

Independent Evaluation of ADJUST Service

May 2016

START360™



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ADJUST Headlines

What has ADJUST accomplished so far?

To date the ADJUST Programme has enjoyed many successes, and these can be measured by considering the progress it has made against the outcomes it aimed to attain. The ADJUST service is now integrated into the resettlement plans for young people. This includes ADJUST staff being instrumental in multi-disciplinary meetings including Risk Management, Parole Commissioners etc. Good relationships have been established with key stakeholders including Hydebank Wood and Woodlands JJC, and also with other key service providers. Some of the ADJUST highlights are:

- » Individual action plans have been developed for all participants who engaged with the service.
- » Meaningful one to one sessions completed as well as diversionary activities.
- » Provided drop in service in both Belfast and Derry.
- » Provided critical crisis interventions as and when the need arose.
- » Provided family support where needed which improved the chances of successfully returning home.

The ADJUST service is targeted to work with 120 young people per annum. The service was offered to 140 young people between April 2014 and the end of March 2015, all being offered the opportunity to explore a number of factors enabling them to become more employable. Of the 140 clients offered, 123 young people chose to engage fully. The following stats show ADJUST's achievements in terms of the 123 young people who engaged in 2014/15.

ADJUST HEADLINES



86%

of young people have not returned to custody.

64%



64% young people progressed into some form of training, education or employment

79%

of young people reported an increase in self-confidence by the end of their engagement.



CONFIDENCE

100%

of the 140 young people offered the service had the opportunity to explore employment options and the positive impact they can have on the economy annually.



100% of the 123 young people who engaged reported an increased awareness of the impacts created by social and economic exclusion by the end of their engagement.



100%

of the 140 young people offered the service had the opportunity to explore the positive impacts of achieving essential skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT.

100

100% of 123 young people who engaged with the service completed an individual action plan including personal development components.



81%

of young people reported an increase in coping strategies in dealing with 'high risk' situations by the end of their engagement.



79%

of young people reported an increase in confidence in achieving their identified goals by the end of their engagement.



81%

of young people reported an increased ability in managing negative community influences by the end of their engagement



86%

of young people reported an increase in knowledge of possible solutions to social and economic exclusions by the end of their engagement

£

From a value for money perspective delivery costs are significantly minimal compared to the potential savings to the public purse:

- » The programme provided the support to some 140 young people per annum across 3 years i.e. 420 young people.
- » Historically, the recidivism rate for this target group would have been 69% or 290 out of the 420 young people (under 18) across 3 years.
- » DOJ estimate the annual cost per prisoner place at £73,762 (this is the figure for an adult and the figure for adolescents is likely to be closer to £200,000 per person per annum).
- » If it is assumed that the average time spent by adolescent reoffenders is six months, the historic cost to the public purse (without ADJUST intervention) would be $290 \times £73,762 \times 50\% = £10.7$ million over 3 years.
- » Based on the performance of the ADJUST Programme intervention across 3 years the cost based on a recidivism rate of 20% would be $84 \times £73,762 \times 50\% = £3.1$ million.
- » In simple terms there is real potential for a saving of some £7.6 million over 3 years.

Executive Summary

This document sets out an independent evaluation of the ADJUST service. ADJUST (Adolescents Leaving the Justice System) is a service developed by Start360 (formerly Opportunity Youth). ADJUST has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund across the April 2012-March 2015 timeframe. It was designed to support young offenders, aged 16-21, prior to and immediately on leaving custody, and up to a maximum of six months post-release.

Central to the ADJUST delivery model is a creative non-formal youth work methodology with a comprehensive Throughcare project offered to people in custody in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Women's Prison (Belfast) and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (Bangor).

