

Evaluation of Kairos WWT Prison In-reach and Post-release Floating Support Service for women





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INTRODUCTION

This report presents key findings of an evaluation of the Prison In-reach and Floating Support project delivered by Kairos WWT. The evaluation was carried out alongside the project delivery over a three-year period, between June 2015 and March 2018. The report details the evaluation framework, including the methodology, an overview of research participants and presents key themes within the data collected, concluding with reflections and recommendations.

The purpose was to provide an independent evaluation of Kairos WWT Prison In-reach project at HMP Peterborough and Floating Support Service in the community (Coventry). The Prison In-reach service involves a dedicated member of Kairos' staff making monthly visits to HMP Peterborough, meeting with female prisoners with a link to Coventry (pre or post sentence) and a history of/or vulnerability to sex working. On release support is provided by Kairos Floating Support Service, offering a brokering service for mainstream

agencies, providing a member of staff to advocate on behalf of the women. This service aims to enable service-users to access health care (physical, mental and sexual), welfare agencies, housing agencies, substance misuse services, legal advice and provisions for furthering education and training. The evaluation evidences the work of this service that provides a link from prison to the community.

The aim of the evaluation was to:

- Examine the process by which the intervention is provided (including partnership working and training needs).
- Explore service users' (women's) experiences of engaging with the support provided by the prison in-reach project.
- Identify the potential benefits associated with an intervention in a prison setting (and beyond) for service users, for prison staff, for HMP Peterborough, and other stakeholders

- Identify potential challenges to the provision of the Prison In-reach intervention in a prison setting for service users, for prison staff, for HMP Peterborough, and other stakeholders
- Explore potential frameworks to evaluate service users experience, e.g. readiness for desistance, recovery
- Capture the perceptions of significant others/family on service users engagement with the intervention
- Consider the need for future provision of a prison in-reach intervention with this client group
- Evaluate the benefits of linking the Prison In-reach service with the Post-prison Floating Support Service

Kairos WWT

Kairos WWT was established in April 1999 to reach out to a group of women that were perceived to be marginalised and vulnerable, sex working in the city of Coventry. There was a clear need for a dedicated charitable project that could build relationships with women, broker provision of mainstream services from whom women were often disengaged and address the complex issues relating to sex work. The vision of Kairos WWT is for a world free from the exploitation of women. Their stated purpose is to increase the life-chances, choices and wellbeing of women caught up in prostitution, affected by or at risk of sexual exploitation in Coventry. The mission of the organisation is as follows: To support and collaborate with women, focusing on three areas:

- Safety: minimising harm for those most at risk
- Stability: addressing individual needs and barriers (such as housing, healthcare, substance misuse interventions)
- Self-belief: supporting women to develop skills and the confidence to make their *own* choices for the future
- As part of this work a Prison In-reach and Post-release Floating Support Service was developed (rationale discussed later). The stated aim of this service (the service under evaluation) is to offer:
 - Monthly 1-1 meetings in prison
 - Advocacy to help with resolving issues in the outside world
 - A Pen pal service and newsletter
 - Release day support – meeting and taking to critical appointments
 - Links to Kairos' Floating Support Service and other services offered

Within the prison setting the Project Worker supports service users to resolve issues affecting them from outside of prison (dealing with incoming post, contacting solicitors, housing, probation, family contact), advocates for needs that are unresolved within prison (health needs, including mental health and bereavement counselling), and develops an action plan for release (including travel arrangements on release, housing, benefits, family contact, drug and alcohol treatment, meaningful occupation of time). Having introduced the vision and aims of Kairos and the prison-in reach service the following section situates the provision within the wider evidence of women and prison and the needs of sex working women.

Section 1: Background and context literature review

What does research tell us about women and prison?

This section introduces key themes within existing research and policy in the UK in order to provide a context for the evaluation findings and recommendations. Beginning with a discussion of the female prison population prevalence, provision and types of offences. The review then moves on to discuss often associated complex experiences and needs of women offenders, before specifically focusing on the client group of women sex workers. It is recognised that given the complexity of women's lives prison may not be the most appropriate response to offending and community based support can offer an alternative. This influenced the development of the Transforming Rehabilitation Programme, which at the time of the evaluation formed the backdrop to the work of Kairos and the experiences of all involved in the evaluation.

In the UK, women represent around 5% of the overall prison population and in 2017 8,474 women were sent to prison;

- (Prison Reform Trust 2018). Since 1993 the number of women sent to prison has doubled, 2,400 more than in 1993. Between 2007 and 2017 community sentences for women halved. Most women entering prison under sentence (83%) have committed a non-violent offence. It is widely acknowledged, across the UK and internationally, that women are often incarcerated for minor offences.
- There are 12 women prisons in England; two of these are privately run (HMP Peterborough and HMP Bronzefield, both run by Sodexo). Male and female prisons adhere to the same rules and regulations, however all women's prisons are required to comply with standards (Prison Service Order 4800) which are gender specific for working with female offenders.
- Women in prison are found to have below average health status compared with the general population, the following major health issues have been identified: specific health problems affected by incarceration, mental health needs, routine health promotion and maintenance, recovery from substance abuse as a major health concern, and social and environmental barriers to care (Colbert et al., 2013).
- Although women account for around 5% of the prison population, they represent over 25% of self-harm incidents, "an indication of the traumatic impact of imprisonment on many." (Prison Reform Trust, 2016).
- It is commonly acknowledged that women offenders are also likely to be 'victims', referring to their own past and current experiences of injustice. "For example, 53% of incarcerated women report having experienced emotional, or sexual abuse as a child." (Prison Reform Trust, 2016). The numerous complexities associated with women offenders, detailed later in the review, have prompted longstanding calls for reducing women's imprisonment, whilst there has been progress, further efforts are needed to improve outcomes for women in the criminal justice system (Prison Reform Trust, 2016).
- In 2007, Baroness Corston produced a review of women in the criminal justice system which called for radical changes to the existing system (Home Office 2007). Corston argued for the criminal justice system to adopt a holistic, woman-centred approach, sensitive to the complex needs of most women offenders (Home Office 2007). Corston recommended appropriate punishment in the community for low risk, non-violent women offenders and the abolition of large prisons in favour of small geographically dispersed custodial units (Home Office 2007).
- "Dysfunctional interpersonal relationships are highlighted as an important dynamic risk factor for reoffending in women. However, quantitative research in this area is scarce and findings inconsistent [; this has important implications for appropriate risk assessment of women. [...] Findings [of a systematic review of 8 studies] were inconsistent but suggested that relational factors may be relevant to reoffending in women in interaction with other complex factors. [...] The findings highlighted the need for research exploring the interaction and mediating effects of various factors, including relationships, on women's reoffending, and the psychological processes involved." (Kreis et al., 2014).
- Keaveny's (1999) studied identified relationships between life events, coping resources and wellbeing for women sentenced to prison, with positive correlation between the number of life events and life change units and depression and anxiety.
- Some studies have recognised the importance of peer mentoring, the need for therapeutic environments and relationships. Kreis et al (2016)

- looked at the importance of relationships in women's substance misuse and offending; they inform that "[d]ysfunctional relationships are highlighted as a potential mediator between women's substance misuse and offending, but few studies have explored how." (35).
- The impact of imprisonment on women, more than half of whom have themselves been victims of serious crime, is especially damaging and their outcomes are worse than men's.
- Most women have neither a home nor a job to go to on release.
- "Women are much more likely to be primary carers, with children far more directly affected by a prison sentence as a result."
- "In England and Wales, there are now around 3,900 women in prison at any one time, but around 9,000 women a year are received into prison for the first time, either on remand or under sentence" ?
- 8,562 women were sent to prison in the year June 2016, either on remand or to serve a sentence. 84% of sentenced women entering prison had committed a non-violent offence (compared to 76% of men).
- More women are sent to prison to serve a sentence for theft than for violence against the person, robbery, sexual offences, fraud, drugs, and motoring offences combined. In 2015, 80% of female theft offences were for shoplifting.
- However, encouragingly, the number of women in prison serving a sentence for theft and handling offences decreased by 9% in the 12 months to June 2016.
- Women's offending is more likely than men's to be prompted by their relationships. Nearly half of women in prison (48%) questioned for the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey reported having committed offences to support someone else's drug use compared to 22% of men.
- A Cabinet Office study found that 28% of women's crimes were financially motivated compared to 20% of men's. Earlier research on mothers in custody found that 38% attributed their offending to 'a need to support their children', single mothers being more likely to cite a lack of money as the cause of their offending than those who were married.
- Women are more likely than men to be in prison under sentence for a first offence. Sentenced women (22%) were nearly twice as likely as men (12%) to have no previous convictions or cautions.
- It is important to note that while many women

appear in Court following arrest and charge, a great many more women are prosecuted for non-criminal offences. This includes TV licence evasion, welfare fraud, fare evasion and sanctions relating to the non-attendance of children at school. Because these cases are not dealt with by the police there is no option to use an out of court disposal.

- TV licence evasion accounted for 36% of all prosecutions for women, but only 6% for men. In 2015, 70% of all the 189,349 defendants prosecuted for this offence were women.
- 45% of women entering prison in 2015 did so on remand. Less than half of women remanded and subsequently found guilty are given a prison sentence (71% of those remanded in the magistrates' courts and 41% of those remanded by the Crown Courts did not receive a custodial sentence).
- Women are much more likely than men to be serving short sentences. In the year to June 2016, 63% of sentenced women entering prison were serving six months or less compared to 47% of men. In 1993 only a third of women were given these very short sentences.
- The number of women entering prison on short sentences (6 months or less) rose by 6% last year, whilst the number of women sentenced between 6 and 12 months decreased by 16% between the first quarter of 2015 and the same period in 2016.
- Women in prison have often been victims of much more serious offences than the ones they are accused of committing. More than half (53%) report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child compared to 27% of men. 57% of women report having been victims of domestic violence. Because many women fear disclosing abuse, both figures are likely to be an underestimate.
- Women can become trapped in a vicious cycle of victimisation and criminal activity. Their situation is often worsened by poverty, substance dependency or poor mental health. Leaving an abusive relationship can be risky - the period when a woman is planning or making her exit is often the most dangerous for her and her children. 31% of women in prison spent time in care as children compared with 24% of men.
- Women (49%) are more likely than men (29%) to report needing help with a drug problem on entry to prison. 24%? Women prisoners are also more likely than men to associate drug use with their offending.
- Women are nearly twice as likely as men in prison to be identified as suffering from depression (65%



- compared to 37%), and more than three times as likely as women in the general population (19%). Almost a third (30%) of women in custody had a psychiatric admission prior to entering prison. 46% of women prisoner's report having attempted suicide at some point in their lives. This is twice the rate of male prisoners (21%) and more than seven times higher than the general population (6%).
- Alcohol is a significant factor in women's offending. 59% of women prisoners who drank alcohol to excess four weeks before custody felt they had a problem with alcohol, 52% thought their drinking was out of control and 41% criminal justice system, amongst other groups.' (Howard League 2016:1).
- For McLean et al (2006), the importance of pre-release planning and continuity of care for women offenders is important. 'Interventions should emphasise access to housing, economic opportunity and family reunification.' (McLean et al 2006: 382). Furthermore, they suggest that special attention should be warranted to those who have engaged in sex work, as they may be marginalised from service based support and family networks.
- Most of the solutions to women's offending lie in improved access to community based support services, including women's centres. These enable women to address underlying problems which may lead to offending but which the criminal justice system cannot solve. (Women's centres are specialist community 'one stop shops' which provide services for women, some of whom are involved with or at risk of involvement with the criminal justice system).

