

An Inspection of the Northern Ireland Prisoner Resettlement Strategy

June 2007





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**Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland**
a better justice system for all







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List of abbreviations

ACE	Assessment, Case Management and Evaluation process
CJI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CSA	Central Services Agency
DEL	Department of Employment and Learning
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DSD	Department for Social Development
Extern	A voluntary organisation which provides services to offenders
FNP	Foreign National Prisoner
HBW	Hydebank Wood Prison and Young Offenders Centre
HRS	Housing Rights Service
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
LSRC	Life Sentence Review Commissioners
MASG	Multi-Agency Steering Group
MGRO	Ministerial Group on Reducing Offending
NIACRO	Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
OBP	Offending Behaviour Programme
PAU	Prisoner Assessment Unit (at Crumlin Rd Prison)
PBNI	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
PREPS	Progressive Regimes and Earned Privileges Scheme
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RASU	Risk Assessment Special Unit
RoI	Republic of Ireland
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMT	Senior Management Team
SPS	Scottish Prison Service
SSA	Social Security Agency
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
YJA	Youth Justice Agency
YOC	Young Offenders Centre



Chief Inspector's Foreword

The Northern Ireland Resettlement Strategy is an important criminal justice initiative. Its aim is to protect the public by addressing a wide range of underpinning factors that contribute to offending. The concept of prisoner resettlement was elevated to a position of priority in UK penal policy by two reports: "Through the Prison Gate" (2001) and "Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners" (2002).

The Northern Ireland Resettlement Strategy was generated by Recommendation 208 of the Criminal Justice Review. This inspection comes at a stage when the Strategy has been operational for nearly three years, a time when the lead agencies – the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) - agreed it would be useful to take stock before planning ahead.

Northern Ireland has a combination of factors which create a positive environment for resettlement: it is a small jurisdiction where prisoners are invariably held close to their homes; it has singular corrections agencies, the lowest per capita rate of imprisonment in the UK, and spends much more per head on imprisonment; it also has high staff/prisoner ratios and close liaison between prisons and community Probation.

CJI and the Prisons Inspectorate have examined the resettlement work of each Northern Ireland prison when undertaking inspections of individual establishments in 2005 and 2006. This inspection is different in that we sought to examine how well the Strategy was being delivered *across* the prison estate, and *between* the Prison Service and its partner agencies.

Because the Strategy focuses almost exclusively on issues relating to prisoners while in custody, and says little about targeting post release progress, this inspection's main focus is on the custodial aspects of the Strategy. However, we also spoke with released prisoners to ascertain their perspective on the value of work undertaken while they were in custody.

CJI applied the definition of resettlement that is used by the Northern Ireland Strategy, and measured progress against the performance standard that the agencies have set for themselves. These definitions are set out in the glossary. In addition, this report's structure is aligned to the seven main areas of the Strategy's implementation plan.

The internal audit of resettlement undertaken by the NIPS in September 2006, partly in preparation for this inspection - is a model of self-scrutiny. If the main recommendations of that audit were to be fully implemented, then resettlement would progress rapidly.

There are issues for the wider criminal justice system, politicians and other government agencies to address in relation to resettlement. The NIPS and its partner agencies are obliged to work with everyone who is sent to them, and are presented with a major challenge to "resettle" people whose lives were often very unsettled before entering prison. Attempts to promote the social inclusion of released prisoners need to be informed by a positive approach to their value as human beings, and their potential contribution as



participants in society. Such attitudes and approaches are not easily cultivated in a context of public antipathy towards some categories of offenders. A real and sustained improvement in resettlement services to prisoners will therefore require a significant degree of political will.

The inspection was undertaken in February 2007, led by CJI's Tom McGonigle, who received valuable assistance from the Prison and Probation Inspectorates. The Scottish Prison Service, the Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland and the Irish Prison Service provided useful comparator information. The NIPS, PBNI and their partner agencies were entirely open in affording access to all requested people, documents and events.

This report contains 19 recommendations which the lead agencies and other important stakeholders such as the Life Sentence Review Commissioners have agreed are important.

We hope there will be good progress in implementing them before we conduct a review in three years time.

Kit Chivers

Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland.





Executive Summary

This inspection found that the concept of resettlement has become well-established since its commencement in 2003. A lot of good preparation – based on frank and self-critical analysis – went into planning the strategy and this has been beneficial in its roll out.

There is positive commitment at strategic level within the NIPS and PBNI, the lead agencies, and they have striven to promote the principle that, apart from loss of liberty, prisoners should retain normal citizenship rights. Several strategic reviews that were identified in the Strategy have now been completed, and their recommendations could help deliver essential cultural changes within the NIPS. It is however a concern that the NIPS expects some key reforms – such as a personal officer scheme and relocation of women prisoners – will not be implemented for several years.

Most responsibility for delivering the Resettlement Strategy lies with the NIPS. They are closely supported by the PBNI, and other partners' investment varies depending upon how significantly they rate offenders in relation to their core business and available resources. This is largely a product of how the strategy was developed: as it is currently written the NIPS are solely responsible for, or lead on over two thirds of the Implementation Plan. It would now be appropriate to widen the net of responsibility. It is anticipated that the Ministerial Group on Reducing Offending will address this issue. In the interim we suggest that all partner agencies should be engaged to explore their potential contribution to the Strategy and to develop more meaningful targets.

The NIPS model for delivering resettlement is largely appropriate for the present, even though absence of a personal officer scheme has meant there is little ownership of resettlement amongst those with key daily interfaces in the NIPS. This is a fundamental flaw, and while Inspectors recognise such a scheme is unrealistic in 2007, it must remain a target.

Each custodial establishment has created resettlement posts which are supported by a Resettlement Team at NIPS HQ. All the people involved are clearly committed to the concept of resettlement. Unfortunately the model is frequently undermined by higher priorities, at both establishment and HQ levels. Redeployment of staff, excessive emphasis on security, and frequent prisoner transfers are the main problems. Progress on a range of NIPS human resources issues will be central to successful future delivery of the Resettlement Strategy.

There are large numbers of prisoners who receive little or no resettlement input, especially remandees – who comprise an unusually large percentage of the Northern Ireland prison population – and short term prisoners. Many may not want or need resettlement attention, but sharper assessment and delivery processes are essential to ensure optimum delivery of an important resource.



Inspectors found problems with delivery of offending behaviour programmes, file recording (although this has improved), deployment of psychologists, the absence of a Resettlement Team in Hydebank Wood, constructive use of prisoners' time, and measurement of the Strategy's progress. We find it necessary to reiterate the need for women prisoners to be held in a separate facility from young men in the interests of good resettlement practice.

The Resettlement Strategy depends heavily on the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), not just for delivery of services, but for providing meaningful links between the Prison Service and the wider community. The VCS find it difficult to plan on the basis of short term funding, and do not always feel valued, while for its part NIPS finds it increasingly difficult to fund VCS work which only deals with a small percentage of prisoners. Such competing demands take place against a backdrop of continuing reductions in the NIPS budget.

At operational level the Strategy has generated many tangible benefits: some excellent staff have been appointed, premises provided, and a range of programmes which prisoners and their families value are being delivered. Links have been strengthened between the NIPS, PBNI and the other agencies.

The resettlement culture within prisons is innovative, and there is a refreshing willingness to experiment. The downside of this approach is a sometimes ad hoc and localised development of resettlement. While many of the initiatives are good things in themselves, piecemeal activity can mean that learning is not shared nor practice consolidated, and progress is vulnerable to being overtaken by the next good idea. The NIPS recognises that there is an overemphasis in some places on specific initiatives at the cost of implementation of the full Strategy, and accepts that it needs to encourage a more consistent, comprehensive and all-embracing approach to implementing the Strategy.

The Resettlement Strategy has clear objectives. Available evidence suggests the current levels of achievement are as follows:

- Fully Achieved – 5
- Partially Achieved – 7
- Not Achieved – 2

Because they are often non-specific and duplicatory, Inspectors found it difficult to measure achievement of the 66 actions outlined in the Strategy. Our assessment is as follows:

- Fully Achieved – 24
- Partially Achieved – 26
- Not Achieved – 16



Northern Ireland's resettlement work compares favourably with the Republic of Ireland. The model is similar to England, Wales and Scotland, and similar difficulties arise in those jurisdictions. A key difference is that statutory providers deliver more services – such as benefits advice and accommodation arrangements – directly in their prisons. Appendix 2 provides more detail on these comparisons.

Good progress has been made during the first phase of the Northern Ireland Resettlement Strategy, and NIPS has initiatives in hand which should deliver further benefits. On the other hand there are several current difficulties, and some impending threats. While the NIPS and its partners must take the lead in dealing with these, wider government and its agencies should also contribute to this important work.