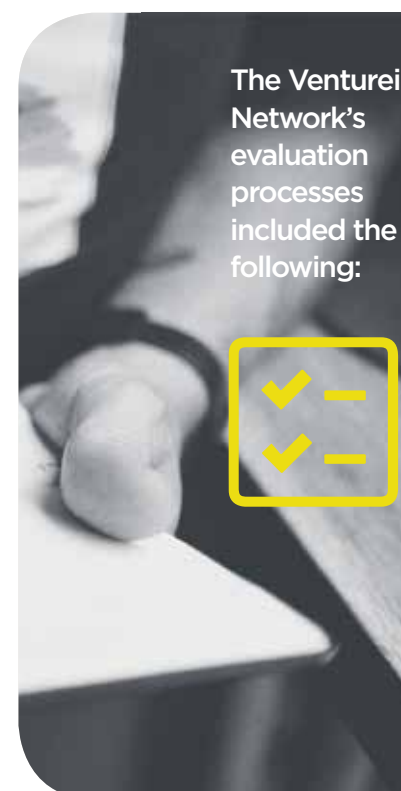
Following its assessment process, the Big Lottery Fund provided a letter of offer for funding in order to support Start360 and its partners to deliver the project. Partners include Northern Ireland Prison Services (NIPS), Probation Service NI, and Housing Rights Service. ADJUST specifically targeted the following needs of adolescents in the Justice System:

- » The high reoffending rate historically and interminably associated with youth offending
- » The underachievement in education and incurring employment barriers which these young people experience
- » The disastrous results of disengagement and detachment from mainstream services resulting in personal problems, problems in the community in forms of nuisance and crime, leading to long term costs and increased criminality, welfare dependency, housing, and a wide range of social and economic factors
- » The serious implications of non/poor attendance in previous formal education in terms of their ability to communicate, socialise and function within today's society
- » The impact of the political conflict in NI and related civil disturbances in terms of our young peoples' feelings of isolation, marginalisation and discrimination experienced, which has impacted on their ability to actively engage as citizens within their own communities
- » The requirement to self-explore the above issues and address feelings of anger, frustration, depression, loneliness and increasingly damaged self-esteem

After the application process and the Big Lottery Fund's assessment, four high level outcomes with associated indicators were developed and agreed as follows:

Outcome No:	Outcome	Outcome Indicators
1	Young people will develop coping strategies in dealing with their high risk behaviours and managing negative peer and community influence resulting in reduced antisocial and offending behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 20 young people can demonstrate a reduction/cessation of anti-social behaviour and will not return to custody six months post engagement » 60 young people demonstrate a reduction/cessation of offending behaviour » 60% of young people report an increased ability in managing negative community influences » 72 young people report an increased ability in managing negative peer influences » 75% of young people report an increase in coping strategies in dealing with 'High Risk' situations » 75% of young people report an increase in self confidence
2	Young people will have increased awareness regarding the impact of social and economic exclusion and how this can be addressed successfully. This will have a positive impact on the proportion of young people who are involved in offending behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 100% of young people report an increased awareness of the impacts created by social and economic exclusion » 40% of young people report an increase in knowledge of possible solutions to social and economic exclusion » 75% of young people report an increase in confidence in achieving their identified goals

3	Young people are better supported to further engage in education, training or employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 100% of young people will complete an individual action plan including personal development components
4	Young people will become more employable as a result of increased literacy, numeracy and ICT skills which will positively impact on reoffending behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 120 young people each year explore employment options and the positive impact they can have on the economy » 120 young people each year have the opportunity to explore the positive impacts of achieving essential skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT and their motivation around these areas



The Venturei Network has developed a series of conclusions after implementing the evaluation process and based on the information available to it. The key conclusions are as follows:



At a headline level the ADJUST service has delivered exactly what was set out in the initial application to the Big Lottery Fund and specified in the resultant Letter of Offer.

Ultimately the focus of the evaluation must be on the impact on adolescents in the justice system who had access to the ADJUST intervention and review of the entry and exit assessments undertaken by the participants (ASI assessments). Direct interviews with a sample of them provides a solid information base to confirm that the programme made a very tangible difference; indeed, some stated that in all likelihood they 'would not still be around' if they had not engaged with ADJUST.



The project has benefited from strong strategic leadership via the initial partnership process which helped to craft and refine the delivery model, strong operational management and a dedicated delivery team (mentors). This has resulted in the delivery of a Big Lottery Fund funded project which has clearly evidenced progress against the four agreed outcomes and with delivery against the indicator targets generally exceeded.