What do we know about women, sex work and prison?

- In terms of women offenders involved in sex working, "21% of women in one prison said they had been involved in prostitution, most linking it to drug addiction (74%) and over a quarter (26%) to having been abused." (Prison Reform Trust, 2014). Whilst these are findings from one prison, the link between offending, prostitution, drug use, and being victims of abuse is commonly recognised.
- The offender-victim dialogue is apparent within some studies; whilst it is important to recognise that women offenders have often been victims of abuse themselves, the 'victim' narrative has been challenged by others. In Gilfus' (1993) study, women, through their own narratives, described themselves as progressing from victims to survivors (rather than offenders); the framework employed highlights that "the best available options for escape from physical and sexual violence are often survival strategies which are criminal." (63). Lister (2001), cited in Sanders (2009), states "there is a need to challenge the construction of women as only passive victims but to understand their capacity and limitations in their structural position and cope with institutional constraints (522). All this takes place within a society, according to Sanders (2009) that has paradoxical, ironic and adverse effects of the very people it is trying to help [where the] emphasis ... is on self-governance—individuals must take control of their own behaviour, the conditions in which they find themselves, and indeed the risks they expose

- themselves to." (Sanders, 2009: 521). Furthermore, Gilfu (1993) asserts that "[w]omen's responses to victimization and women's relational identities are seen as factors which both motivate and restrain women's criminal activities." (63).
- Gatrell (2010) recognizes that treating sex-workers as "victims" could further jeopardize their social position.
- It is argued that there is strong evidence to suggest that the conditional welfare services given through the entanglement of the welfare and criminal justice systems play a pivotal role in maintaining marginal lifestyles and a cycle of entrapment into social exclusion. These wider issues of the marginalisation of women who are assumed to be 'deviant' and 'disordered' are connected to broader changes in the West that criminalise and oppress citizens who are outside of mainstream society. (McNaughton and Saunders, 2007).
- Discussions around women offenders sometimes centre on comparisons to men, as most criminal justice system related rhetoric is informed by the majority of offenders – men (95% of prison population). McNaughton and Saunders (2007) indicate that it is common for women to experience a 'yo-yo' effect of being in and out of negative situations, in an ongoing fashion. In this vein, Firmin et al (2013?) report that women prostitutes depict themselves as having a lifestyle addiction, including addiction to lifestyle elements that accompany prostitution behaviours. Participants in the study felt that freedom, and to overcome their lifestyle addiction, would require social service assistance. However, although the women prostitutes "repeatedly and consistently used the term "addiction" when describing their lifestyles, they did not meet the DSM-IV-TR criteria for addiction. Rather, they shared many of the same psychological constructs as do addicts (e.g., feeling trapped, desiring escape, needing help to change), but they did not meet medical criteria for addictive dependence (e.g., tolerance or withdrawal)." (231).
- A wide body of literature focuses on the health aspects of incarcerated sex working women (e.g. see Parvez et al., 2013), however the scope of this review and study is much broader than health needs. A large body of literature focuses on the health aspects of women offenders engaged in prostitution, specifically STI and HIV and drug and alcohol use, and the associated risks and complexities. Research shows that incarcerated women have a high degree of comorbid psychopathology (the presence of more than one disorder), including the following: substance

dependence (drugs/alcohol), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), and major depression. Furthermore, they are more likely to have had traumatic experiences (including early physical and sexual abuse) compared to male peers (Lewis, 2006).

- These issues are also apparent with street prostitutes [in the context of them being a small minority of sex workers], as Oselin (2014) inform "they have the highest rates of physical and sexual abuse, arrest and incarceration, drug addiction, and stigmatization." (36).
- However, there are critiques centring on the over reliance of pharmaceutical medicalisation, and not enough psycho-social services, thus calling for non-medicalised interventions (e.g. more, and better access to counselling services). For example, aspects such as stress, anxiety and depression have been highlighted as needing attention. cdhWithin the literature therefore, there appears to be recognition of the medicalised approaches and the non-medicalised approaches towards women offenders (and prostitutes). For Plugge et al., (2014), a key finding was how being on probation was highly stressful and probationers saw this as their main health concern.

The ever-changing context of UK criminal justice

The evaluation was commissioned and carried out at a time when the UK criminal justice system was going through a period of significant change. Transforming Rehabilitation programme, launched February 2015, was based on Transforming Rehabilitation: a strategy for reform, launched in May 2013. The National Probation Service is responsible for the management of high risk offenders on release and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC's) came into effect in June 2015 and are responsible for the management of low and medium risk offenders and short sentence offenders (less than 12 months). The introduction of Transforming Rehabilitation reforms claimed:

Transforming Rehabilitation will help to ensure that all of those sentenced to prison or community sentences are properly punished while being supported to turn their backs on crime for good (MoJ 2013)

TR proposed significant changes in the leadership and ownership of probation services, advocated the need for a new range of ‘rehabilitation activity and major reorganisation of the prison estate with the introduction of ‘resettlement prisons’, where people will be transferred to an establishment near to their home address for (at least) the last three months of their sentence. Alongside this, it represents a concerted attempt to provide rehabilitation and ‘through the gate’ resettlement services under the remit of CRCs and the NPS (Clink, August 2015). Transforming Rehabilitation outlines a strategy for reform of the Criminal Justice System, suggesting that there is a key role for partnership working between Criminal Justice System and third sector organisations in transforming lives of those who come to the attention of the criminal justice system.

- ‘In 2013/2014 there was £3.78m funding provided by the National Offender Management Service which was designated for community services for women. The funds were made available through Probation Trust contracts. The National Offender Management Service have confirmed this now forms part of the Community Rehabilitation Company funding; services for women are no longer separately identified. This means the funding of provision for women who offend is no longer ring-fenced, and hence is now discretionary and dependent upon local commissioning arrangements by Community Rehabilitation Companies, together with specific provision funded by other partners, such as local authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners. There are no contractual penalties for those who do not fund bespoke services for women.’ (HM Inspectorate of Probation 2016b: 7).
- “The NPS advises courts on sentencing all offenders and manages the 20% of offenders in the community presenting higher risks of serious harm or with prior history of domestic violence and sexual offences. CRCs supervise the 80% of offenders presenting low and medium risk of harm.” (National Audit Office 2017: 31).
- Crucially, for the purposes of this evaluation, “Following the introduction of the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014, offender supervision has been extended to offenders with prison sentences under 12 months. Around 45,000 short-sentence offenders, for whom reoffending rates are relatively high, are now covered by probation services.” (National Audit Office 2017: 34)
- In an initiative known as ‘Through the Gate’, probation services must provide offenders with resettlement services while they are still in prison, in anticipation of their release. HMPPS is reorganising the prison estate with the aim of holding offenders

closer to home, to provide some continuity in probation before and after release. However, in October 2016 HM Inspector of Probation found that more than two-thirds of offenders released from prison had not received enough help pre-release in relation to accommodation, employment or finances. (National Audit Office 2017: 34).

- ‘NOMS chose to devolve commissioning of women’s services to Probation Trusts. There was no requirement to keep funding the WDF projects or to maintain the integrity of the holistic woman centred approach. A number of projects had their funding cut, some of those new to the CJS folded and others struggled with requirements from Trusts to extend their reach to cover an entire probation area.’ (Hogarth 2017: 6).

- The more immediate demands of implementing the Transforming Rehabilitation programme appear to have diverted attention from the development of practice and services for women who offend. (HM Inspectorate of Probation 2016b: 8).

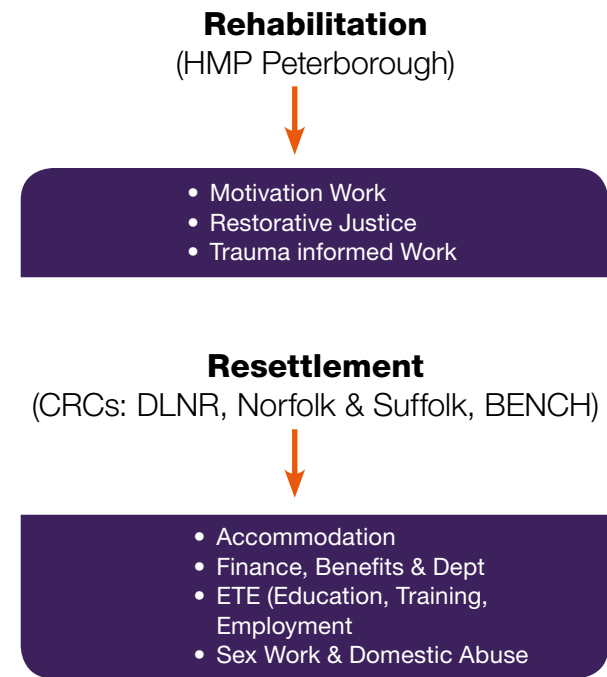
It is also important to note that, the above changes are taking place at a time in which organisations are operating within a context of austerity and retrenchment of resources, which has increased the challenges for all services (statutory, voluntary, private) of delivering and raised some crucial questions.

Prison In-reach setting: HMP Peterborough

The evaluation was designed to be a close fit to the National Offender Management Service priority around reducing re-offending. Kairos use an Outcomes star to capture data and are able to report on rates of re-offending and other key positive outcomes related to the intervention. Kairos in their practice identified a pattern of repeat offending and links to sex work in women recently released from prison. Particularly those serving short sentences are often released to no support or unstable accommodation, leaving them vulnerable to sex work, deprivation and addiction. Kairos prison in-reach project is an early intervention project which works with women in prison, on release and offers continuing support to resolve a range of issues. The evaluation aimed to map links between this intervention and Pathways 8 and 9 (Abuse and Prostitution) within HMP Peterborough to ensure that the findings are of value to HMP Peterborough’s development in this area (see below for change to policy and practice).

During 2015, within the course of the evaluation, HMP Peterborough lost their contract for Resettlement services. The work within HMP Peterborough that used

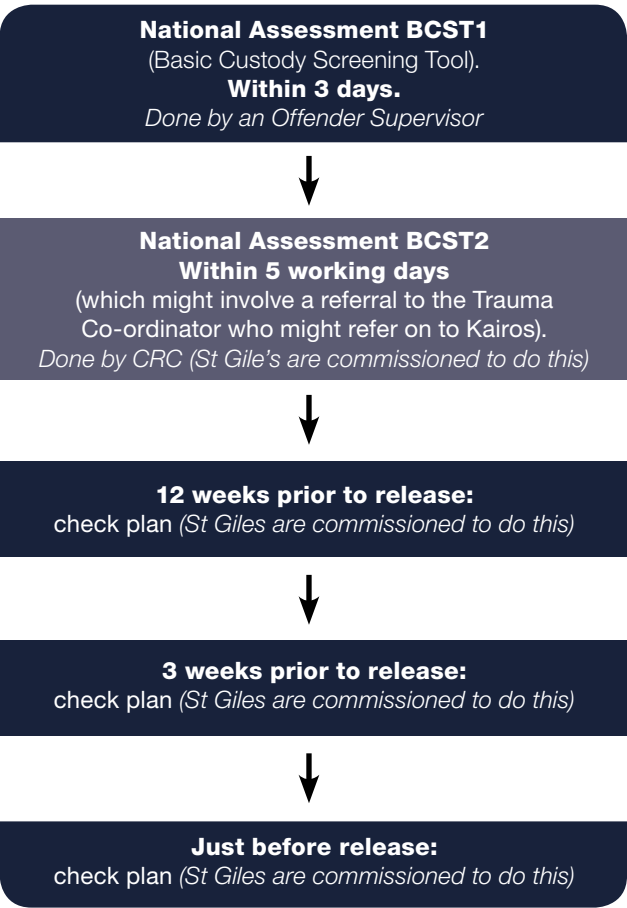
to be managed under the term ‘Resettlement’ became divided into two streams: Rehabilitation and Resettlement



The team wished to ask what these changes in delivery meant for the evaluation, for Kairos and importantly for the women service users.