Recommendations

- The resettlement needs of groups such as remand prisoners and short term prisoners should be given greater priority. This process should be commenced by targeting remand and short term prisoners who are assessed as especially needy. **(Para 2.7)**
- The PAU file recording process should be used as a model for resettlement file recording. **(Para 2.9)**
- The NIPS transfer policy should be updated. This should take account of the diversity of the NIPS estate, clearly notifying to prisoners the opportunities that exist, and incorporating resettlement and equity issues. **(Para 2.13)**
- A separate thematic inspection of the lifer management system in Northern Ireland should be undertaken. The timing of this inspection should allow time for new practice in lifer management to bed in. **(Para 2.16)**
- NIPS should recommit to Resettlement Leave and involvement of prisoners' families at Resettlement Boards. **(Para 2.19)**
- The NIPS and PBNi should work with others to design and deliver offending behaviour programmes or other relevant interventions for a wider range of prisoners, including "deniers." **(Para 3.4)**
- NIPS should maintain close oversight of its psychology services, and regularly review their functioning with all interested parties. **(Para 3.9)**
- The Implementation Plan should be updated to place greater emphasis on the contribution of the NIPS' partners while prisoners are inside; and on resettlement outcomes that are achieved after release from custody. The underpinning principle should be that prisoners have the same rights as other citizens, save for their loss of liberty. **(Para 4.4)**
- Pending developments by the MGRO we recommend that the MASG composition should be reviewed, with a view to more appropriate participation and wider ownership by setting more explicit objectives for all partner agencies. **(Para 4.5)**
- The resettlement databases should be slightly amended and standardised between establishments. **(Para 4.16)**
- The MASG should adopt simpler and more measurable outcome monitoring against benchmarks in the Resettlement Action Plan. It should retain the existing seven areas/14 objectives, but reduce the 66 actions to a smaller, achievable number. **(Para 4.17)**

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- The NIPS should reaffirm its commitment to both objectives in the area of developing a prison structure which reflects the “working day” outside, and outline tangible steps towards their fulfilment. **(Para 5.5)**
 - The NIPS Security Classification Review’s recommendations should be implemented with a degree of urgency. **(Para 5.12)**
 - NIPS should recommit to establishing a personal officer scheme, or its equivalent for all prisoners, within a meaningful timescale. **(Para 6.7)**
 - A dedicated Resettlement Team should be established promptly in HBW pending a personal officer system being put in place. **(Para 6.12)**
 - HBW and Maghaberry governors and their senior management teams should articulate clearly the way in which their establishment contributes to the Northern Ireland Resettlement Strategy. **(Para 6.13)**
 - HBW and Maghaberry governors should articulate the various contributions expected from different groups of staff in the establishment. **(Para 6.13)**
 - NIPS and PBNI in conjunction with appropriate agencies should redraft the healthcare section of the Implementation Plan to ensure appropriate targets are set for the new era of prison healthcare provision. **(Para 7.3)**
 - We again recommend relocation of the women prisoners to a dedicated site. **(Para 8.5)**



Section



Inspection Report



Background and Development



- 1.1 Although the prison population has been rising steadily since 2001, Northern Ireland still has the lowest imprisonment rate in the UK (82/100k), and the lowest reconviction rate (43%).
- 1.2 On March 5th 2007:
- The prison population was 1,456, of whom 38% were on remand (only 17% of the English prison population were on remand);
 - There were 73 separated Loyalist and Republican prisoners held in Maghaberry;
 - 36 female prisoners were held at Hydebank Wood;
 - Numbers of foreign national prisoners were increasing, but still low: 44 people representing 32 nationalities;
 - There were 6,145 committals to prison during 2005-06;
 - The Northern Ireland annual cost per prisoner place was £86,290, more than twice the England and Wales cost of £37,500.
- 1.4 **Maghaberry** – A high security prison with capacity for 745 adult male long term sentenced and remand prisoners – but holding 820 in May 2007 due to overcrowding. Some prisoners are held in separated conditions, and there is a dedicated facility for 12 lifers in the later stages of sentence. Maghaberry also manages the Prisoner Assessment Unit which has 22 beds in Belfast for prisoners nearing the end of their sentences.
- Maghaberry provides resettlement opportunities for sentenced prisoners. Remandees comprise more than half the population and can avail of housing advice, but apart from a small number who are offered education and other programmes they are not eligible for resettlement planning. Maghaberry has a dedicated Resettlement Team based in discrete accommodation.
- 1.3 **Magilligan** – A medium security prison, with capacity for 425 shorter-term prisoners, which also has low security accommodation (Foyleview) for up to 82 selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.
- Magilligan has a dedicated Resettlement Team based in purpose-built accommodation. The physical

The Prison Estate

- 1.3 The Northern Ireland prison estate is small – there are three establishments, each applying a different resettlement approach.



presence of Foyleview supports Magilligan's resettlement ethos, and local employers and the community have been well-engaged over the past 12 years. Resettlement is easier to deliver at Magilligan because it has a settled population, who are all serving sentences, and the security emphasis is less than at Maghaberry.

- 1.6 **Hydebank Wood (HBW)** – A medium to low security young offenders centre and prison, with total capacity for 306 male young offenders and female prisoners.
- HBW provides resettlement for all remand and sentenced young offenders and women. It does not have a dedicated team or premises, but two managers have a resettlement brief. Working out arrangements are available for a small number of women prisoners and young men at Hydebank Wood.
- 1.7 A Resettlement Project Board began work in July 2002, and a Head of Resettlement was appointed within the NIPS to coordinate activity across its three establishments. The Project Board commissioned an Aftercare Audit, which was provided in March 2003. A Strategic Review of Resettlement Services was launched in October 2003, and the Resettlement Strategy was launched in June 2004, followed almost a year later by an Implementation Plan for the period April 2005 – March 2007.
- 1.8 Since the Strategy was launched there have been several positive initiatives including designation of dedicated staff and premises, and staff secondments between partner

organisations. A Multi-Agency Steering Group (MASG) was established and many existing initiatives (most of the VCS activity within the prisons) were brought under the framework of the Strategy. These developments have generated closer working relationships and promoted a coherent resettlement identity.

- 1.9 Several strategic reviews that were identified in the Strategy have now been completed by the NIPS, including reviews of lifers, chaplains, security, constructive activity, progressive regimes, offending behaviour programmes and facilitators. If implemented, their recommendations will make a major contribution to resettlement, as well as helping deliver essential cultural changes within the NIPS.
- 1.10 Detailed databases of resettlement activity have been developed by Maghaberry and Magilligan, and the significance of resettlement is demonstrated by the fact that both these prisons make explicit reference to resettlement activity in their statements of purpose on the NIPS website. The Independent Monitoring Boards take a keen interest in resettlement issues and their latest reports have called on the NIPS to allocate more resources to resettlement.

The NIPS Resettlement Audit

- 1.11 The Resettlement Strategies' Multi-Agency Steering Group (MASG) minutes indicate that by June 2006 the high prison population was felt to be impacting on resources and programme delivery. In September



2006 NIPS undertook a Resettlement Audit. It made positive findings overall, including “performance that clearly indicates good or excellent performance” and found an average compliance level of 66% with the Standard.

- 1.12 The main areas requiring significant attention were inconsistent resourcing of resettlement, low awareness among non-specialist staff, the system of prisoner transfers and inadequate pre-release processes. An individual report was completed for each prison, highlighting key areas for future development.
- 1.13 In Maghaberry it found “Very limited work being done in the essential area of discharge...Because staff have not been informed about Safer Custody concept, it is seen as a process that is separate and disconnected from resettlement...Pockets of good initiatives are in evidence but not fully integrated, resourced or linked up to the resettlement process. Resettlement is thus seriously compromised. Resettlement staff are competent, enthusiastic and keen, with excellent practice in some areas...but frustrated through having to react continuously...dependence on so few staff is resulting in a system that is at best fragile...Magilligan is inevitably impacted by the lack of information flowing from Maghaberry...”
- 1.14 Magilligan had “excellent resettlement accommodation.” There were 10 dedicated NIPS staff, all with Job Descriptions and relevant training, and the Resettlement Team had won a Criminal Justice Award in

2006 for “Outstanding contribution to working with offenders.”

- 1.15 At Hydebank Wood “In the absence of a dedicated Resettlement Team, the Inmate Activity Governor, PO and admin post try to involve residential staff with varying degrees of success...There are excellent systems in place, and if the resettlement team was properly resourced these could be utilised to the full. Arguably, resettlement should have a high priority within a young offenders’ institution, where the highest rate of recidivism occurs.”
- 1.16 The NIPS Management Board have formally accepted the audit findings and recommendations. They intend to use it along with the recommendations of this inspection report as the basis for the next phase of the Resettlement Strategy.