The project was delivered in timeframe and budget.



There is clear evidence that not only were outcomes delivered for the adolescents but that there were positive outcomes for parents and guardians. Often the intervention took pressure off the family unit and helped parents to develop coping strategies or the ability to identify behaviour (by the adolescent) which could reduce progress or put them in a place where they made poor decisions or put themselves at risk. The ADJUST intervention supported the family to develop other support networks which had the potential to deal with many of the issues faced by the adolescent or the family unit. At a more basic level there was also evidence that the intervention created conditions where communications were initiated (where they had ceased) or were enhanced between the adolescent and his/her parent(s) and other members of the family unit.



The rationale for DOJ and strategic partners considering how to resource an ADJUST service is further strengthened when the value for money of the ADJUST intervention is considered. Section 6 of the evaluation report calculates the savings to the public purse (using conservative/prudent assumptions). The ADJUST service has saved over £6 million across the three year delivery timeframe.



The partnership developed in order to influence the design of the ADJUST service and the ongoing partnership working approach used to implement it has been central to the success of ADJUST. Consultation with a range of representatives from NIPS, Youth Justice Agency and Housing Rights Service confirm that this collaborative approach has brought both increased effectiveness and efficiencies to these organisations. Equally there is concern that these benefits and the learning captured via the collaborative approach with Start360 via the implementation of ADJUST will be lost post the Big Lottery Fund funding and there is a real need to identify alternative resourcing strategies.



At its most basic, an intervention such as ADJUST attempts to support better decision making by adolescents in the justice system, helping them to take responsibility and make better decisions which will reduce the potential for reoffending, resulting in spending less time in the young offenders' system. Traditionally recidivism for adolescents is high when compared to that for adults (though marginally lower in Northern Ireland than in other regions of the UK) and based on the published Department of Justice figures is 69% (against 33% for adults).

Perhaps one of the main outputs of the evaluation process is the fact that for the first cohort of ADJUST service users, only 39% reoffended within a year after finishing their engagement with the service. Five of these were on recall so the figure drops again to 32%. This presents a strong case for strategic players in the sector (DOJ, NIPS and Youth Justice Agency) to consider the learning captured via the delivery of the Big Lottery Fund resourced project and identify how it could be mainstreamed into the support processes for adolescents in the justice system.

Background & Introduction



Change Starts Here

Start360 (formerly Opportunity Youth) is a regional charity established in 1993 and is Northern Ireland's leading provider of support services to young people, adult offenders and families in the community. The organisation works with over 22,000 young people, vulnerable adults and their families every year, offering a diverse range of interventions in the

areas of health, justice and the economy including family support, counselling and mentoring. These interventions promote active participation, enabling users to make more informed decisions about their behaviour, lifestyle and progression routes. This work seeks to assist the organisation to achieve its mission, vision and values.



Values

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| ✓ We care | ✓ We listen |
| ✓ We challenge | ✓ We evaluate |
| ✓ We empower | ✓ We measure |
| ✓ We engage | ✓ We respond |
| ✓ We mentor | ✓ We deliver |

The ADJUST Service

The ADJUST (Adolescents Leaving the Justice System) service is funded by the Big Lottery Fund across the timeframe April 2012 – March 2015 and seeks to support young offenders aged 16 to 21 years prior to and immediately on leaving custody, and up to a maximum of six months post-release. The project is delivered through creative non-formal youth work methodology with a comprehensive Throughcare project offered to young people in custody of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and

Women's Prison (Belfast) and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (Bangor).

ADJUST has been designed to address the personal, social, education and employment needs of young people leaving custody through a programme of personal development, employability and life skills attainment in order that every young person will have access to a continuum of care from pre-release to a maximum of six-months post release.