A further challenge arose with the closure of HMP Holloway. HMP Peterborough took on the work of the Essex courts. With a growing remand population, HMP Peterborough had to move women on as they had issues with capacity within the prison. One third of the prison population at HMP Peterborough have been sentenced to less than three weeks in prison. This increased, largely due to incidences of re-call to prison. There are a number of reasons why prisoners may be moved from Peterborough to another prison. They may be eligible for open conditions (Peterborough is a closed prison), it might be perceived that they would benefit from an intervention that another prison can offer or another prison may be nearer to their home.

Assessment Process with HMP Peterborough:



Summary

Existing research draws attention to the complexity of the lives of women who are found in the prison population. A number have past experiences of abuse, domestic violence, mental and physical health issues, substance misuse and homelessness. Changes in the criminal justice system have impacted on women, they often receive short sentences which has implication for measures aiming to address any underlying issues which may make re-offending more likely. It is known that responses to offending women are most effective when they are holistic, well co-ordinated and addressing need on multiple levels. It is therefore important to know what Kairos’ prison in reach project is able to offer to women and to other stakeholders.



Section 2: Research design and methodology

This section details the research design and methodological approach which was undertaken. The evaluation team adopted a quantitative and qualitative framework, to capture a breadth of experience and views. A number of methods were utilised, including: semi-structured interviews, reflective diaries, a short survey containing closed and open ended questions and existing case study data. Conducting the study over a 32 month period and adopting an action research model allowed for preliminary findings to be shared with Kairos WWT.

“ We set out to capture service user journeys through their interaction with Kairos in the prison setting through to their relationship with the organisation post release. As it was important to also pay attention to factors inside and outside of the prison setting, we aimed to include several stakeholder views, e.g. other organisations, Kairos team, prison staff, to evaluate the process of delivering the project and the outcomes for all stakeholders. ”

The prison in-reach service was originally linked to one prison, HMP Peterborough (in recent months the Key Worker has more frequently visited women in other prisons, namely Drake Hall and Foston Hall, the implications of this will be discussed later). Women from the Coventry area have traditionally been sent to Peterborough to fulfil their sentence; other women who wish to move to the Coventry area post release are also offered support.

- The typical categories of women accessing the Prison In-reach project are:
- Existing Kairos Service Users
 - New referrals
 - Women with short sentences
 - Women with long sentences
- This variation of existing contact with Kairos WWT, length of time in prison and different pathways to the service was considered in designing the methods of data collection. For example, a high proportion of women offenders were serving short sentences which meant their stay in prison was brief, so it would be less possible for the evaluation team to speak to them whilst in prison. Ethical approval to carry out the research was gained from Coventry University. Approval was also sought from the Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Services (NOMS). HMP Peterborough Vetting procedure was also required, which took some time to obtain. Consideration was given to consent always being informed, the confidentiality of responses and procedures for secure data storage. All researchers had DBS clearance and had been security checked by two other prisons for male offenders.
- The starting point for the evaluation was to collate data already collected by Kairos. The team collected baseline data, including monitoring data and outcome measures, statistics regarding numbers of women Kairos have worked with and numbers achieving transition outcomes, including defining a ‘successful’ outcome. Baseline data around the following was collected:
- Motivation of participants engaging with the project
 - Demographic information of participants, including age, ethnicity,
 - Initial expectations about the prison in-reach initiative
 - Initial aspiration about prison in-reach initiative
- The data Kairos collect when meeting with women in the community was shared with the research team in an anonymised format. Kairos and the research team worked together to ensure data was being captured, recorded and exported effectively, in a way that was compatible.
- Over the duration of the evaluation Kairos provided a range of support to a total of 33 women on their in-reach prison project. The tables below provide some insight about the characteristics of the women they supported:



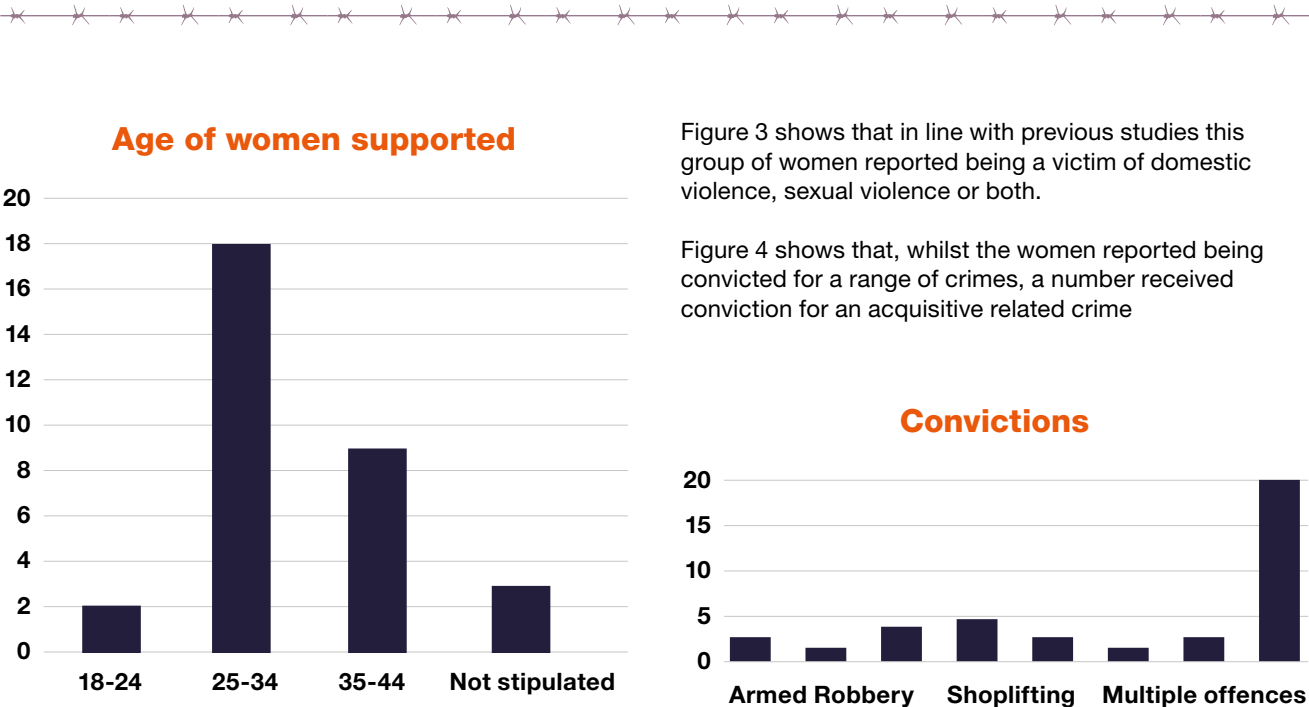


Figure 1

Women accessing the prison in reach service were aged between 18-44 years old. The majority aged between 25 and 44 years of age

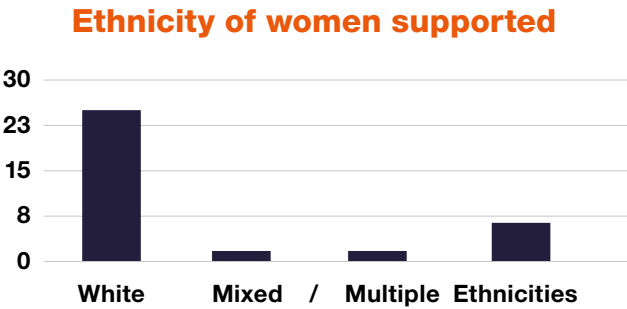


Figure 2

The majority of the women identified as white British. Only 2 women identified as Black and Minority Ethnic.

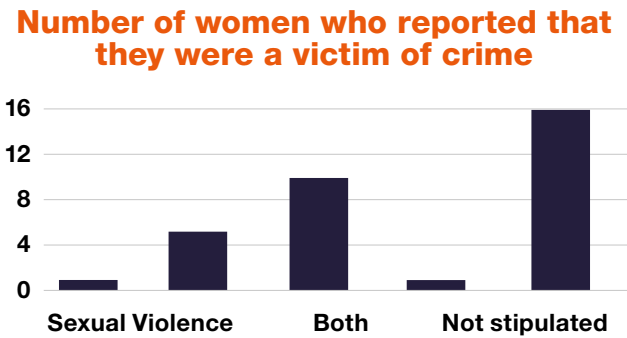


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows that in line with previous studies this group of women reported being a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence or both.

Figure 4 shows that, whilst the women reported being convicted for a range of crimes, a number received conviction for an acquisitive related crime



Figure 4

Whilst the majority of women had a relatively short sentence, sentences ranged from two weeks to four years. Hence, our analysis of the characteristics of the women supported by Kairos, reaffirms a number of the trends associated with women who come to the attention of the criminal justice system as detailed in the previous section.

Within prison –

It was proposed that a member of the research team would attend Kairos’ monthly visit to HMP Peterborough and observe the practice of the Key Worker. Data would also be gathered from the women service-users. The purpose of participant observation was to gain insight to the prison in-reach service within the prison setting and to capture first hand participants’ views, behaviour and interactions. Ideally the team wished to capture the journey of individual women service users, over a period of time (where possible), rather than in a one-off interaction.

During lengthy negotiations with the prison to be able to gain access it was decided that the Key Worker could encourage women to complete a short survey, so that some data was being captured for the evaluation. The survey (WEMWBS) was designed to be a consistent approach, not dependent on the length of sentence and suitable in the absence of face to face contact with the evaluation team. Whilst a small number of surveys were received many items were incomplete, this has limited the data that can be drawn on in this report.

The evaluation team made a number of unsuccessful attempts to gain access to the prison to shadow the work of Kairos, this did not happen during the period of NOMS approval.

Post-release –

Semi-structured interviews post-release were carried out, capturing women’s experience of support from Kairos within prison and in the community. Qualitative methods were best suited to establish whether support from Kairos may have ameliorated negative impact on their living circumstances, dependent children, contact with services, anxiety and distress, amongst other issues.

In both years a wider range of services were invited by email to take part in the evaluation, and followed up, pressure on services may have meant that these interviews did not take priority.

Kairos’ project staff participants

The period of the evaluation saw the role of manager change hands.

Two managers were interviewed (one in Year 1 and one in Year 2).

The post of prison in-reach project worker was held by 4 different staff during the evaluation, 2 staff left post and 1 commenced maternity leave.

Four project workers participated (3 interviews plus reflective diary entries, 1 reflective diary entry only).

The implications of staff fluctuation and the challenges for a small, voluntary sector charity of the constraints of funding will be discussed in a later section.