The Future

NIPS and PBNi identify some significant proposed developments that are likely to impact on the Resettlement Strategy in the near future, and for which they are planning.

- 1.17 The Sentencing Framework Review proposes indeterminate and extended periods in custody, along with a supporting infrastructure of recall, parole supervision and developed use of the Custody Probation Order. These are likely to increase the size of the prison population, at least in the short term, and to include a growing population of elderly prisoners. For the increasing numbers of prisoners who will become subject



to community supervision by PBNI after release from custody, resettlement is not only about preparation for practical readjustment, but also about preparation for supervision in the community – which is becoming increasingly stringent and curtailing of liberty.

- 1.18 Even without prison population increases due to the Sentencing Framework Review, the prison population is rising steadily anyhow, and the NIPS has plans to accommodate over 100 extra prisoners at Maghaberry and Magilligan.
- 1.19 The NIPS Efficiency Programme requires cuts of 149 operational staff from April 2007 (Maghaberry = 83; Magilligan = 35; HBW = 31). It has been guaranteed that the Resettlement Teams will not be affected, but given the existing practice of redeploying resettlement staff it seems likely that resettlement resources will be further stretched.
- 1.20 Devolution of criminal justice to a local Assembly would increase the level of local scrutiny of the prison system. It might also cause greater pressure to reduce the cost per prisoner place, and raise resettlement expectations.

Addressing the complex needs of prisoners



2.1 The work identified in this area of the Implementation Plan establishes the basis for developing all resettlement activity within the NIPS and with its partner agencies. Two objectives and 14 actions were identified. Both objectives – reviewing prisoner regimes and developing a resettlement framework – are deemed to be achieved.

2.2 Assessed achievement levels in relation to the actions are as follows:

- Fully Achieved – 8
- Partially Achieved – 3
- Not Achieved – 3

The non-achieved actions involve reviews of prison transfers, pre-release framework and extension of working out schemes.

2.3 Resettlement policies have been developed at NIPS HQ and local levels, and the concept of resettlement is now better accepted and understood in the prisons than it was three years ago. A Resettlement Standard has been developed. It was updated in September 2006 to become clearer and more measurable.

2.4 A document for assessing prisoners' resettlement needs – the Resettlement Needs Profile – was

drawn up after considerable consultation, and based on best practice elsewhere. While there have been some initial teething problems during the pilot phase, further fine tuning is planned throughout 2007-08. Many prisoners may not want or need resettlement attention, but sharp assessment and delivery processes are essential to ensure optimum delivery of an important resource.

2.5 Interagency public protection work is generally good. Many released prisoners are subjected to tight management in the community and prohibited from participating in certain activities, to the extent that agencies accept there are occasions when the need for public protection will run counter to the Resettlement Standard. The Assessment, Case Management and Evaluation (ACE) process is used for risk assessment. However the training of Prison Officers to undertake ACE assessments has not been fruitful because many who were trained have subsequently been redeployed away from resettlement roles. Quality control of ACE assessments is also an issue, and consideration is being given to PBNI reverting to do all the assessments.



2.6 Foreign national prisoners' needs are beginning to be identified and addressed. A workshop to address their specific resettlement needs was run by the NIPS in March 2007, and Visitors Information Books have been translated into Cantonese, Spanish, Lithuanian and Polish.

2.7 A major gap in this area of the Resettlement Strategy is that significant groups of prisoners do not receive any resettlement input. Overcrowding of the prison estate, particularly at Maghaberry, is reported by the NIPS as a key pressure on the delivery of resettlement services. In particular adult short term prisoners, remand prisoners (who have not been convicted of a crime and should be entitled to a greater level of services) and separated prisoners at Maghaberry are unlikely to benefit. Magilligan caters for its short term prisoners by compining committal and discharge interviews. Remandees constitute the bulk of Maghaberry's population, and short termers are the people most likely to return to prison at an early stage. Although the Resettlement Standard suggests that "provision to reduce the risk of reoffending is inappropriate for prisoners who are remanded for trial," this should not preclude attention being paid to their wide ranging social problems, some of which arise specifically as a result of their remand into custody. It is to HBWs credit that remand prisoners there receive the same level of resettlement input as sentenced prisoners – this opportunity should apply equally to all remand prisoners, irrespective of their location. **We**

recommend that the resettlement needs of groups such as remand prisoners and short term prisoners should be given greater priority. This process should be commenced by targeting remand and short term prisoners who are assessed as especially needy.

Files

2.8 NIPS data suggests 94% of eligible prisoners (99% of lifers) were working to a Resettlement Plan during 2005-06. A resettlement case file system has been introduced, and the files that Inspectors viewed represented an improvement on recent inspections insofar as there was written information on each prisoner who had signed up to a Resettlement Plan; and reviews had taken place. However few of the files portrayed a meaningful and up to date picture of prisoners' resettlement activity. There was also evidence of insensitive and inappropriate comments in files, as well as references which were predominantly about institutional behaviour rather than about prisoners as individuals.

2.9 The best files seen by Inspectors were those held on prisoners in the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU). They were regularly updated with relevant information, while maintaining focus on key aspects of risk and resettlement, and incorporated a daily diary completed by the prisoner. Whilst Inspectors recognise that the PAUs small numbers and lower turnover make recording easier, **we recommend**

that the PAU file recording process should be used as a model for resettlement file recording.

Transfers

- 2.10 Several prisoners and staff told Inspectors that resettlement progress was impeded by being transferred between prisons. The numbers are significant: almost a thousand prisoners transferred from Maghaberry to Magilligan during 2005-06 and the only strategic oversight of transfers appears to be at a weekly transfer board which is designed to offset bedspace pressures in Maghaberry by identifying prisoners who should transfer to Magilligan. This board comprises representatives from Maghaberry and Magilligan, and has an independent chair from NIPS headquarters. Resettlement is beginning to feature on the agenda, but the main criteria are security and medical fitness. The board that Inspectors observed was well-run. However it operates under a headquarters instruction which was issued in 2000, when the estate was less diverse and the Resettlement Strategy did not exist. The lack of strategic focus on transfer opportunities across the entire estate seems to be a missed opportunity, and the NIPS agrees that its transfer policy needs to be updated.
- 2.11 For example, the PAU is meant to receive lifers approaching the end of their sentence and prisoners on transfer from Foyleview: the reality is that only six made that transfer between January 2006 – February 2007. Therefore the PAU Senior

Officer has to undertake a weekly trawl of Maghaberry's nominal roll in an attempt to maximise this valuable resource which could offer prisoners a tangible incentive. The PAU does not feature in official transfer board arrangements nor by way of prisoners being made aware of opportunities to nominate themselves and earn the right to transfer, and there is no system for measuring equality of access to transfers.

- 2.12 Magilligan runs a local assessment panel to decide upon progression to Foyleview. This has been problematic in the past as there was evidence that access was not equally available to all prisoners. NIPS has undertaken to address this issue and an observed meeting for this inspection found that diversity formed part of the consideration. Resettlement was prioritised, and the ethos of the discussion was positive, trying to find reasons to include rather than exclude applicants.
- 2.13 Theoretically the Resettlement File should transfer with prisoners when they move between prisons. However this does not always happen – during 2006 only 46% of prisoners who transferred from Maghaberry to Magilligan had resettlement plans. Even when files transfer, Inspectors saw evidence of the receiving prison undertaking fresh assessments, sometimes out of necessity and sometimes because their local approach to resettlement was different. **We recommend that the NIPS transfer policy should be updated. This should take account of the diversity of the NIPS estate, clearly notifying to**



prisoners the opportunities that exist, and incorporating resettlement and equity issues.