The project targets the following needs:

The requirement to self-explore the above issues and address feelings of anger, frustration, depression, loneliness and increasingly damaged self-esteem

The high reoffending rate historically and interminably associated with youth offending

The underachievement in education and recurring employment barriers which these young people experience

The disastrous results of disengagement and detachment from mainstream services resulting in personal problems, problems in the community in forms of nuisance and crime, leading to long term costs and increased criminality, welfare dependency, housing, and a wide range of social and economic factors



The serious implications of non/poor attendance in previous formal education in terms of their ability to communicate, socialise and function within today's society

The impact of the political conflict in NI and related civil disturbances in terms of our young peoples' feelings of isolation, marginalisation and discrimination experienced, which has impacted on their ability to actively engage as citizens within their own communities

Evaluation Process

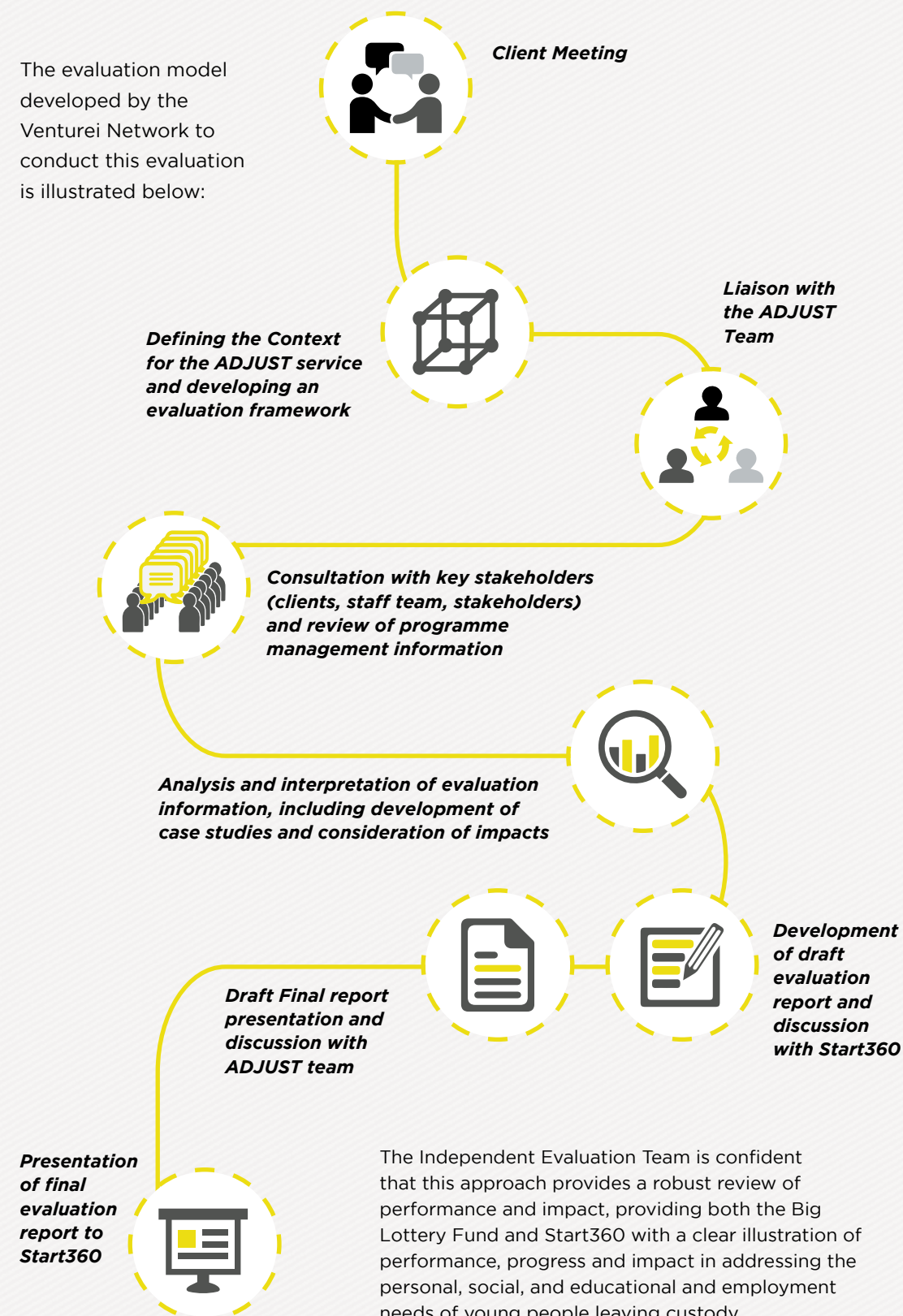
The Terms of Reference set out to meet the following objectives:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  <p>Evaluate the effectiveness of the Programme qualitatively and quantitatively and evaluate the effectiveness of delivery</p> |  <p>Quantify in local, regional and national terms what are (and can be) the economic and social impacts of the ADJUST service</p> |
|  <p>Assess how successful the Programme has been at changing the attitudes of participants towards becoming positive members of society</p> |  <p>Report on specific and notable success stories with quantifiable evidence as to the impact of the intervention on the individuals involved</p> |
|  <p>Make recommendations on how the intervention might be placed within the Reducing Offending Strategy set out by the Department of Justice and Prison Reform set out by NIPS</p> |  <p>Consider the effectiveness of the ADJUST service in terms of helping participants develop the necessary skills and attitudes which will help them reduce the risk of becoming involved in risk-laden behaviours</p> |
|  <p>Make recommendations as to the scalability of the service and how to maximise this</p> | |

