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The resettlement of young people sent to custody from North Wales

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Background

- Resettlement Broker Project
- Several ongoing research activities

Findings chime with other related projects and research areas:

- ✓ Beyond Youth Custody
- ✓ Desistance in youth justice



‘From the mouths of dragons – how does the resettlement of young people from North Wales measure up...in their own words?’

- Interviews with young people sent to DTO custody from North Wales (to England)
 1. Return to the community
 2. End of licence
 - Purpose - to understand their custody and resettlement experience, against literature on:
 - Effective resettlement
 - Current desistance thinking
- ...all within the Welsh context



Interview participants

- Whole population of young people from North wales leaving custody (DTOs) April to Sept 2014
- Eight young people (5 - missing data)
- Focus group of five young people in Hindley YOI (Oct 2013)
- Four interviews with earlier custody leavers during their licence (worker selected)



The interviewees (excluding Hindley group)

- Mean age 16 (range 13-18)
- 9 (n11) in custody for Breach of Statutory Order
- 7 serving \leq 6 months
- Only 1 female
- Mean average 9 previous convictions
- Nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ LAC
- Nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ first language Welsh
- 3 NEET at sentence, increasing to 8 on release



- Only 2 received Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) opportunities
- Nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ committed breachable actions, but were not breached
- 3 returned to court for breach, 2 recalled
- Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ had no further offending during licence, but only 4 offence free after 12 months (roughly commensurate with UK figures)
- Only 5 with further identified support after licence (inc social worker, where applicable)



Findings

- Young people from more westerly counties felt more impact from being in English custody (language, culture, distance)
- Significant emotional difficulties experienced on leaving custody (not addressed in any provision/intervention, including pre-release courses, where available), including loss of custody relationships
- Young people were being denied ROTL because of their sentence length (however, some young people found the thought of having to return too difficult to accept ROTL)
- Young people were being denied some programmes because of their sentence length



- Majority of young people were released on a Friday, with skeleton staff to support over first (crucial) weekend
- Custody seriously fractured ETE provision
- High intensity post-release licences (ISS) serve to remind young people of 'offender' status, and add to breach
- Planning for post-licence ('after justice') utilising non-criminal agencies helps enable the young person's new non-offending personal narrative, while focusing their attention on post-licence life
- Resettlement planning and intervention did not consider young people's personal goals



Debates to which this adds

- Resettlement good practice – utilisation of a range of agencies (Partnership approach – aim of current project)
- Importance of ROTL being made more generally available (currently under YJB review)
- Use of English custody for Welsh young people – devolution of youth justice enabling the establishment of small local units?
- Roll-out of AssetPlus – embedding of desistance approach?



If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got (Henry Ford)

Current opportunities for change:

- Opportunity for the Ministry of Justice to take on board a growing range of literature covering good resettlement and desistance working
- Youth Justice Review
- YJB review of ROTL
- Devolution of youth justice
- Roll-out of Asset-Plus



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