Lifers

- 2.14 The number of lifers (164 on April 30th 2007) and potential lifers (40) in Northern Ireland is high and increasing steadily. It includes several who have been recalled after being released under the 1999 early release scheme and whose previous experience of prison was very different. The NIPS has completed a useful review of its lifer management, and subsequently updated the action plans that arose from this review in November 2006 and March 2007.
- 2.15 Inspectors noted some recent improvements in lifer management. Each lifer now has an annual review, which they are invited to attend; potential lifers have a needs analysis completed when they arrive into custody; all staff in Maghaberry's Erne House, which holds most of the lifer population, had updated training during 2006; and new accommodation has been developed on the Maghaberry site to provide more relaxed regimes for lifers who are at an advanced stage in their sentence.
- 2.16 While there is necessarily more resettlement activity at some points during a life sentence, concerns were expressed to Inspectors about the sufficiency of interventions at the early stages. In addition the Life Sentence Review Commissioners (LSRC) expressed concerns about risk assessment of lifers, lack of opportunities for them to participate in relevant offending behaviour work,

inadequacy of provision for female lifers, failure to comprehensively address the mental health needs of lifers, and other aspects of their management. This is an important joint area of work for the NIPS and PBNI – who are currently establishing a detailed set of standards for their work with lifers. **We therefore recommend that a separate thematic inspection of the lifer management system in Northern Ireland should be undertaken. The timing of this inspection should allow time for new practice in lifer management to bed in.**

- 2.17 The Resettlement Strategy recognises that much resettlement activity will be meaningless unless attention is paid to the basic deficits faced by many prisoners, such as literacy and numeracy. It is reported that 51% of prisoners with literacy and numeracy deficits achieved improvements during 2005-06. This exceeded the NIPS target. The target for City and Guilds Basic Skills achievement was not reached (36% of those eligible achieved these awards). However, these are good examples of simple targets being set and measured.
- 2.18 The Strategy aspired to undertake prisoner surveys to measure their satisfaction levels with resettlement work. No dedicated surveys have been undertaken, though resettlement has featured in the routine inspection surveys of each prison, and also in general prisoner surveys undertaken by the Scottish Prison Service in 2006. The broad findings of these surveys, as with prisoner feedback for this inspection,



was that prisoners' experience of resettlement is often haphazard, and determined more by what is available than by their assessed need.

- 2.19 Home leave arrangements generally seem to work well in terms of risk assessment and safe returns to custody. Overall 78% (2,173/2,790 applications) of home leave applications during 2005-06 were successful. However only Magilligan appeared to use resettlement leave, for a small number of prisoners. And there has been virtually no involvement of prisoners' families at Resettlement Boards during the lifetime of the Strategy. Home leave and family contact are very important elements of the Strategy, and **we recommend that NIPS should recommit to them.**



CHAPTER 3:

Delivering offending behaviour programmes



3.1 Two objectives and seven actions were identified. Both objectives – to deliver and evaluate offending behaviour programmes (OBPs) – are deemed to be partially achieved.

3.2 Assessed achievement levels in relation to the actions are as follows:

- Fully Achieved – 2
- Partially Achieved – 5

3.3 The key objective involved delivery of accredited offending behaviour programmes – enhanced thinking skills, cognitive behaviour, sex offending, car crime and anger management. The resettlement databases show that 245 prisoners participated in prison based OBPs during 2006:

- 56 in Maghaberry;
- 99 in Magilligan;
- 90 in HBW.

These are low numbers in relation to the entire prison population, and in terms of fulfilling the Resettlement Standard to “reduce the risk of reoffending and risk of harm.”

3.4 Numerous difficulties – which are not unique to Northern Ireland – beset delivery of OBPs. Eligibility criteria are a particular problem. The following groups cannot participate in

offending behaviour programmes:

- Remand prisoners;
- Prisoners with insufficient time left on sentence;
- Prisoners whose risk level is deemed too low;
- “Deniers” (prisoners who maintain their innocence despite being convicted) and
- Prisoners with poor literacy levels.

While these criteria are perfectly valid, and essential for accreditation purposes, they result in many fewer prisoners undertaking OBPs than would be desirable. The challenge therefore – which is beyond the responsibility of NIPS alone – is to develop offending behaviour programmes for prisoners who are currently ineligible. Arrangements for programme design and accreditation were drawn up in 2004 but have not been implemented. **We recommend that NIPS and PBNI should work with others to design and deliver offending behaviour programmes or other relevant interventions for a wider range of prisoners, including “deniers.”**

3.5 For those prisoners who are required to undertake OBPs as part of a court order, PBNI has to deliver the



programmes after release if they have not been undertaken in prison. PBNI has developed a peripatetic team to help deliver OBPs, and Inspectors were told that despite major logistical problems, nobody has failed to be offered a programme in the community.

- 3.6 It was clear from discussions with released prisoners that they recognise they are being managed according to their risk levels, and there were several instances where non-compliance was appropriately dealt with by prompt initiation of breach proceedings. This was confirmed by file reviews which also demonstrated that the released prisoners were receiving appropriate support in conjunction with a range of other appropriate agencies.
- 3.7 Besides prisoner eligibility issues, delivery of OBPs within prisons is hindered by shortages of facilitators. Facilitation is a challenging, time-consuming and skilled role which requires continuously updated training, opportunities to consolidate skills learned and to deliver programmes on a consistent basis. This is difficult for Prison Officers' because their shift patterns do not fit neatly, especially for sex offender programmes which require the input of three staff three times a week for ten months.

Psychology

- 3.8 Developments within prison psychology during the past few years have not helped support OBP delivery or other aspects of the Resettlement Strategy. There were

indications that because of location and reporting arrangements the Chief Psychologist had perhaps not been as closely involved as she might have been in line management and policy work. This has resulted in independent psychology arrangements being established for each establishment, without clear management or coordination. The LSRC was recently shocked to discover that there was no quality assurance process in relation to lifer assessments, and there had been some recent cases where the assessments provided to them had been defective.

- 3.9 Inspectors were told that the role of the Chief Psychologist has recently been clarified, and a job description and oversight arrangements have been agreed with all interested parties in establishments. It remains to be seen whether this will remedy the difficulties and **we recommend that the NIPS should maintain close oversight of its psychology services, and regularly review their functioning with all interested parties.**
- 3.10 While for 07-08, the NIPS has committed approx. £200k for provision of psychology services in establishments, it has proven difficult for the service to recruit and retain psychologists. For the longer term they have initiated discussions with government workforce planners since neither local university has an academic route for producing forensic psychologists.
- 3.11 Prisoners are well aware that a refusal to engage with psychology is



likely to result in downgrading of their regime level. Yet they also know that engagement is unlikely to lead to participation in appropriate programmes because of insufficient facilitators or the problems highlighted in paragraph 3.4. Such outcomes lead to cynicism on their part, and a sense that the system is ineffective.

3.12 Reviews of OBPs and facilitators have been undertaken. Unfortunately the OBP review could not fulfil its basic requirement for reconviction analysis because of incomplete data. Nor could the review of facilitators signal any clear way forward to address this difficult issue.

3.13 Despite the difficulties with OBP delivery there are a wide range of other programmes that work well in the prisons. They are popular with prisoners and their families, and attract high levels of participation, although delivery is still dependent on the availability of facilitators, and therefore often patchy. Many are run by voluntary and community sector bodies (VCS), often in conjunction with Prison Officers. These programmes make a significant contribution to resettlement by enhancing prisoners' personal development and supporting their families through a difficult time. They include alcohol and drugs awareness programmes, child centred visits, yoga, parenting programmes, literacy and reading schemes, job clubs, Duke of Edinburgh's Endeavour Award, a Good Relations programme and health promotion.



CHAPTER 4:

Reintegrating prisoners into the community with expert partners



- 4.1 One objective and six actions were identified. The objective – to establish the multi-agency steering group – is deemed to be achieved.
- 4.2 Assessed achievement levels in relation to the actions are as follows:
 - Fully Achieved – 2
 - Partially Achieved – 4
- 4.3 The MASG meets twice annually, alternately chaired by NIPS and PBNI. Resettlement also features regularly at meetings between the various signatory agencies, and there are a range of formal agreements to underpin the work. In addition to the NIPS and PBNI the MASGs active membership includes representatives from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), NIACRO, Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and Social Security Agency (SSA).
- 4.4 Progress in engaging strategic partners in the Resettlement Strategy has been varied. Documentation and interviews indicate that this depends on how significant agencies perceive offenders are to their core business, and on how much effort is made to engage them meaningfully. This is not helped by the fact that the Strategy is generally less clear about what is

actually expected of non-criminal justice agencies. The NIPS have vigorously pursued opportunities to engage with community partners, but at times been rebuffed because of structural and funding impediments e.g. when seeking affiliation to local Further Education Colleges for education provision. This is exacerbated by the fact that the Implementation Plan lays ownership for delivery almost exclusively at the NIPS door, and there is much less emphasis on the consequences of this activity within the community after release. Given that resettlement is defined as “...work in custody *and on release...*” and that several statutory providers have signed up to the Strategy, **we recommend that the Implementation Plan should be updated to place greater emphasis on the contribution of the NIPS’ partners while prisoners are inside; and on resettlement outcomes that are achieved after release from custody. The underpinning principle should be that prisoners have the same rights as other citizens, save for their loss of liberty.**

- 4.5 It has proven difficult to get the right people involved in the MASG, particularly to blend appropriate



strategic and operational personnel from the relevant agencies e.g. the Central Services Agency and Department of Employment and Learning are signatories to the Resettlement Strategy, but have not participated in the MASG for some time; there is no health perspective; and prison governors do not attend. It is important that the lead agencies continue to work to widen the net of responsibility for offenders. The NIPS and the NIO have also initiated a Ministerial Group on Reducing Offending with the purpose of providing a “structured, strategic and integrated way forward” bringing together ministers with interests in criminal justice, health, education and social development. This approach - which is similar to the community planning model - aims to improve coordination of the resettlement strategy and deal with barriers.