The evaluation report considers the following key aspects of the ADJUST service:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  <p>Backgrounds of participants</p> |  <p>Personal case stories of three participants (minimum numbers)</p> |  <p>Strategic recommendations</p> |
|  <p>Summation of participants' personal action plans and planned/ actual outcomes</p> |  <p>Initial recommendations regarding the economic and social cost/benefit analysis with cross referencing to any similar initiatives on a national or international scale</p> | |

The evaluation model developed by the Venturei Network to conduct this evaluation is illustrated below:



Strategic Context

This section of the evaluation report sets out the policy environment within which the ADJUST service operates, considering the project's contribution to the wider strategic environment.

Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2011-2015

The aim of the Programme for Government is to build a vibrant Northern Ireland economy through creating education and employment opportunities for every citizen. It also seeks to reduce crime, enhance community relations and improve the wellbeing and quality of life of the Northern Ireland people.

In order to achieve this, the Programme for Government outlines five priorities which will guide the decisions and investments made by the Executive, its Departments and their agencies:

Priorities

1

Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future

2

Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing

3

Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities

4

Building a Strong and Shared Community

5

Delivering High Quality and Efficient Public Services

The Programme for Government makes a series of commitments which are relevant to the ADJUST service. Within Priority 1 the Northern Ireland Executive seeks to create over 25,000 new jobs by 2015. It also aims to increase the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve at least 5 GCSEs or equivalent and to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives, and job creation.

Another commitment by the Northern Ireland Executive is to deliver a range of measures to tackle poverty and social

exclusion through the Delivering Social Change framework under Priority 2 of the Programme for Government. In Priority 3 the Northern Ireland Executive seeks to reduce the level of serious crime, tackle crime against older and vulnerable people by more effective and appropriate sentences, and improve community safety by tackling anti-social behaviour. Finally, under Priority 4 the Northern Ireland Executive aims to develop initiatives that will help people to understand the cultures which exist in the Province and bring people together to encourage social cohesion and integration.

The ADJUST service is an initiative which aims to reduce re-offending among young people aged 16 - 20 years who have been released from Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre through providing tailoring mentoring and support prior to leaving custody and up to six months post release. The activities and support provided

through the programme help to tackle the challenges which may have led to these people offending such as poverty, lack of education, and unemployment, which are key elements of the Programme for Government. It also contributes to ensuring safer communities throughout Northern Ireland which is something that the Programme for Government strives to achieve.