Evaluation Participants

Women service user participants

4 women service users took part in face to face interviews. 5 women completed the short survey whilst in prison. Case studies of one to one work with women were also included. The number of interviews undertaken was not extensive, for a range of reasons relating to working with women experiencing such complex circumstances, so direct data from service users is limited. As referred to above, this has been supplemented with case study data collected by Kairos and annual monitoring data. Inability to gain access to shadow Kairos’ in-prison work limited the collection of direct data from women in prison and prison staff.

Stakeholder participants

Year 1 –

5 stakeholder agencies were interviewed about their relationship with Kairos. These agencies were: police, probation, drug and alcohol recovery service, specified activity service for women, and volunteer with a health remit. This process of interviewing key stakeholders was repeated in Year 2, with a particular focus on capturing any changes in partnership working and the wider context which may have taken place during the time period in question.

Year 2 –

4 stakeholder agencies were interviewed. These agencies were: a sex worker support service; drug and alcohol recovery services; volunteer with a health remit; sexual violence support service.



Section 3: Key Findings

In this section we present key findings based on monitoring data, interview data, case studies, supplemented by survey data and reflective diaries. This mixed approach to data collection was designed to capture a range of views and experiences. Following the presentation of Kairos' monitoring data findings will be presented thematically.

Kairos monitoring data, reported to the funder annually, provided useful insight to the numbers who had engaged with the Prison In-reach and Floating Support Service, the means of engagement and known about outcomes.

Year 1 (2015-2016)

The Prison In-reach Service was accessed by **17 service-users** with 16 engaging with the service and 1 woman being referred to other services.

Of the 16 service-users engaging with the Prison In-reach service **13** were released from HMP Peterborough and **10** of those women did not re-offend post release (for 3 service-users this was over 6 months, **for 4 service-users was 3-4 months, for 3 service-users was 1-2 months**).

Time spent in HMP Peterborough included **39%** for non-violent offences (theft) **38%** for minor violent offences (common assault, criminal damage)

15% for burglary/possession and

8% for aggravated robbery.

For **75%** of the service-users engaged with Kairos service, **75%** had served previous custodial sentences, with 3 service-users with a record of over 20 convictions.

12 visits were made to HMP Peterborough's Female Link to meet with individual service-users on a 1-1 basis.

Year 2 (2016-2017)

Kairos re-structured the Prison In reach project during year 2 to better reflect the breadth of support being offered to women affected by the Criminal Justice System. **The Project became 'Roots Out', offering three distinct** but joined up phases of support:

- Prison In reach (face to face contact, telephone calls, emails and letters) whilst on remand of serving custodial sentences)
- Release Support (two weeks of intensive support to assist with a successful resettlement)
- Floating Support on License (practical support for as long as service-users are on license to reduce re-offending and increase successful resettlement).

14 women engaged with Roots Out Project with 12 serving custodial sentences in HMP Peterborough or HMP Drakehall (and two being supported in the community). Of the 12 service-users that engaged with the Prison In-reach service, 9 were released during the 12 months and of those 9, 7 service-users accessed Release Support. Of those 7 women who were supported immediately on release, 3 continued to access Floating Support.

Of the 14 women receiving support from the Roots Out Project, 5 of a possible 11 did not re-offend within a 6 month period. 10 visits were made to HMP Peterborough to meet with individual service users on a 1-1 basis. (Visits were not possible during April and May 2016 due to problems with vetting processes at the prison.)

Year 3 (2017-2018)

20 women benefited overall; 16 women were visited in prison on at least one occasion. For 2 women this was the only visit they received during their time in prison. Their sentence lengths ranged from over a year to just a few weeks, offences were in the majority non-violent crimes such as theft or burglary, often related to the women's drug habits.

8 different visits to HMP Peterborough Female Link were made during the year, to meet with women on a one-to-one basis. During these visits, the Project Worker registered new service users, assessed needs, explored and took instruction on advocacy needs, as well as made plans for support needed upon release. On 2 occasions Kairos were only informed that the service user would be released the following day or in a few days by the service user themselves.

Reducing pattern of offending: of the 8 women released in the last 6 months, 5 had not re-offended since their release from prison. The other 3 had all continued to engage with Kairos' one-to-one Floating

Support work whilst being in/out of prison or returning to court, and are aware of our services and availability of support. 75% of service users engaged with probation either pre or post-time in prison or court appearances. In 50% of these cases the support required significant amount of input from Kairos project workers, to accompany service users to appointments, remind them of dates and liaise with probation officers and advocate on service users' behalf.

3 different service users were accompanied at court appearances, including the project worker having to stand up and speak in one of those cases. For 2 women, Kairos support was taken into account in preventing the women from going to prison; 1 was given a suspended sentence, 1 a probation order. For the other woman the court appearances were monthly as part of drug rehabilitation requirement (DRR) and as well as submitting clean drug tests, continued work with Kairos was part of this engagement order. The judge continued to be impressed by the woman's improvement and she reported vastly improved confidence and well-being.

Having provided an overview of the activities of the project we wish to provide an in-depth understanding of the views and experiences of all stakeholders and situate this within the wider issues for the delivery of services to this group of women.

The findings are presented thematically:

Theme 1: The role played by Kairos' Prison In-reach service

- Need for and knowledge of the prison in-reach service
- Support offered within prison
- Practical support
- Emotional support
- Prison – chance for rehabilitation
- Barriers and challenges to working within a prison setting

Theme 2: Kairos' Floating support in the community

- Practical support for women and liaison with other agencies
- Emotional support
- Partnership working

Theme 3: Partnership working

- Barriers and challenges to working in the community

Theme 1: The role played by Kairos' Prison In-reach Service - Need for and knowledge of the prison in-reach service

The need for the Prison In-reach service was identified between 8-10 years ago. Under a Court Diversion scheme a Kairos Project Worker would go to the court with a woman anticipating conviction and there would also be an element of follow up support. The need for a more formalized service was gradually identified:

“What we were noticing was, no surprise, that throughout outreach work and street outreach and evening drop in and with our Floating Support Service, we would see this kind of recurring pattern with the women, that they would offend, commit crime, go to prison for a really short sentence, you know six weeks, eight weeks, they would come back from prison. We would lose all contact with them, they would come out of prison and it was more disruptive than anything because the relationship that they had with us would break down, they would lose their scripts, they would maybe lose their accommodation. All of the kind of support services that were around them, even as tentative as they were, would dissolve and breakdown whilst the service user was in prison and there was no cohesion and they would get released from prison with nowhere to go, no accommodation, even though they are not supposed to. They would be released without anywhere to live and we would find them as we would do the street outreach again. Back on the streets with no accommodation, sofa surfing and just in unsafe places. Their soliciting and loitering would increase because they had nothing and had lost their benefits [...] they were in a worse position having been in prison had they were for whatever reason they committed that offence. They were always for really petty things like shop lifting or you know, really petty crimes that didn't really seem to justify the level of disruption that was happening through these short sentences. So yes, we really wanted to do something to kind of break that cycle and if not anything else, maintain contact with the women whilst they were in prison” (K Manager)

Having identified a need for the work Kairos pursued a working relationship with Peterborough prison, gaining a ‘foot in the door’ through needing to maintain contact with a woman who was to give evidence in a significant rape trial. Agencies from other areas were providing monthly or weekly support in the prison but there was a lack of provision for women from the Coventry area.

In order to understand awareness of the support offered by Kairos a number of stakeholder agencies were asked what they knew of the Prison In-reach and Floating support project. All were familiar with the work of Kairos as an organisation that supported women experiencing multiple disadvantages, but levels of awareness of the prison focused support varied.

“They're in all the right places. They're in the prisons, they're at the drop-ins, they've got good connections with all the other local charities” (Health volunteer, Year 2))

“I didn't actually know about Kairos, it was (named project worker) got in touch with me. I think she'd started working with (client) while she was still in prison and when it was close to release she got in touch.” (National Probation Service/NPS, Year 1) Women who had received support from the Prison In-reach and Floating support service were asked how they first became aware of Kairos and the support service that they offered. Word of mouth was an important source of informal communication.. One woman was aware of their outreach work in Coventry before she went to prison and was invited to drop in for coffee or a chat. She ‘didn't know what to make of it’ so chose not to go.

“I knew about them but I didn't want to accept any help. I think, erm, there's points when I didn't think I needed help. It was only when I went that I realised that actually I did” (JESS)

It was only when someone that she knew was going along and that she decided to ‘give it a go’, her main reason for attending was that she did not have any food at home:

“..they gave out personal things, clothes, and that really helped me. At one time I had, my shoes, the only pair I had were literally falling apart and there were a pair of shoes in there, the only ones that kind of fit me [...] so I was over the moon with that and that was the one thing that kind of – kind of stood out to me cause that really made a difference that did.” (JESS)

Not only practical items were appreciated by the women but emotional support too:

“Well just someone being nice to you, taking an interest in you and not judging you. That really made a difference” (JESS)

So whilst women were often aware of Kairos' service they needed to be at a point where they were ready to accept help, or to know that they could attend to access food or practical resources without experiencing any pressure to engage. When asked about other interventions

taking place with female offenders from or in Coventry stakeholder and women participants could name services which had a remit for dealing with related needs (drug and alcohol, homelessness, mental health) and other projects supporting sex workers such as Embrace, Turnaround, and previously THT SWISH but knew of no other local service that did prison-in reach work.

Support offered within prison

The literature presented in Section 1 highlights the needs of women within prison and the challenges of requiring the criminal justice system to address such needs. Means of tending to related and underlying issues are often called upon. Asked to describe the nature of the work of this project a Kairos manager described the work as floating support but in a prison setting:

“...it's about sitting down with the service user and action planning and looking at their challenges and barriers, addressing them and trying to advocate for them when we need to. So in any other context it would be called floating support because it is exactly the same function and yet because it is in prison, obviously it has a slightly different nature” (K manager)

The project was described consistently by the Kairos managers and support workers, there was also agreement as to what the work entailed.

“Then with the prison, when the women are released there is some intensive work we try and just address the very immediate issues, housing and probation and drug and alcohol treatment and then it should seamlessly move into floating support and the idea now is that the Project Worker that does prison reach also carries them through with floating support. Whereas before there was, one of the challenges was that you know (worker) would go and do some really good work in the prison and have a really strong relationship and then we would kind of expect that service user to kind of just go onto another Project Worker for floating support and actually we were losing women at that point, because naturally if you have built up a relationship with somebody that point of transition where you are trying to establish yourself in the community and introducing another change, actually is not that helpful. So we are hoping that this works better now we are keeping those two together” (K Manager).