Pending developments by the MGRO, we recommend that the MASG composition should be reviewed, with a view to more appropriate participation and wider ownership by setting more explicit objectives for all partner agencies.

Three main areas were identified in this section of the Strategy: housing, employment and benefits advice:

Housing

- 4.6 In relation to housing the NIHE has funded a Housing Rights Service (HRS) pilot project for 24 months to advise about more complex housing matters, and to mentor resettlement staff, since June 2006. Despite agreeing a clear remit there have

been different interpretations of this post, leading to some confusion and unmet expectations. However the acknowledged benefit of the project has been in flagging up accommodation issues that need to be addressed, and getting NIHE action on them. It is noteworthy that most of the beneficiaries in Maghaberry are remand prisoners, who otherwise receive little resettlement intervention. The HRS generates hard outcome data that shows tangible progress, which could provide a model for measuring wider aspects of the Strategy.

- 4.7 The NIHE were described as having helped make a practical difference in matters such as entry to direct access hostels, though prisoners’ accommodation needs are much greater than can be provided for within current arrangements. Consequently the NIHE is planning to jointly fund a second worker with NIPS for the prisons. They are also engaged in a specialist interagency accommodation group to address the sensitive issue of sex offenders’ accommodation needs.

Employment

- 4.8 Members of the MASG were hopeful that the Progress to Work initiative – which was established with the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) - would provide opportunities to enhance prisoners’ employability and support those with special needs. While they reported disappointment with DEL’s levels of engagement and delivery, feedback from DEL indicates that they view the Progress to Work programme as



serving a wider client group than prisoners, and suggest more could have been done to engage them with the Resettlement Strategy. This is a good example of a situation where roles and expectations need to be more clearly agreed for the next phase of the Resettlement Strategy.

- 4.9 Nonetheless there have been relevant achievements: Foyleview has developed a wide range of voluntary work placements and managed to obtain fulltime employment for 31 ex-prisoners during the past year; and NIACRO exceeded its target of “enhancing the employability” of 300 prisoners during 2006-7. There are also local successes, such as in the delivery of Multiskills (wallpapering, tiling etc) training at Magilligan to short term prisoners. This is useful for prisoners at a personal level, even if it does not lead to paid employment. In planning the next phase of the Resettlement Strategy across the prison estate it may be useful to prioritise training which provides flexibility and can lead to qualifications within a short time, given the high numbers of prisoners who only spend short periods in sentenced custody.

Benefits Advice

- 4.10 In relation to benefits advice the SSA seeks to make a practical contribution to the Strategy, although it considers itself to be on the periphery of the criminal justice system. The SSA has delivered a series of two-day training courses for the NIPS and NIACRO staff and researched the experience of ex-prisoners accessing the benefits

system to simplify and speed up the process. This has culminated in new operational guidance. The SSA have also part-funded a welfare rights post at HBW, and arranged for NIACRO Advice Workers to attend their District Managers’ meetings.

The Voluntary and Community Sector

- 4.11 Besides contributing to the housing, employability and benefits themes, VCS organisations have acquired funding to deliver a range of other services in the prisons e.g. parenting programmes (Barnardos), Visitor Centres (Quakers and NIACRO), Employability and Benefits Advice (NIACRO), Bereavement Volunteers (Cruse), Drugs/Alcohol counsellors (Northlands and Dunlewey), Opportunity Youth Support Workers at HBW. These and other programmes are funded by NIPS and PBNI, and have added significantly to resettlement provision across the prison estate.
- 4.12 Inspectors heard several examples of operational difficulties and tensions in partnership working: well-intentioned but hasty initiatives that failed to take account of previous learning; communications breakdowns that caused duplication of effort within the same establishment; VCS groups feeling undervalued at times; feedback not provided; disciplines with different priorities working in relative isolation from each other; overlapping services being provided in some areas. These are typical, but unnecessary problems that arise in partnership working. They can be costly in financial terms and energy, and require ongoing attention and commitment by



everyone involved in order to achieve solutions. In planning the way ahead after this inspection it may be useful for the MASG agencies to hold an event where they clarify roles and responsibilities in order to operate more effectively henceforth.

- 4.13 The VCS contribution is significant and enriches prison life. By providing essential links for some prisoners to community agencies on release, the VCS represent an important and perhaps fragile thread between custody and the community. Furthermore, the VCS voice is important to support interventions such as resettlement which may be perceived as marginal. Some statutory bodies choose to deliver their services in prisons via the VCS. This can work as long as the rationale and funding arrangements are correct, and relationships are sufficiently mature.
- 4.14 Inspectors were told that government has recently proposed to change the current basis for funding the criminal justice voluntary sector. Basically this means that significant core costs will have to be paid to the VCS by NIPS and PBNI. At a time when the NIPS and PBNI budgets are decreasing, they fear this will be impossible, though as outlined in CJs “Added Value” report in November 2006, such major change will require detailed planning and restructuring over a period of years.
- 4.15 The Resettlement Strategy would be seriously impoverished if the VCS input were lost, and it is not only the VCS which has difficulty in resourcing resettlement activity. Although CJR recommendation 208 suggested that

“...the (Probation) service should be adequately resourced” to deliver resettlement services, PBNI also has unresolved funding shortages and reports that it has received no funding for resettlement work in the community.

Measurement

- 4.16 The resettlement needs of each prison’s population are compiled on databases which have been designed and are maintained by the individual initiative of prison staff. They provide management information and analysis of a wide range of activity including OBP referrals and completions, risk levels, leave applications and outcomes. The information generated by these databases is useful for managerial purposes, both locally and at headquarters level. It could be even more accurate with a few amendments, and would enable comparisons if standardised between establishments, especially if relevant material was incorporated within the NIPS database. **We recommend that the resettlement databases should be slightly amended and standardised between establishments.**
- 4.17 Quantitative measurement of the Strategys’ achievements has not worked well so far. As with any criminal justice initiative, rates of reoffending might be considered the ultimate arbiter of success, though in reality this is an impossible measure, even with good longitudinal research. However basic measurable outcomes should be applied e.g. benefits processed within 24 hours of release; secured accommodation for release;



jobs/training positions taken up; literacy and numeracy levels improved against benchmarks. In this case agencies told Inspectors that the higher level resettlement indicators are aspirational rather than realistic, there are no clear reporting mechanisms, and some agencies do not have appropriate measurement systems in place. These concerns are now being addressed and a more manageable, smaller-scale system has been drafted for consideration. We endorse this progress and recommend that **the MASG should adopt simpler and more measurable outcome monitoring against benchmarks in the Resettlement Action Plan. It should retain the existing seven areas/14 objectives, but reduce the 66 actions to a smaller, achievable number.**



CHAPTER 5:

Developing a prison structure which reflects the “working day” outside



5.1 Two objectives and 14 actions were identified. One objective – developing prison vocational and educational services – is deemed to be partially achieved, and the other – prisoners to achieve at least five hours per day in constructive resettlement activity – is deemed not to be achieved.

5.2 Assessed achievement levels in relation to the actions are as follows:

- Fully Achieved – 4
- Partially Achieved – 6
- Not Achieved – 4

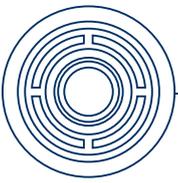
Outstanding actions in this section of the Strategy include expansion of evening activities and training peer mentors to assist with resettlement.

5.3 Areas of achievement include lunchtime opening of Maghaberry workshops since October 2006; development of local employer links for Foyleview and PAU prisoners; and provision of job kiosks in each prison.

5.4 That said the aspiration of prison working life reflecting the working day outside is a long way from reality. At best the working day operates between 10am – 12 noon and 2pm – 4pm. This four hour period is frequently eroded by late starts and early finishes, confirming the view of the 2003 Resettlement Needs Survey

that the prisons in many ways still run to suit the needs of staff rather than the needs of prisoners. At HBW the major criticism heard from prisoners and some members of staff was that the rigid timetable for the working day does not reflect life outside. Many prisoners stated that they would prefer to have a brief working lunch in their workshop rather than the long locked up lunchtime period at present.