Practical support

The support, referred to above, is practical, emotional, psychological and centred on the needs and desires of individual women. Prison can be a lonely and frightening experience, HMP Peterborough is located some distance away from Coventry, women offenders are unable to be located close to home, which can have an impact on the contact that they are able to maintain with family and friends. Kairos are able to offer practical support to women once they are aware of them:

“I didn’t know any of them (Kairos key workers) personally, I just kind of went, you know, I’d spoken to them but hadn’t become good friends with any of them and then when I went into prison, they did come and visit me. They sent me clothes, they sent me stamps, they, yeah, they came and asked me if there was anything I needed, and I weren’t expecting actually how much they could try and help me with. Erm they were already planning housing benefits and everything like that which, you know, I wasn’t expecting” (JESS)

The support offered was unexpected and welcomed, as further evidenced by a woman that was pregnant when sentenced:

“I thought they were really good, like really helpful and that, like there was like one time where, actually it was when I was on this sentence cause I was pregnant with her, and obviously I was getting big and the clothes that I had were really tight on me, I was having to walk around with my buttons undone and stuff but I had a long top but it weren’t, you know what I mean, so I asked them if they could help me and they like got some money and they like bought me some clothes to fit me. That was really helpful. They weren’t second hand, they came in with the tags on” (NICKY)

The practical response by Kairos was appreciated as no other clothes had been provided to the woman to accommodate her pregnancy; of particular note is that the clothes were new, unworn by anybody else, the tags signify something broader to the woman, these were not somebody’s cast offs but bought especially for her. This act of kindness was meaningful and appreciated. Clothes may be available in prison but have to be paid for:

“Well like when I needed clothes, you know, I didn’t have any at all, just what I went to prison in, and because I’d been in longer than the 28 days before she’d (Kairos key worker) come up to meet me I could say ‘can you get me some clothes please’, after 28 days you have to buy it, it’s meant to be an

incentive for you to save up out of your poxy little £8.50 wages [...] so you’ve got to buy your own coffee, and their (prison staff) attitude is well, if you want something bad enough you’ll stop drinking coffee or you’ll stop smoking or you will stop doing whatever it is that gets you through the day, which is crazy really” (LIZ)

Women were in need of basic supplies and the support of Kairos was welcomed and presented as in contrast to what was seen as a punitive attitude to need from within the prison.

The evaluation drew on other sources of data to understand further the context of prison. Each of the Kairos Prison In-reach project workers (x 4) were encouraged to keep a reflective diary in order to describe the outcome of their monthly visit to Peterborough prison, thinking about what worked well and what challenges were met. This is an example diary from Year 1 of the evaluation:

Visit Detail:

This was the first visit I had done since February so I was very keen to see the women. NAME from Pathways 8 and 9 had already told me I had 3 women booked in to see me. There seems to be a lot of changes going on within Peterborough at the minute and this was clear when I went into the female link. The room layout had now been changed and management were now in the open office but the door was closed. I was keen to meet the resettlement manager’s replacement but they made it very clear that I couldn’t disturb them. I felt slightly uncomfortable as there were a lot of new faces so I ended up sitting in the room and waited for the women.

Staff Reflection:

The afternoon went really quickly; it was lovely to see the women. I was thanked by one of the ladies who said that she had really appreciated my emails. She wasn’t too happy about the restrictions on sending paper and envelopes, I personally find it all very punitive and I’m really mindful that often many of our women’s family members can’t make regular visits, so writing to relatives can be quite cathartic and less isolating for them. In the appointment we then went on to talk about the offence that brought her into prison, this conversation led to her rationalising what had happened but not yet taking responsibility or

ownership of the crime. She finds it very hard to open up and previous visits have usually consisted of a few yes and no answers but I was very surprised that she was engaging in conversation. Maybe before my next visit I could try better ways of trying to engage with her, it’s obvious that she finds it difficult to talk. Maybe I could use visual tools such as bringing in some a5 paper and pens and look at exploring solution focused therapy such as the miracle question or a letter from a future self and use that as a way of finding out a bit more about her. I’m conscious that it can be quite intimidating talking to someone who you hardly know about personal stuff and can leave you feeling very vulnerable, so if I can make it easier for them then that’s my priority. One lady who I have recently been supporting whilst on licence has now been recalled to Peterborough because she didn’t engage with drug treatment or probation. I have been supporting her outside right up until last week when I knew she was back in prison. She had put her name down to see me on this visit, however when it came to her coming to her appointment to see me, she refused to leave the cell. I have to admit I did feel a little bit disappointed but then I realised that she has only been back inside for a few days and she might still be getting her mental health medication and also I’m mindful that she might well be a bit embarrassed.

Positive outcome:

One woman talking more in fifteen minutes than I have ever heard her talk in all the months I’ve worked with her. The fact that I’m now back in HMP Peterborough and I’ve had my clearance sorted.

Negative Outcome:

The woman who didn’t come out her cell

Learning:

Allow for silences, it’s a great way to allow the service user to gather their thoughts without me having to fill the gap with dialogue.

Action:

A prisoners request in relation to a civil matter is new for me, so I’ll have to do some background work and speak to my colleagues and Coventry Law Centre



Reflecting on each visit was part of the action research approach to this evaluation and allowed for organisational learning to take place throughout the evaluation, rather than only at the end. The diaries were a valuable source of material, describing the activities of the prison in-reach project and the challenges associated with delivering within a prison setting. The diary reflections kept by the project workers revealed that the environment of prison has to be conducive to the delivery of third sector interventions. Communication between agencies and prison is crucial in conveying the value of what the agency has to offer to the women, by decreasing isolation, offering support, encouraging and motivating and allowing time for reflection on the past in order to move forward.

The support offered by Kairos extended from provision of items that would otherwise be unavailable or have to be paid for to liaison with a number of key services.

“if I had issues outside of the prison, like ...I don’t know, having to contact people and that or like probation or just general stuff really – they used to do it for me on the outside and they’d always get back to me; they’d never leave me like stewing on something. They’d always get back to me about whatever I needed them to do. I can’t give you specifics because I can’t remember but I know they did do a lot of phoning around for me” (NICKY)

The liaison that Kairos took responsibility for had a positive impact on the women:

“[...] it just kind of took a – like lifted a weight kind of thing, like I didn’t have that pressure of being in prison, doing my detox, being pregnant and then like having that added stress. They dealt with it for me” (NICKY)

Women appreciated that Kairos gave their personal circumstances such attention and consideration. Making contact with other services on behalf of the women and putting arrangements in place was reported to have had a positive effect on the well-being of women.

Emotional support

Kairos also kept in contact via email and letters in between their monthly visits, ‘keeping in touch’ was welcomed. One woman described the response of other female prisoners to the service:

“the people that were also working with Kairos, it did mean the world to them as well – that’s simple things like the stamps, you know, it sounds silly but it’s contacting the outside world that makes things a bit easier [...] They’d come in every month and if

you’d asked, you’d be on their list and they’d see everyone” (JESS)

This was reinforced by Kairos:

“the women that say, I know you have taken your time out to come all the way here and you have sat with me for twenty minutes and now you are going to go all the way back, they really value that, they care enough, and I matter enough that they are here” (K manager)

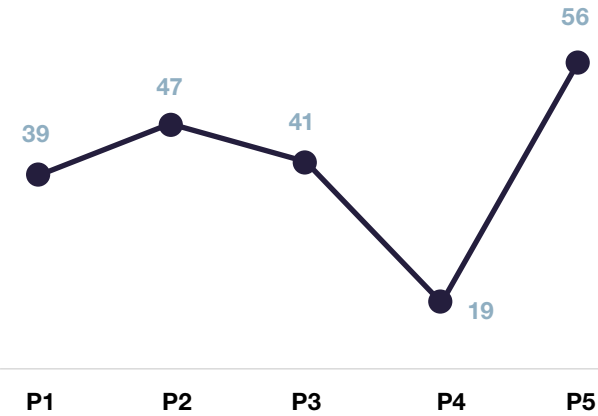
“God, I think people would end up hurting themselves in prison because, like I said, this (Kairos visits) to a lot of people is all they’ve got [...] because in prison you get told you can see a support worker, you know, a listener they call them [...] they’re just other prisoners and they’ve got problems of their own, it’s just so they can get out of their own pad most of the time [...] and they’ve got Samaritans but, you know, if you can’t get out of your pad to use a phone, at your most worst time, then how are you going to speak to a Samaritan?” (LIZ)

That Kairos staff were non-judgemental and showed care towards the women helped them to feel less lonely and isolated. The support went some way to relieving mental burden and demonstrated that the women were worthy. This is significant as the literature shows that women engaged in sex work are stigmatised and that welfare and support responses are often conditional.

In exploring women’s health and well-being a further tool selected for this study was the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Health and Wellbeing survey (WEMWBS). The intention was to request participants to complete a survey during our monthly visit or to leave a copy for them to complete and return via post to the research team. However, as discussed earlier only five surveys were completed. It is difficult to extrapolate from this data but it provides some insight as to how these women felt during this visit and draws attention to the meaning of the visits from Kairos.

The graph below shows that at the time of completing the survey Participant 4 reported the lowest wellbeing score. She reported that whilst she felt positive about the support she was receiving from Kairos, she had recently had her three children removed, they had been taken into care. She noted that it was two of her son’s birthdays as something that she felt bad or negative about. She also said ‘*Thank you for Kairos coming to prison, without them I would be lost and alone as I don’t get any other visitors to come and see me.*’

WEMEBS Score



Participant 5 reported the highest wellbeing score. In the diary she shared a number of positive developments that may account for this. She was getting a law specialist to look at her case and she identified being able to do things on her own, including getting a job in prison. Participant 5 also identified loss of children as something she felt bad and negative about. She shared her appreciation of having a mum who was caring for her children while in prison. She says that ‘support has been useful’ (from Kairos). She also shares that she is looking forward to getting out and to seeing her children. Interestingly, Participants 1, 2 and 3, with similar wellbeing scores, did not provide a lot of information in the diary. All three noted that they felt bad or negative about being away from a child/ren. All three had been in prison previously and two (Participant 2 and Participant 3) referred to a substance misuse and mental health need unit?. Participant 2 wrote that her ‘anti depression tablets are helping repressive side of illness’. Participant 3 wrote about how she was drug free for the first time: ‘*becoming clean – first time in 21 years. Done it on my own!*’ Both Participant 2 and Participant 3 wrote that they appreciated the support provided by Kairos, Participant 3 described it as helping her to feel less isolated.

Summary

Face to face contact when women are in prison is valued in and of itself, often practical support follows as the project worker negotiates with other agencies on behalf of the woman. Meeting basic needs for clothes and writing materials was much appreciated when women had little access to money. More than that, the presence of the project worker signifies that someone cares and is there to offer support to help relieve isolation, loneliness and feelings of desperation – feelings which

have sometimes not been expressed to anyone else. Knowing the procedure and that the project worker would consistently be present on the same day each month was also valued by the women and is helpful in trying to build trust of professionals.

Prison – chance for rehabilitation

Alongside thinking about the role of a prison in-reach project a key theme throughout the data concerned the role of prison, as a potential place of rehabilitation and transformation. Firstly, in terms of a change of environment prison can be seen to offer an opportunity to be away from an environment where drugs are needed and often available and women have to engage in sex work or stealing to fund their drug dependence:

“[...] for me prison is really important because it’s getting them away from that chaos, because if on a day to day basis, you try and engage with somebody, like a sex worker, their lifestyle is: they get up in the morning, they just need that next hit so they’ll go and do what they need to do for that next £10. Then they have the high and then it comes down again and then it’s that same cycle so for a lot of the women it doesn’t matter what time of day it is, what day of the week it is – they haven’t really got a concept of the things me and you would have a concept of – it’s just a constant need for that hit and the vicious circle. So even to try and arrange, like, sometimes I’ll say “we’ll go to the Recovery Partnership, we’ll do this” on a day to day basis, so for example, there was one girl who needed to go to the Recovery Partnership this morning, I had to go to Salvation Army, I had to wake her up, to get her in the shower, get her dressed, and get her down there because she’d got no concept of what time of day it is, what time her appointments are, so it’s just constant chaos and it’s really difficult to engage with anybody with that constant rolling chaos. So when something like prison happens, it’s often a bit of respite away from that chaos. Their drugs are managed by sort of like a script or different sort of medication. They’re sleeping properly, they’re eating and it’s installing a bit of normality back into their life and at that point, in my opinion, is an ideal opportunity to sit down and have a conversation where they can think straight, where they’re not looking for that £10 bag. They’re not worried about having to do something with somebody to get that £10 bag. You can actually have an honest conversation with somebody about what they want and reforming their life, whereas I think outside of prison in the chaos, it’s really difficult” (Police, Year 1)



Kairos staff, stakeholder participants and also some women saw prison as a potential place of positive personal change. It was one of the reasons for setting up the prison in-reach service:

“...the letters that we did receive from women whilst we were in prison were always really focused and there was some clarity when you stripped away everything else that was kind of contributing to the chaos in their lives, when they were in the city. When you strip that back and they were isolated and maybe they were getting clean, maybe they had time to reflect. There was this real sense of ‘I want to change, I want things to be different’. You know it felt like a real missed opportunity that whilst they had some clarity and that kind of, I guess space, we weren’t having those conversations about, well how would you like your life to be and what does needs to be different and how would you like things to move forward. So that was kind of the rationale behind setting the service up” (K manager)

One woman, the youngest participant, found prison to be a place where she could find her own space and credits going to prison as saving her and increasing her confidence to be alone.