5.5 The working week picture is equally poor. While 95% of Magilligan’s prisoners are notionally allocated work, much of this is neither fulltime nor meaningful: on one day during this inspection H1 had 87 prisoners on roll, of whom only 29 were shown as working. On another day H3A+ B had 42 on roll, but only 18 of these were actually working. Prisoners who were engaged in work identified that they had very limited roles, both in time occupied and in stimulus. Even in motivating settings such as education or the Maghaberry Braille workshops, the system was blamed for delivering an insubstantial experience: prisoners in Magilligan who were allocated full time education told Inspectors that they received only 1 x full day and 2 x half days per week. This was no reflection on the teachers and instructors who were reported as



being helpful and encouraging. Rather it reflected an outdated, security-driven system that urgently needs to be updated. **We recommend the NIPS reaffirm its commitment to both objectives in this area, and outline tangible steps towards their fulfilment.**

- 5.6 Each prison departments Key Performance Targets focus on volume rather than impact on prisoners. This has led to competition amongst activity providers, meaning some prisoners end up in activities that are inappropriate to their needs while staff become frustrated by inconsistent attendance patterns. Current activity is poorly coordinated and there is no particular priority, whereas English prisons' purposeful activity targets are set according to the establishments' security classification.
- 5.7 It is therefore inaccurate to think of prisoners as a captive audience who are readily available to partake in work, therapeutic activities and offending behaviour programmes. The reality is that, while they are captive, their availability is limited by lengthy and sometimes unpredictable lockup times (usually 22 hours per day for remand prisoners), other commitments such as visits and court appearances, gym, tuckshop, security lockdowns and lack of cover for instructors' and teachers' leave.

Security

- 5.8 Of all the challenges that resettlement faces, it is the predominant security culture that most impedes much of the progress

to which the NIPS aspires. High levels of searching and shutdowns, combined with the fact that most prisoners have to be escorted everywhere within the prisons, have a negative impact on culture and relationships. The November 2006 review of prisoner security classification is illuminating. It suggests that 50% of Northern Ireland's prisoners could have their classification downgraded. This review was based on October 2005 data which showed that, of 1,369 prisoners:

- 11% were classified as High Risk (only 1.3% of the English prison population is high risk);
- 82% were Medium Risk;
- 7% were Low Risk.

- 5.9 The review suggested "This situation is difficult to justify, particularly when there is a direct correlation between security classification and staff/prisoner ratios, especially in Maghaberry...In fact the NIPS is a medium-low risk service...prisoners are held in inappropriate security conditions for their risk level...This all causes problems and does not allow for the sharing of complexity of prisoner population between Maghaberry and Magilligan.... Classification is imprecise and subjective... As a Prison Service we have been risk averse rather than risk managers..."

- 5.10 Subsequently a new classification model was locally-designed and trialled, resulting in:
- 9% of the population was reclassified to High Risk;
 - 34% was reclassified to Medium Risk;
 - 57% was reclassified to Low Risk.

5.11 The review suggested that application of this model would produce numerous positive results, including better role definition for establishments; better staff deployment; assist NIPS to shift away from its “siege mentality;” and allow prisoners clear progression through sentence.

5.12 The NIPS reports that it must determine the future configuration of its estate and resolve human resource issues before the reviews recommendations can be implemented, although the 2007-2010 Corporate Plan states that “A new security classification model is to be rolled out in 2007...” Of all the reviews recently undertaken by the NIPS, this is probably the most important for resettlement purposes, and **we recommend that the Security Classification Review’s recommendations be implemented with a degree of urgency.**

5.13 The NIPS also undertook a Prisoner Needs Constructive Activity Review in 2006, partly because skills delivered were not always appropriate to the current job market. That review is helpful in identifying achievements by prisoners, including 396 national education accreditations, and over 500 nationally recognised training awards during 2004-05. However it concluded that there was no coordinated strategy, large numbers of prisoners ended up in activities that were inappropriate to their needs, and that “Non-Developmental” activity (court, wing orderly) often takes priority over “Developmental”

activity (work, programmes, education). It also pointed to useful learning from other UK jurisdictions and the RoI where education and vocational training are frequently delivered by external statutory providers. NIPS is addressing these issues by its Progressive Regimes and Earned Privileges Scheme (PREPS) Review and by its attempts to engage external partners in the Resettlement Strategy.

5.14 There has been more focus on the development of charitable work than meaningful work in each of the prisons. While some prisoners are more willing to undertake such work, and it to some extent provides opportunities for reparation, it does not enable the skills development that would enhance resettlement prospects.

5.15 Maghaberry managers expended a lot of energy and money on security upgrading to negotiate lunchtime opening of their workshops in October 2006. It is therefore frustrating for them to find evidence of significant underusage of the workshops. During the inspection week average official occupancy of the 120 places was 49%, though anecdotal feedback suggested the actual figure was a lot less. There were several reasons for this:

- Automatic ineligibility of remandees and separated prisoners;
- Security blockages of other prisoners
- Instructors on leave without cover for their functions;
- Many prisoners were unwilling to come:



- “It’s because the food is better in the houses at lunchtime;”
“The work I want (Motor Mechanics) is not done there;”
“There are too many drugs in the workshops;”
“The wages do not justify the effort;”
“If I go back to my cell over lunchtime I can watch TV in peace.”
- Communication breakdowns – officers simply not calling prisoners out to the workshops.

5.16 These reasons are both structural and personal. Structural matters are within the control of prison managers. They should be remedied to some extent by the PREPS Review which is potentially far-reaching, but wider cultural change will be required to achieve meaningful and lasting progress.

5.17 Whilst the regime for separated prisoners expanded in October 2006, the prisoners report it as still being very limited. Their separated status means they cannot partake in many of the activities that are available to the main population. Education, gym and crafts are provided, but in each instance the numbers of participants are restricted on security grounds.

5.18 At its most positive an ex-prisoner reported that he had saved a significant sum earned from work undertaken while in Foyleview, which was very useful in assisting his resettlement after release.

CHAPTER 6:

Greater interaction between staff and prisoners



6.1 Two objectives and five actions were identified. One objective – raising staff awareness – is deemed to be partially achieved; the other – developing the role of personal officers – is deemed not to be achieved.

6.2 Assessed achievement levels in relation to the actions are as follows:

- Fully Achieved – 0
- Partially Achieved – 2
- Not Achieved – 3

Apart from the personal officer role, the other outstanding actions involve resettlement training for “all prison and probation staff.”

6.3 The actions in this area are mainly about meeting Prison Officers’ training needs in relation to resettlement. They are important because staff training has an important role to play in achieving a higher profile for resettlement generally. Magilligan has developed good local resettlement training for prison staff, and has also begun to develop a restorative justice policy.

6.4 Most of NIPS’ centralised training continues to emphasise the security features of the job, though resettlement elements now feature in the new management training for Principal Officers and Senior Officers.

The NIPS training college is also at an advanced stage of developing a workshop focussing on resettlement for officer grades, which is to be delivered in autumn 2007. Each establishment has a tutor, and there is also a Strategic Learning Committee in place with governor representation, which can be expected to enhance the profile of resettlement in time.

6.5 The NIPS Resettlement Audit commented extensively on problems with staffing resettlement teams:

- “The staff outside Resettlement Teams have a limited understanding of how the process works...In Maghaberry and HBW insufficient staffing complements were found to be critical, and is currently relying on the goodwill of staff to keep it on the radar.”
- “The Management Team at all levels redeploy staff from Resettlement Teams when they need extra staff. This has a double negative effect – first it leaves the Resettlement Teams unable to deliver services...Second it delivers a message to the wider prison that resettlement is less important and reinforces the negative views towards these changes in practice.”