“I deliberately wanted to go to prison to get away and if I didn’t I wouldn’t be here because that literally – you know I’ve been in, I’ve always been in relationships since I was fourteen. If I wasn’t with that person, I’d be with someone else and that kind of taught me I was okay on my own, you know I can just be me and this is the first time I’ve been able to just be me so yeah it’s been great” (JESS)

Keeping with the theme of prison offering opportunities for change, short prison sentences were highly criticised for not allowing time to assess a woman’s needs and put support in place to address needs:

“I think, this sounds really quite cruel, to really benefit, the women need to do a decent sentence. When they go in and they just go in for a couple of weeks or 5-6 weeks or 6-8 something like that, it’s very difficult to put a package together and for them to get out of the chaos and into some sort of normality in that short space of time. When you look at how long it takes to get stable on a script and how long it takes to get off that methadone, it’s a long process, so often if we discuss things at the Sex Worker Forum meeting and a woman’s

only been sent down for a short period of time I think sometimes we feel like we’ve got a lot of work to do in a short period of time, whereas if they’re inside for longer you’ve got more chance of actually speaking to them, finding out what they want and putting something together, but we don’t have control over what sentences they get. And some women will say “I just need to go down. I can’t deal with this” [...] or they’ll say “I’m going to kill myself if I carry on like this” They accept that their life is so chaotic but they don’t know how to deal with it” (Police, Year 1)

Not only are short sentences not providing enough time in prison to address offending behaviour or underlying need, they are also highly disruptive of any positive aspects in women’s lives. The disruption to family relationships, to tenancies, to health care, relationships with supporters, leads to a need to constantly rebuild on release. During the period of evaluation, there was an increasing churn of women going in and out of prison in short periods due to changes in policy:

“[...] as of April this year if they are even in for 2 days they come out and have to engage with the CRC [...] some of them have never ever had to go to that so there’s been a lot of recalls just because they haven’t been used to having to present and engage so that’s been a significant change” (K project worker Year 1)

Probation service and the CRC were critical of licence conditions which rested on women attending several appointments with different services at times that were not appropriate as this would lead to the need to recall them to prison, which was often ‘sad’ or not justified. This also led to increased numbers engaging with Kairos and their profile was raised with support organisations, such as NPS and the CRC’s, who may ask Kairos’ for help when they had lost contact with a woman. Such changes were also impacting and increasing the workload of Kairos’ staff.

Summary

When women are desperate to escape their current circumstances prison appears to be a viable option. Research has shown that prison can be a space for rehabilitation however, provision does not always meet expectation. Prison can provide some respite from precarious living for women, with an existence focused around routine that requires little decision-



making. Some women feel motivated to change and the Kairos project worker can be there to explore what life could be like if the motivation is sustained. They also provide an opportunity for women to build purposeful relationships of trust, which potentially open up channels of communication between the women, worker and their families. Short sentences are not helpful and completely disrupt relationships, especially with children and family. It seems clear that it is not necessarily prison that is desired but escape from daily life and the opportunity for things to be different.

Barriers and challenges to working within a prison setting

All Kairos project workers and managers emphasised the efforts that they made to have open channels of communication with the prison. Project workers would email in advance of coming to the prison for their regular monthly visit and request a room in the Link, which was usually allocated. There were occasions over the period of evaluation when a room had not been booked, despite confirming in advance. On one occasion there was no space to see women other than on the edge of an office worker's desk, affording no privacy or confidentiality. This did not help when trying to build rapport with a new service user and understand her needs. At other times vetting processes for new staff took time, so whilst project workers had not been vetted women could not be visited.

There were occasions when prison staff were not available to escort women to meet Kairos, time spent with each woman was sometimes limited by not being able to start on time. Each appointment varied, depending on the number of women the project worker had on their list, occasionally women who were not known of in advance also wanted to see the project worker. All were seen within the time slot of 2 hours but time spent varied and was reported by project workers to sometimes feel rushed. Further issues reported by the project workers was a lack of communication between prison and Kairos, often associated with staff changes, and the general difficulties which seemed to have increased with the prison's engagement in rehabilitation. The reflective journal of a Kairos manager states:

"I have made every attempt I can to contact individual prison workers and managers, I can now list 8 individuals I have tried, ... to set up a partnership meeting...the difficulties we are having with HMP Peterborough and to some extent Foston Hall are symptomatic of the acute failures of the criminal justice system to adequately understand and meet the needs of women" (K manager)

On a positive note, multi-agency meetings had recently taken place to better understand each others' role and what agencies could offer to the women.

Summary

Delivering interventions successfully within prison is often dependent on the support of the prison management and strong relationships with those who can facilitate access within the prison. The importance of partnership working cannot be emphasised enough (Brown et al, 2015; Brown et al, 2016). Relationships which involve different organisational cultures and values need time to develop. A key advocate is often essential to a positive working relationship, variation in staff and relying on those who are unfamiliar with the support being offered is unlikely to lead to as successful outcome as would be possible with strong 'buy in'.



Theme 2: Kairos' Floating Support in the community

Transitioning from prison back into the community is a time when support is most needed as there are a number of arrangements to make to help women feel safe, secure and stable. Both practical support – in terms of having basic needs for food, shelter, income met – and emotional and psychological support are crucial at this time of change and upheaval.

Practical support for women and liaison with other agencies

In advance of release, the project worker aims to set in place plans for each woman who is moving back to, or into, the Coventry area. One strategy which aims to address the immediate practical issue of clothes (other than prison clothes) and a means of communication comes in the form of a pack. Both women and other stakeholder participants spoke positively about the pack that Kairos make available for women on release from prison, which includes a mobile phone and clothes.

"they give you a support package with a phone and credit on it and like basically they're there if you need them" (NICKY)

The phone allows women to have a contact number to be able to give to the agencies that they will need to contact. Whilst having a phone is useful it also brings added pressure as it makes a woman contactable not just by support services but by anyone who may have her telephone number and means that she can make contact with others:

"Yeah we sorted out benefits and that took a good while to come through. She did offer me a phone with credit on, erm, I didn't want it – it took me a long time to have a phone cause I just didn't want anyone, I didn't want the temptation there. So yeah she literally went through everything, she was looking at courses to try and help me, setting up counselling but at that stage I was saying "yes, I'd like to" but when it came to it, I think my mental, I weren't mentally ready and I'd back out of it" (JESS)

Services that needed to have contact with the women appreciated that without the free phone this would be made more difficult. Probation noted that without a phone a woman may miss her appointments, and this would cause difficulties in trying to find reasons not to recall her to prison:

"It's (Kairos' service) such a valuable resource that it just needs to be used. I've come from a background of mentoring before I did this, so I've seen the good impact it can have. Especially specifically for women, because there's hardly anything for female offenders [...] Even if it's just to help signpost, just to have someone positive in your life. I suppose we're somebody positive in her life, but they have to come and see us, it's not that they want to come and see us. Whereas with [Kairos key worker], I know this lady disengaged at the end, but she probably wanted to go to see [Kairos key worker] a lot more than me. So, in that sense it's good to have someone separate from all the criminal justice stuff, and someone you're not going to get into trouble if you miss an appointment" (NPS Year 1).

Other examples of practical support were given by women, including securing funding to be able to set up a home:

"They've helped me with stuff like they helped me sort my carpets out [...] because there's these charities that can give you funding for ex-offenders, they can fund stuff for you but you can't have the money, the ex-offenders can't have the money. The workers have got to have the money and then whatever you need, the workers have got to hand the money over to pay for things and then because they did the receipts to send back to the people that fund it" (NICKY)

One woman said that Kairos were supporting her with the storage of her furniture and belongings as she was currently homeless:

"They've been a lot more helpful where storing my stuff's concerned [...] because a lot of places just wanted to dash it, you know, I'm not getting any younger – I've had it all once, I've lost it all. What I have got I want to keep [...] even I.D., it's mad, how hard I.D. is to get now and you need it for everything, everything" (LIZ)

As Kairos have evolved they have found new ways to respond to women's needs. This facility to store belongings, possessions and items linked to the past and the woman's identity was not offered by other services and was much appreciated.

As stated above, on release from prison women have a number of appointments that they need to attend, some related to the conditions of their licence and others relating to securing support. This involves remembering the date, time and venue and being physically able to get

there. Kairos liaise with a range of different agencies and support women to attend appointments, with their mobile phone, transport, calls to remind them to wake up and be ready, and provide emotional and advocacy support to engage with different people representing different agencies.

From the case study data provided by Kairos of support given to women on-release the most prominent source of support provided to all related to attempting to secure accommodation, preferably with some stability rather than on a temporary basis. The need for appropriate accommodation is crucial to a number of successful outcomes and has been shown to be vitally important in terms of recidivism. A stable and safe place to stay and to call home offers an opportunity to begin to address other needs, such as mental health, drug/alcohol and relationship issues.

Securing accommodation for the woman on release is the responsibility of the prison Resettlement team and NPS, however, over the duration of the evaluation it became less likely that accommodation had been put in place for women's return to Coventry (or elsewhere). This led Kairos to need to advocate on behalf of the woman to navigate housing systems.

“What I find is that I do a lot of their (Housing) donkey work, I do a lot of stuff that they should be doing. So, like they should've had a support plan in place on release for a lot of our women, it shouldn't be me looking for accommodation it should be them, especially as they're coming out on licence” (K project worker, Yr 2)

Kairos' staff did recognise the challenges that other organisations were facing:

“[...] probation officers have got 40-50 people to manage, so I'm like, well my little prison release is just like a drop in the ocean for them but I still have to be banging on that door saying 'she's still being released and she's got no housing” (K project worker Yr 2).

The project worker stated that services, such as National Probation Service, often do appreciate that she is a vulnerable woman with mental health needs but still there is nowhere available to place her. There was not a clear link between prison and being out in the community:

“There's not that kind of linear process where it should be a smooth process, you would like to think it would be a logical process – these are the needs of the women in prison, this is the support they

are going to need when they get out of prison [...] there's something massively missing where they're just slipping through the net” (K project worker, Yr 2)

A number of service-users are released on a Friday, which can cause issues for Kairos in co-ordinating services to be in place on release, particularly if they are not kept informed that a woman is to be released. The prison say that they must release them to the day that they are eligible for release. If this is a Saturday, Sunday (or bank holiday), they must release them earlier (e.g. Friday). Friday releases are therefore Friday, Saturday and Sunday releases. It is also not uncommon for women to be discharged from prison without any of the agencies involved being notified – agencies like GP surgeries, so that they have not got their regular medication set up.