- 6.6 Inspectors were told that NIPS has “too many staff in the wrong places” i.e. fulfilling security duties. This has impeded attempts to introduce a personal officer scheme throughout the NIPS estate since 2000. The historical lack of engagement between Prison Officers and prisoners has caused these efforts to falter, while current shift patterns also inhibit continuity of staff-prisoner contact.
- 6.7 NIPS is aware of these problems, and is working to address them through the “Blueprint” human resource strategy. Inspectors were told that this strategy suggests a personal officer scheme is unworkable for the NIPS for a variety of reasons, particularly because it might allow other staff to disengage from prisoners. NIPS does not dispute the value of each individual prisoner having a named member of staff who would take a special interest in their case, and to whom they could turn for advice or support, and aims to introduce a “case management” system whereby every member of staff will be provided with relevant skills and training for all prisoners. Inspectors do not know the details of the case management system, but are concerned that it might not be fully introduced for several years. **We therefore recommend that NIPS recommit to establishing a personal officer scheme or its equivalent for all prisoners, within a meaningful timescale.**
- 6.8 While no formal personal officer scheme operates in any establishment, Inspectors observed several NIPS staff effectively fulfilling the personal officer role (mainly contributing to safer custody, lifer and resettlement team work). It was also encouraging to learn that, of forty prisoners spoken to at HBW the comments about most staff were very positive. In March 2007 the Hydebank Wood Governor received a Butler Trust Achievement Award for his innovative work in breaking down barriers and building mutual respect between staff and young offenders.
- 6.9 The HBW Inspectors commented: “Our overall impression echoed the prisoners’ comments. We found them to be very committed and generally very keen to develop their contribution to the work of the prison. The fact that it is a small, informal friendly place can dilute some of the official and formal managerial requirements that need to be spelled out, including about resettlement. Resettlement is happening, but not stated – it could be done so much better if it were more explicit.”
- 6.10 They suggested that there is an urgent need for some kind of personal officer scheme for every prisoner in HBW: “There is currently no sense in the minds of prisoners that their personal sentences are being managed with a structured beginning, middle and end, or that a resettlement plan exists.
- 6.11 “We gained the impression that many pieces of the resettlement jigsaw already exist in HBW, and these pieces are often of high quality with dedicated staff... What is so obviously missing at present is a systematic way of putting the pieces together so that



they make up a specific resettlement big picture for each prisoner.

Although there are weekly resettlement meetings, prisoners do not attend, and the meetings tend to confuse management processes with delivery processes.” **We therefore recommend that a dedicated Resettlement Team should be established promptly in HBW pending a personal officer system being put in place.**

- 6.12 We make two further related recommendations that apply to both HBW and Maghaberry:
- (i) The governors and their senior management teams should articulate clearly the way in which their establishment contributes to the Northern Ireland Resettlement Strategy;**
 - (ii) They should also articulate the various contributions expected from different groups of staff in the establishment.**

- 6.13 Unlike HBW, most prisoners in the adult estate were less positive about their interaction with staff. Relationships were reported as generally respectful, but distant and reactive. The prisoners were less inclined to focus on resettlement issues than on their court case or the grind and trivia of daily prison life. Ex-prisoners however were more positive on reflection about their time in custody. Two of them commented:
- “The Personal Officer system was meaningless but there were some you could call a friend.” (Maghaberry prisoner).
 - “My Personal Officer (in Foyleview) was dead-on.”

6.14 Whilst several lifers told Inspectors that the Personal Officer Scheme is nominal, the lifer reviews that were observed had good input from uniformed staff in attendance. Even though not designated as “Personal Officers” they clearly knew the prisoners by first name, and were aware of relevant current issues.

6.15 The proposed restorative justice programme has not yet been implemented at each establishment. However, Magilligan has undertaken a pilot project with nine victims so far meeting the prisoners who had offended against them. The project has been carefully managed, with selection of appropriate cases. The experience is described as powerful and rewarding for all victims, prisoners and staff involved. Everyone benefits from this type of innovation and it should be replicated more widely in the next phase of the Resettlement Strategy.



CHAPTER 7:

Promoting healthier and pro-social lifestyles



- 7.1 Three objectives and twelve actions were identified. One objective – maintenance of family links – is deemed to be achieved, the other two – encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide support for personality disordered offenders – are deemed to be partially achieved.
- 7.2 Assessed achievement levels in relation to the actions are as follows:
- Fully Achieved – 6
 - Partially Achieved – 4
 - Not Achieved – 2

The most obvious non-achieved action involved enabling family visits to take place at the family home.

- 7.3 Transfer of lead responsibility for prison healthcare to the Health Service took place in April 2007, when the Eastern Health and Social Services Board began to commission services from local Health and Social Services Trusts on behalf of all three prisons. This is a significant achievement which should improve healthcare for prisoners, though it is expected to take a long time to fully implement, since there are issues such as clinical governance and the status of current healthcare staff to be resolved. **We recommend that NIPS and PBNI in conjunction with appropriate agencies should redraft the healthcare section of**

the Implementation Plan to ensure appropriate targets are set for the new era of prison healthcare provision.

- 7.4 There have been several achievements in terms of promoting healthier and prosocial lifestyles (most of which were not targeted in the Resettlement Implementation Plan). These include:
- Seven Alcohol and Drugs Management Programmes were delivered to 77 prisoners during 2006;
 - The absence of any suicide in HBW during the past 7 years was rightly seen by staff as a good achievement;
 - Wellman Clinics have been established at Magilligan;
 - NIPS has appointed an Addiction Services Manager – this is particularly important given the problems of drugs abuse within prisons;
 - A three year project has been established with the University of Ulster to improve mental health screening upon committal to Maghaberry;
 - Three Cognitive Behaviour Therapists provide weekly sessions at HBW;
 - Smoking cessation programmes have been established in each prison, complemented by nicotine



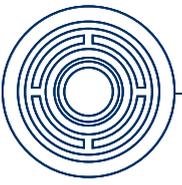
- replacement therapy;
 - Workshops have been delivered by the Dunlewey and Northlands Centres on drugs, stress and anger, coping skills and suicide/self harm and
 - In September 2006, Northern Ireland Prison Service and Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland hosted a conference on Promoting Healthy Prisons.
- 7.5 Several prisoners told Inspectors that they experienced difficulty with changes to their medication after entering prison. They reported particular difficulties in this respect upon transfer to Magilligan because the Magilligan doctors prescribing practices were not consistent with those at Maghaberry. Several were appreciative of the healthcare that they received, reflecting high levels of alcohol and drug abuse when living in the community:
- “I got sorted out physically while in jail.”
- “Jail probably saved my life.”
- “I got a lot out of jail...it settled my head and removed me from the old company...”
- “Being remanded was probably the best thing that ever happened me.”
- “Jail did me good...it got me off the cannabis.”
- 7.6 Maghaberry has taken significant local action in relation to the target to develop vulnerable prisoner programmes. Its multidisciplinary Safer Custody Group was found to be providing good case management of prisoners who were at high risk of harm or difficult to manage because of personality disordered behaviour. Maghaberry’s Risk Assessment and Social Unit (RASU) scheme has helped poor copers, though Inspectors’ observations of RASU again demonstrated the problems of security dominance: during the inspection week there were eight prisoners in the RASU; three of them were barred by Security from working in the Gardens, yet Gardens comprised 60% of the RASU “working week”! On the other hand individual feedback from a released prisoner who had spent his time in the RASU showed how it could work well:
- “I did gardening, yoga, art, craft, English and Maths tests, and the IMB (Independent Monitoring Board) visited regularly to see that I was OK.”
- 7.7 More recently the Reach unit has been under development: 24 prisoners (both remanded and sentenced) will live on a dedicated landing from April 2007, while up to forty others are managed by Reach within the general population. Reach aims to stabilise unsettled or disruptive prisoners before gradually reintegrating them with the main population. It incorporates an Isolated Visitor Scheme and is developing a Family Strategy – which should relate to relevant areas of the Resettlement Strategy - that is intended to be applied across the prison estate.
- 7.8 As with so many initiatives that support resettlement, this is a local development in one establishment rather than an initiative which has a recognised place within the prison estate. Such schemes are at risk if local champions take on other



priorities or are moved elsewhere. Good practice is less likely to extend across the NIPS estate, and there is no strategy for ensuring that eligible prisoners who are held in other prisons (and Inspectors heard from the IMB of such prisoners, sometimes held in the Segregation Units) can be moved to the Reach unit.

Prisoners' Families

- 7.9 This section of the Resettlement Strategy also targets work with prisoners' families. There has been much good work undertaken in this area by each prison, particularly in relation to delivery of parenting programmes and expansion of child centred visits. The Maghaberry Inspectors noted that "We should praise the work of the Family Officers and the role they play in supporting family relationships." They had 1069 family contacts during 2006, providing a range of practical and emotional support: birthday cakes, opportunities for fathers to record stories for their children and family photos, staffing child centred visits, making referrals to parenting and other classes. As reported in previous inspections, there were again many positive comments from prisoners and their families about the NIPS Family Officers. They and others engaged in resettlement show that capacity and willingness are available within the Prison Service. These attributes can be harnessed by awareness raising and training, but are frustrated by redeployment to other duties.
- 7.10 The former Prison Link project has now been transferred entirely to NIACRO and renamed Family Links. It provides a range of practical support (e.g. transport, childminding, benefits advice) for prisoners' families. It is developing well, and has benefited from the secondment of a fulltime Prison Discipline Manager. Family Links is jointly funded by PBNi and the YJA, and is also seeking Social Services support in relation to preventative intervention with the children of prisoners. NIACRO convenes an interagency children of prisoners group to address their unique needs.
- 7.11 Each prison has a Visitor Centre, run by the Quakers or NIACRO. The Visitor Centres and transport are largely funded by NIPS. They provide an excellent service (food and drink, childcare, transport, advice) and have good working relationships with families and with prison staff. There are high levels of annual usage, and a Visitors Centre Forum helps ensure good communication between service providers and the NIPS.