In liaising with other statutory and provider agencies the independence of Kairos is also important, that women can be honest without fear of being judged or having confidences broken:

“She did seem to be more open with [Kairos key worker] I think, because obviously sharing information, and it seemed she would be happy to tell her more than perhaps with me. She was using drugs and she was admitting it to [Kairos key worker], but if she'd admitted it to me she might have got into trouble, which actually she wouldn't. It would be better if she admitted it, but she perhaps didn't think like that” (NPS, Year 1)

Emotional support

Just as the support offered to women when they are in prison is experienced as emotional support so is support once back out and in the community. Women spoke of what this element of support meant to them:

“I appreciate everything they've done for me, to date. Like they've taken away a lot of stress, like really been there, and I really appreciate that” (NICKY)

“I don't think I would have got through it really without their support. I know that if I went back to the drugs I wouldn't be here today. It got that bad and they were a big part of that” (JESS)

“Just someone being here, to just come and have a chat and a cup of coffee, it's nice” (LIZ)

Stakeholders were also able to give examples of the emotional support provided by Kairos. A participant from the National Probation Service recounted a case where

a woman was subject to drug testing on her licence on release, she failed a drugs test which had implications for her children, who were living with her. Rather than immediately notifying children's social services NPS and Kairos worked together to encourage her to tell her mother, the legal guardian of the children, and proceed from there. This was regarded as a more empathetic response 'because if I was to go the social services it's a bit harsh and they tend to react drastically ...[Kairos worker] was able to help with that to support her, it's difficult going to tell your mum you've done that' (NPS, Year 1).

Theme 3: Partnership working

Participants were largely positive about the interaction that they had with Kairos' key workers and valued the role that they played. National Probation Service gave an example of why they found this to be helpful:

“...with us we find we're dishing out information to everyone trying to get help but, ultimately, it's our responsibility so they're not bothered, because it's not on them it's on us. Not, not bothered, but it's not their priority like it is ours, and Kairos were active, always emailing me, ringing me, which is positive because it's refreshing to have someone actively sharing information with you. Even with the police its difficult getting information from them” (NPS, Year 1)

However, Kairos' proactive approach was not always found to be helpful:

“Kairos, for arguments sake, will have the case on behalf of a person and they say this person needs a script. Ok, that's fine we hear what you're saying, and they may need the script, but we need to do an assessment on that person, we need to look at the history of that person. We're also aware of the history of that person that Kairos may not be aware of, and the risk issues that are in place. So, we'll do the assessment and make the decision about the safety of prescribing, not somebody else tell us to make that” (The Recovery Partnership, Year 1)

Following the re-tendering of drug and alcohol support services in the city in Year 2 of the evaluation the new service had a more positive opinion of Kairos:

“I like working with Kairos, I've got a lot of time for Kairos [...] the organisation are trying their hardest to get these people engaged in treatment” (*Change Grow Live, Year 2*)

This stakeholder went on to say that they would be considering how their service could work better around prison releases, which would involve closer links with Kairos.

One way for Kairos to progress partnership working had been identified as the drafting of Service Level Agreements, in order to formalise working relationships. This had been tried in the past with some services, with little change. Most recently Kairos are keen to be the hub around which the support for women happens. In particular, this involves the need for improved pathways between the prison, probation and Kairos.

Partnership working was also identified as being crucial, due to the limited capacity of Kairos' service. Joint work was taking place between Kairos and Turnaround to support women in attending appointments if one or the other was not available, 'there is no capacity for one organisation to do it all, there is so much work to do'. If on release from prison women do not go to the agreed place to meet with Kairos and are seen by Turnaround they can 'scoop them back in' and remind them of their appointment, as missing appointments can have such a big impact, this also may mean that they 'are not lost completely'. This organisation was also sympathetic to the issues caused when a lot of planning goes into a release yet women are released early, or, no opportunity for planning has taken place and women are released without medication, housing or support.

Ultimately, it was noted that the partnerships with organisations that worked best were those where a relationship had been built with a named contact who was flexible and understood the complexity of the service users lives. This was also an area that had been identified as in need of improvement:

“The best relationships and partnerships come when an individual knows another individual, and so when staff members change and leave if there's not been really, I think it's also about good record keeping as well while you're about partnerships because it can feel like quite a nebulous thing to record sometimes about just the types of people you know or who's a really good person to talk to at (housing) about getting a position on housing for example, I think that's something that I'd like us to improve on is recording, and a kind of a system about recording key contacts and partnerships because I think sometimes that knowledge then leaves when staff leave, and we've experienced quite a bit of that organisational partnership loss which means you're then at square one again when a new person starts, it takes them a few months to



build up [...] I think I've only come across one, what I would call a service level agreement, they called it something else but it's the same thing, so I don't think there's many of the partnerships that have been formalised other than through natural working relationships" (K Manager)

An individual with understanding of the client group and empathy was highly valued by stakeholders and by women. It was felt that women might experience a response from a service more positively if supported at an appointment by an advocate, such as provided by Kairos:

"it's all about reducing stigma and increasing self-esteem and letting the women know that they're going to be listened to and they're going to be treated as a human being and I think that if they have someone supporting them with those appointments the professionals are more likely, as sad as it is, to pay more attention to what the woman needs rather than looking at her and thinking 'oh she's a crack head, she's a sex worker' [...] to have someone who is a specialist project to support them and advocate for them, it helps" (Sexual Violence support, Year 2)

Summary

The provisions Kairos distribute to women are a practical response to immediate need and are much appreciated. The role played through liaison with other agencies is also clearly evidenced and regarded as positive by other stakeholders that claim to/wish to work in partnership. There are instances where clarity regarding the role of Kairos would be appreciated and the importance of a service which is dedicated to befriending women and advocating on their behalf on release from prison could be better understood. The remit of the project worker's role has expanded as they have attempted to plug gaps in responses, for example, from probation services and housing providers. Given the strong links between homelessness and re-offending it seems unfortunate that women who have served a custodial sentence are not necessarily deemed vulnerable and responded to with a sense of urgency.

Barriers and challenges to working in the community

The challenges involved in delivering this project and developing as an organisation link directly to the socio-economic and political environment in which the

intervention is taking place. Participant stakeholders spoke of the challenges of doing this work within a climate of shrinking resources and demands for particular types of evidence of 'what works' with this client group:

"[...] there is a huge funding pressure on every organisation and there is enormous pressure for agencies to provide quantitative evidence and actually and with this client group quantitative evidence is really hard to demonstrate because the benefits are all qualitative. It's not clear cut but actually those small qualitative differences make a huge difference long term, it is really hard to demonstrate that funding wise. I suppose the example of that is if you improve somebody's self-esteem you gradually improve their drug use, gradually improve their health, if they fall pregnant they are supported through their pregnancy and then they get positive assistance with their parenting then that's a family that has a positive life but also saves huge amounts of money to the country as a whole – that's the bit that's hard to demonstrate because the moment that they start to do well they are off the books. You don't notice the saving because you are then at the bottom, looking at where everyone else is coming from" (Health volunteer, Year 1)

This was reinforced by a Kairos manager, who recognised that the demand for support was so great that they could realistically only deal with women in crisis, and the longer term support that they know is needed in order to sustain women in the community is always being deferred or can only be limited.

Small changes, as demonstrated in the data presented above, do make the difference, so one of the challenges is to find ways of capturing all the steps no matter how small or 'soft' that lead to what can be perceived by the women, and by their supporters as a successful outcome.

"I think all the girls in my position knew they (Kairos) were here, it's just whether they wanted to come. They can't force these girls to come in, they know that it's here and they do everything to make those girls feel welcome, so it's just up to them [...] they also know that even if they don't want support they can just turn up and have some food and go. You know, it's not like you have to accept the help to go there; you can just turn up if you're hungry. I mean, there were times that I didn't want to talk. I just turned up and they could see I didn't want to talk and I got some food and I left. So it does make you feel better" (JESS)



Organisations also identified limitations in the role being performed by some services in terms of resettling and rehabilitating women on release from prison:

"They (the prison) claim to have resettlement teams, I don't know what they're doing because I've never had an offender coming out saying, 'Prison have found me this place to live', I don't really understand that. I guess they have the same difficulty we have with housing" (NPS)

Furthermore, arrangements under Transforming Rehabilitation appear to have created some perverse incentives regarding housing and payment by results:

"Since we've split they'll deliver some housing services which we have to pay them for; so, the tax payer would pay the CRC for delivering a housing service, they work from within prison. We'll get an email saying, 'Can you create this referral on the system, and send it to us', but once you send it up to them that's like a payment, you're basically paying them for a service. So, I had five from this one guy saying, 'Can you pay to this resettlement service', I was, 'I've found him accommodation, I've got it and you want me to pay you?' He was harassing me, it's just to get money, but that's privatisation I guess, which is sad. Some of the probation officers weren't up to scratch with that and were just creating them, which is sad" (NPS, Year 1).

Changes in the criminal justice system have also impacted, with high caseloads leaving less time for rehabilitative responses:

"The sad thing is, you just concentrate on the risk management really, you're not concentrating on helping them change, because that comes first, the risk management" (NPS, Year 1)

Furthermore, the changes required to really make a difference to the lives of women who are experiencing multiple disadvantage and to tackle the 'revolving door' are bigger than any one organisation can make:

"Statutory bodies haven't changed their thinking, there isn't new thought, there isn't any new thinking/theories, we're still back to locking up people for trivial things, these silly little sentences that they keep getting. That woman I mentioned with eight prison sentences in a year, well what was that going to achieve? It didn't achieve anything. It doesn't seem to deter anybody, I've resigned myself to the idea that you're not going to see lots of women exit the service, exit this way of life, be happy and



positive, keep trying and I imagine you will see the same people time and time again, because of all those big things that need to change, have not changed" (K project worker, Year 2)

Needs that are complex and inter-related need a holistic approach, tailored to the woman; this is made more difficult when services are issue based and have a remit for addressing one aspect. Kairos act as a bridge between service users and other services, especially statutory services, and are motivated to see every small engagement as a positive step because *'if I was to use big markers I think you'd lose the motivation to carry on [...] the services just don't exist that we need'* (K project worker, Year 2). A Kairos manager explained her frustration with funders that required quantifiable outcomes:

"if they understood well enough just how complex the work that we do is and how, you know, please don't ask us to have 'so many women exit sex work a year', as that is just not attainable and realistic and doesn't reflect the complexity of the lives of the women and the myriad of barriers that they face" (K manager)

Summary

Capturing and recognising all small steps towards change is important as the tipping point or window of opportunity is different for each woman. Building a relationship of trust enables positive engagement and can ultimately lead to women making positive changes, from wanting this to it happening can be a long time. The barriers and challenges to Kairos' work come from other organisations and some funders' lack of understanding of the complex needs of women offenders, limited support and resources from agencies that have a remit to support (e.g. CRC's, housing providers) and systemic failures, such as payment by results.