CHAPTER 8:

Supporting women in custody and on release



8.1 Two objectives and seven actions were identified. Both objectives – develop a female resettlement policy, and develop a constructive female regime - are deemed to be partially achieved.

8.2 Assessed achievement levels in relation to the actions are as follows:

- Fully Achieved – 3
- Partially Achieved – 3
- Not Achieved – 1

The outstanding action involves development of video linking to support retention of family links.

8.3 NIPS and its partners have worked hard to develop the regime for women within HBW. A new, self-regulating wing was opened in April 2007 and there are plans for a new reception wing and separate workshops. NIPS has aspirations to build a separate women's facility but have no idea when they will be able to do so. So the position remains that the women are likely to have to stay in a basically unsatisfactory location for the indefinite future. The existence of a women's prison within the perimeter of a male Young Offenders Centre continues to present major challenges for the day to day operation of HBW. Women

prisoners expressed concern that the establishment was dominated by the needs of the young men, and those small number who had previously been imprisoned in Mourne House told Inspectors that it provided a preferable environment.

8.4 Basic aspects of daily prison life such as the women's diet at HBW were criticised. The diet was generally reported as geared towards the tastes of twenty year old males and unsuitable for them. Managers with responsibility for the women prisoners expressed frustration at the male-dominated culture of HBW and felt powerless to achieve even basic changes to issues such as the diet.

8.5 There were other gender-related grievances, such as the women not being allowed to wear shorts or tee shirts in the warmer weather because it led to the young men shouting at them inappropriately. Unlike male prisoners, women cannot work in the central kitchen, nor deliver food within the establishment. While recognising that much has been done to improve the conditions for women prisoners in HBW, it is fundamentally inappropriate that they continue to share a location with young male prisoners and **we again**



recommend relocation of the women prisoners to a dedicated site.

- 8.6 Inspectors spoke with two women ex-prisoners. One woman said she “...relied on other prisoners for support, though...had good relationships with some staff...gym staff were best of all...I got my job back after release...was helped to continue my foundation course via the library in Hydebank.” Another said that “Mourne House was better than Hydebank because the young boys’ misbehaviour affected us. I was helped by Probation, Cruse and Womens Aid.”
- 8.7 The major ongoing issue from this part of the Implementation Plan is for NIPS to develop community-based diversionary programmes in conjunction with PBNI. A substantial amount of work has already been undertaken in this respect, resulting in a detailed Business Plan for a centre that would provide residential accommodation as an alternative to remand in custody, as well as a Day Centre for female offenders. The Business Plan has now been accepted by the NIHE, though this is a major proposal involving several agencies, which is likely to take some time to reach fruition.

Section



Appendices



Appendix 1 Methodology

Six inspectors (2 per prison) spent a week in each of the prisons, and met released prisoners in local Probation facilities and hostels.

A total of 112 serving prisoners and 26 released prisoners were interviewed;

Interviews were conducted with NIPS and PBNI managers and staff, plus key staff from partner agencies;

Resettlement files and Probation files were reviewed;

A range of meetings were observed;

Detailed background reading was undertaken, including review of statistical and policy documentation that was provided by the NIPS and PBNI;

The Prison Inspectorate's "Expectations" document provided the basis for interviews. Expectations requires that resettlement is managed strategically and that all prisoners should have a sentence plan based upon an individual assessment of risk and need, which they are involved in designing and which is regularly reviewed.



Appendix 2 Comparisons

England and Wales

Two recent publications provide useful comparison with the resettlement position in England and Wales:

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons Annual Report for 2005 – 2006 suggests that resettlement work is not good:

“Prisoners continued to undergo a large number of assessments and interviews, but their results were rarely coordinated and followed through consistently during sentence. Plans were drawn up (though not always for those serving short sentences) but no individual was responsible for ensuring that they were followed, or for monitoring progress against targets set. Targets were often not shared with key personnel and sentence plans were not routinely used to inform key decisions about how the prisoner would spend time in custody...Personal Officers were rarely involved in sentence management, and entries in prisoners' history sheets reflected this...Too often, responsibility for meeting planned targets effectively remained with the prisoner.” [P60]

“...Access to relevant and timely interventions and programmes...has been adversely affected by prisoner numbers: some prisons had hundreds of prisoners queuing up for courses they would be unable to take before release...There was underuse of release on temporary licence for resettlement purposes.” [P62]

The report also says that the role of voluntary and community organisations in resettlement was “patchy and long term funding uncertain...nor were these services always well coordinated.” [P61]

Fewer than a quarter of prisoners surveyed felt that they were gaining useful employment skills or drug treatment, and only around one third felt that their education would be useful on release;

Only 30% of men in local prisons felt that they had done anything during their sentence which would make them less likely to reoffend. However two thirds of those in training prisons, and over half of young adults, did believe that they had done something that would make them less likely to offend in the future.

There were more negative than positive assessments in women's prisons, although women prisoners' relationships with staff were good, and women were also more likely to say that they knew where to go for help with resettlement issues even if, in practice that help was assessed as insufficient.

The group of adult prisons with the most positive balance of assessments were open/resettlement prisons, where 95% of prisoners believed that they had done something there which would make them less likely to reoffend.



“What works in Resettlement – Findings from seven Pathfinders for short term prisoners in England and Wales” (Lewis et al in Criminology and Criminal Justice Vol 7 No 1 Feb 2007).

This is an evaluation of Phase One of seven projects focussing on the needs of adults sentenced to prison for 12 months or less, who were currently not subject to post-release supervision. This evaluation also shows that it has been difficult to make progress in resettlement:

“The programmes were hampered by implementation problems particularly in relation to development, staffing and management...Staffing problems were an ongoing hindrance...” [P38]

Some teams “...regularly lost actual and potential participants who were transferred to other prisons because of overcrowding...some projects encountered a culture of resistance and obstruction among prison staff...project participants were often unable to access prison-based provisions due to long waiting lists and the limited time that they spent in custody...gaps in provision and long waiting lists existed.” [P39]

“All the projects struggled to meet their target number of participants...due to staff shortages, a lack of eligible prisoners, and the transfer of short term prisoners...The gap between the total of prisoners with case records opened (1,081) and the original target numbers (2,500) gives some indication of the extent of the problem.” [P39]

Scotland

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) operates in the context of a burgeoning population (7,324 on 13th March 2007) and high levels of investment in capital build, which includes some private contract provision. It manages its 14 public sector prisons by internal contracts. These contracts require measurement of resettlement activity including risk and needs assessments undertaken, programme completions, vocational and employment-related qualifications achieved and accommodation secured for release. The SPS are able to show clear progress in resettlement since the internal contractual process commenced in 2003. A particularly useful target is completion of an annual survey of prisoner perceptions which covers a wide range of issues.

The SPS reports that the routine presence of external statutory agencies in most establishments is of key importance in delivering their resettlement targets. Benefits and housing providers visit most prisons each week. This ensures that prisoners and their families maintain connection with essential services. It also helps to avoid benefit fraud and ensure that families' claims are quickly processed to deal with their new circumstances.

The capital build process underway within the SPS incorporates Links Centres which are similar to Magilligans PDU. These are jointly-staffed by Prison Officers, statutory housing and advice workers and VCS partners, where offending behaviour and personal development programmes are delivered. There is a fledgling restorative practices approach in some



establishments, and as in Northern Ireland the range of programmes delivered reflects a mixture of prisoner need, available funding and staff commitment.

Republic of Ireland

Feedback from the Irish Prison Service suggests that “There is no current strategic focus on resettlement. Prison Officers are not directly involved in resettlement work, though they do make referrals to the Probation Service and other agencies. Whilst some prisoners are referred onto accommodation, training and education programmes, it is very much hit and miss. A lot of work and resources would need to be put in place to develop a proper and adequate service.”



Appendix 3 Definitions

Resettlement: “A systematic and evidence based process by which actions are taken to work with the prisoner in custody and on release...It encompasses the totality of work with prisoners, their families and significant others in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations.”

Resettlement Performance Standard: “All prisoners will have the opportunity to maintain and develop appropriate community ties and to prepare for their release. Provision by the Prison Service in collaboration with the PBNI will be targeted on the basis of an assessment of risks and needs and directed towards reducing the risk of reoffending and risk of harm.”

There are two exceptions to the Standard: civil prisoners and prisoners subject to a whole life tariff (there is only one such prisoner in Northern Ireland).

“Short Term Prisoner” A prisoner who is serving less than four years







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