Section 4: Future development and growth of Kairos as a specialist women's service

Those stakeholders that knew the organisation well commented on how it had expanded and how services had developed in a proactive way, such as working with young people and working in prisons:

"[...] the work that they are doing now is a lot more pre-emptive of problems. Chaos is part and parcel of life for the women and I just feel that it's such a wasted opportunity if we don't engage them then, one of the difficulties is that women's sentences are very short, the majority I think are around 4 weeks so it's quite hard for Kairos to get in there in that short time but it's an opportunity wasted if we don't" (Health volunteer, Year 2).

Having staff with the appropriate attitude and values was regarded as important as the organisation moves forward and develops:

"[...] selecting people for the organization, that's tough. We have had a difficult year and we don't always get it right and when it isn't a good fit, it's not a good fit. I think it takes a very definite certain kind of person that gets kind of the culture of the organization and can roll with the challenges and the very specific challenges around the kind of work that we do and the slow progress that you know, soft outcomes, you need to see them as wins, like it's awful and a really frustrating job. You know when we have the right people in place, you know, we thrive and it's a great environment" (K manager)

As important was having staff with in-depth knowledge and skills in the issues being faced by the client group:

"we were lucky with (key worker) in that [...] she was working at another organisation working with homeless people, so she had a really excellent knowledge about the housing system when she joined, and we've really benefited from that because of her specialist knowledge really about, you know, she just came in and was able to take that off very, like hit the ground running with that, but another person who didn't have that experience would've not been as quick as she has been to sort out housing for people [...] we've helped more people maintain their existing accommodation, even though the barriers have still been problematic but actually we've helped more people get into some more stable accommodation in the last year than previously, and I think that is down to, even though we've had some people still going in and out and some people being evicted and problems with the housing providers, I think because of the knowledge that we've now got in the team around housing we've achieved better outcomes for people in that time" (K manager).

Such knowledge was clearly helpful in being able to leverage support and navigate complicated systems and processes. Over the duration of the evaluation, systems used to capture information about the women were tweaked, changed and updated in order to better track outcomes and progress. More recently, recording was being embedded, as part of the daily routine. A new CEO had introduced further levels of accountability, requesting monthly reports from business development and operations managers.

Kairos were commended for their continual assessment of service-user need, highly necessary in such a shifting economic and political environment. Collaborative working is important – several times participants said that no organisation can operate on their own – and multi-agency working is key to maximising resources and support for the women. Kairos understand client need, are clear on professional boundaries and are 'one of the most professional voluntary organisations'. Motivation for continuing the work despite challenges was not difficult to find amongst Kairos staff:

"often I think about individual women and I think oh yeah, actually we, I think we've kept people alive this year who wouldn't actually be alive otherwise, or there's people who having that one-to-one that I had with NAME about you know, you stopped two people going to jail this year because you

advocated for them in court, and that's a really big achievement, and just knowing a bit about some of their stories and their past experiences makes you, yeah I think it always makes me very proud about Kairos's work and I think, yeah, despite all the difficulties I think we have achieved a lot, I think there's a lot of improvement to make about the ongoing mentoring, stability, self-belief stages, but I think in spite of the challenges of last year we've still kept all our services running" (K manager)

Key messages arising from the evaluation:

The evidence of this evaluation indicates that Kairos Prison In-reach and Floating Support Service is making a difference in the lives of women, even if unremarked upon at the time. Women's experiences are validated by Kairos' unconditional response to need and non-judgemental approach.

The service is valued by stakeholders and women service users because it offers something different to other services in the Coventry area. The service plays a positive role in valuing women, advocating and liaising on their behalf. The existing literature supports the need for community based programmes, designed for women/this client group, addressing complex needs.

It was regarded as helpful by women, stakeholders and Kairos staff to have an independent women's organisation creating the bridge from prison to community, and offering a much needed support mechanism in supporting the resettlement process. Kairos provide the opportunity to receive consistent support (subject to staff change) and to build trust.

Kairos are committed to seeing through what is promised, they communicate well and often, as evidenced by their interaction with stakeholders, women and the prison.

Kairos professionally and personally invest in the women, wanting the best for them. They are available for practical and emotional support which is non-judgemental.

Understanding and supporting rehabilitation

The Corston Report of 2007 called for a holistic, woman centred approach to women who offend but this has far from been realised as yet. The Offender Rehabilitation

Act (2014) made it mandatory for prisoners to be supervised and recalled to prison if found to be in breach

of the Act. Current data, and evidence within this report, shows that women are being recalled to prison, often for failure to keep in touch and other administrative reasons not related to any further criminality.

In the final month of this period of evaluation the Ministry of Justice released the Female Offender Strategy (June 2018).

There is evidence that Kairos Prison In-reach and Floating Support Service offers a valuable support system for women, through playing an essential befriending role with a vulnerable or potentially vulnerable group of women. A core feature also rests on the advocacy they provide that helps women, some of whom have complex needs, navigate and access services need to support recidivism in terms of helping women to make a change when they can and where it is appropriate. The commitment and consistency provided by the project worker provides validation of the women's worth. Any small steps towards personal change are valued and documented as it is recognised that a successful outcome is built on small achievements. There are some women who achieve transformation and success as measured by traditional outcomes but this is not usual. What is more usual is that women have more hope, motivation to reduce negative behaviour, make positive changes and, through the befriending and advocacy of Kairos, move somewhat closer to achieving their goals.

There are limitations in the project worker role. It is not full time and at times has other responsibilities, this means that whilst the support given is much needed and appreciated it is often only at the point of crisis. In order to affect change long term women need to be able to access on-going services and support, perhaps to continue the work of thinking about the past to be able to look towards the future which was started whilst in prison. Alongside supporting the women's general health and well-being (especially mental) work which helps with reflecting on choices made, dealing with regret and loss and moving forward would enhance the outcomes for women. There is therefore merit in considering the post of prison in-reach/floating support to be a dedicated role. This would support with sustaining this element of the work and in providing additional time to work longitudinally to evidence change.

Kairos appear to know enough about the optimal conditions for change for a woman. Internal and external factors have been identified, small moments and glimpses of possibility are harnessed whenever possible

to help a woman move towards reducing offending, addressing underlying issues and therefore having less need to engage in sex work. This point of change is different for each individual woman, emphasising the importance of relationship-building and relationship based ways of connecting.

Women in prison have considerable personal and structural barriers to overcome to resettle successfully on release from prison (Hart 2017). The current 'responsibilization agenda', which rewards those who can help themselves, leaves those in need of additional support further marginalised (Hart 2017:166). In addition, the 'responsibilization agenda' has pathologised structural and gender disadvantages as individual criminogenic need. Hart (2017) makes it clear that without addressing the structural and gender disadvantages experienced by women in and on exit from prison, it is difficult to see how women can resettle successfully and desist from criminality.

The socio-economic context within which Kairos are working cannot be regarded as outside the concerns of this evaluation. Changes to the criminal justice system and austerity provide huge challenges to the work, to some extent Kairos are responding flexibly and partnership working is recognised as crucial in making limited resources stretch further, to meet the needs of women in and from Coventry and support their rehabilitative journey.

Recommendations:

To join up thinking and working across agencies which support women in Coventry. The new Coventry Women's Partnership, in which Kairos are a partner, is a venture which should be instrumental in making this happen, alongside the existing Sex Worker Forum. This research highlights the importance of building a strong network to make accessing support for a range of needs less challenging.

To develop a formalised working agreement, service level agreement, with HMP Peterborough and other prisons, to support in-reach work and Pathway release planning. This may lead to a more positive working relationship and increase understanding of the benefits of Kairos' intervention, for women and for prisons.

Maintain on-going communication in each stakeholder agency with a key contact who understands the aim of Kairos, enabling clear release planning and support. This arrangement should not be solely dependent on individual workers (stakeholder or Kairos) as this poses a risk when staff leave their posts.

To build on the immediate, crisis driven work with women in order to sustain change where there has been motivation to positively transition out of sex work and/or drug and alcohol use.

To draw on Kairos' expertise to deliver workforce training and presentations to inform other agencies of the needs and experiences of the client group, raising awareness of the stigma and discrimination often experienced in interaction with service providers. Kairos have a rich understanding of their client group, particularly of the ways in which past trauma impacts on mental health, use of alcohol and drugs and vulnerability to exploitation.

To develop links with organisations working with ethnically diverse communities. The changing demographic in Coventry, characterised by increasing Black and Minority Ethnic communities and the increasing number of BAME women who come to the attention of the criminal justice system indicates a need for on-going service development to ensure that the service is equipped to address the needs of all women.

To use all available monitoring, evaluation and outcomes data to attract funders who recognise the value of a specialist women centred service, embedded in the local community, addressing complex issues of substance misuse, offending, trauma, violence and homelessness.

Coventry University Evaluation challenges and limitations

Adopting a qualitative approach to women’s experiences of support within the criminal justice system offers an additional perspective. Some studies have focused on how women offenders feel about engaging in research, and what this should look like. Hedderman et al (2011) stress the importance of qualitative approaches when working with women offenders. ‘This article draws on interviews conducted with Together Women clients in the project’s development phase to argue that outcome evaluations which rely exclusively or mainly on information in project databases and criminal records may not capture key elements which make an intervention ‘work’. Neglecting service users’ insights may lead to under-estimating resource needs, unrealistic target setting, and the eventual abandonment of promising ideas in favour of the next ‘new’ magic bullet.’ (3) Malloch et al. (2014) emphasise the importance of holistic responses and solutions when working with women offenders, which are ‘gender responsive’ and ‘community based’. However, they advocate the need for ‘community’ and ‘holistic’ to have more meaningful definitions.

The original aim of this evaluation was to interview women who are receiving Kairos’ support whilst in prison, interviewing soon after release and four months after their release. There were a number of reasons why this was not possible. Gaining access to HMP Peterborough proved to be challenging. The National Offender Management Service application was submitted in August 2015 and approved on 1 January 2016). HMP Peterborough experienced a number of staff changes and consequently information about the NOMS application and approval was requested on more than a couple of occasions. Vetting/security clearance forms were also sent and misplaced. The research team finally achieved vetting clearance on 21 March 2017, following an in person visit to the prison, however, access to be able to shadow the Kairos project worker(s) was not forthcoming and subsequently not achieved within the timescale. Clearly this impacted on the data that could be obtained about the delivery of the service within the prison setting. This also impacted on our engagement with service users once they were back in Coventry as we had not formed a relationship with them whilst in prison. We were reliant on the key worker to keep contact and to encourage women to take part in the evaluation. None of the participants were interviewed on release and again four months later, which was our intention, so we were unable to fulfil that evaluation objective.

Final reflections

This evaluation has provided an evidence base for the delivery of the prison in-reach service delivered in HMP Peterborough by Kairos WWT. The findings can be used to shape the practice of all stakeholders - Kairos, HMP Peterborough and other support services. The evaluation demonstrated that the work of Kairos is both holistic and community based, a Serious Case Review 2016 identified the organisation as an example of good practice. It is hoped that a key outcome is that the evaluation has positively contributed to the development of Kairos WWT as an organization, by adopting an action research approach and by drawing attention to what has not worked well alongside what has worked well. Through a collaborative approach the evaluation team aimed to build evaluation into the everyday practice of Kairos WWT, thereby supporting the sustainability of the service. The establishment of a positive working relationship between Coventry University and Kairos provided a number of learning opportunities. In addition, the evaluation aids Kairos WWT wider aim of supporting, empowering and sharing the voices of women users of their service.

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