*The ADJUST service is an initiative which aims to **reduce re-offending** among young people aged 16 - 20 years*



This Framework recognises the need to address these issues through timely and appropriate interventions which will improve the quality of life of those individuals who are at risk

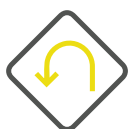
Department of Justice: Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending – Towards a Safer Society 2013

The reduction in criminal activities throughout Northern Ireland is a key aim of the Department of Justice. By reducing offending, it will result in fewer victims of crime and lessen the financial, social and emotional costs of crime across the Province. It will also lower the fear of crime in the community and contribute towards people feeling safe and secure in their own homes. In order to tackle this issue, the Department of Justice developed a Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending. The Strategic Framework sets out how the Department will build a safer Northern Ireland through a long term reduction in offending behaviour.

The Strategic Framework is based around five themes:



Prevention



Diversion



Reducing opportunities to commit crime



Effective delivery of justice



Reducing reoffending

It is widely acknowledged that offending behaviour is linked to individuals that are suffering issues such as family dysfunction, exclusion and poor attainment in education, unemployment, vulnerabilities, lack of stable accommodation, and poverty and disadvantage. This Framework recognises the need to address these issues through timely and appropriate interventions which will improve the quality of life of those individuals who are at risk of future offending and set them on a life trajectory away from offending behaviour. Diverting people away from committing criminal acts will also contribute to reducing offending. The Framework suggests that engaging adults and young people particularly those who are vulnerable or at risk of social exclusion in education or training, encouraging them to participate in a youth or community group, play sports or get involved in other forms of leisure or cultural activities will help to divert them away from offending.

The third theme of the Framework is reducing opportunities to commit crime. The Framework acknowledges that other actions can be taken to reduce offending other than trying to alter an individual's behaviour. This includes extending partnership working between statutory agencies and local communities to reduce anti-social behaviour among young people, increasing street lighting and CCTV in towns, ensuring buildings are fitted with the latest security technology, and providing advice and guidance to local communities on protecting people and property.

The effectiveness of justice agencies in apprehending and convicting offenders is also important in both deterring offending and ensuring public confidence in the justice system. The Framework seeks to implement measures that will speed up justice, review the use of community sentences and improve support for victims and witnesses.

Finally, it is recognised that the justice system should place an increasing emphasis on supporting the effective rehabilitation and resettlement of offenders to reduce the risk of reoffending. The Framework recommends that the type of support for offenders should include:



Reducing re-offending is at the core of what the ADJUST service seeks to achieve. It provides a range of support in addition to various activities to divert young people away from undertaking criminal acts. This includes outdoor activities such as go karting and paintballing as well as education and training opportunities which will enable them to secure employment or carry out volunteering. Therefore, the ADJUST service helps these young people to rebuild their lives and equips them with the life skills required to reintegrate into society, which helps to deliver on the themes of the Strategic Framework.



Department of Justice: Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities – A Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017

Reducing crime and ensuring that all areas of Northern Ireland are safe for people to live, work and visit is one of the key priorities of the Northern Ireland Executive. In response the Department of Justice developed a Community Safety Strategy. It sets out the direction for reducing crime, anti-social

behaviour and fear of crime across Northern Ireland over a five year period to 2017. By ensuring the safety of the local community it encourages the continued inward investment and economic development of Northern Ireland as well as to reaffirm Northern Ireland as being a safe place to visit.

The overall aim of the Community Safety Strategy is to help build:

- ✓ Safer communities, with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
- ✓ Shared communities, where each person's rights are respected in a shared and cohesive community
- ✓ Confident communities, where people feel safe and have confidence in the agencies that serve them

To deliver on these aims the Strategy sets out a series of actions which are identified below.

To build <i>safer communities</i> with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour the Department will:	To build <i>shared communities</i> where each person's rights are respected in a shared and cohesive community the Department will:	To build <i>confident communities</i> where people feel safe and have confidence in the agencies that serve them the Department will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Intervene early to reduce the risk of individuals, especially young people, from coming into contact with the justice system ✓ Reduce the level of alcohol and drug related crime by supporting individuals who face addiction and substance misuse ✓ Tackle domestic and sexual violence ✓ Continue to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour in local communities through targeted programmes delivered regionally and locally ✓ Make our neighbourhoods, town and city centres and rural communities safer by reducing the opportunities to commit crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work closely with local communities and across government to address community safety issues at interfaces ✓ Seek agreement with local communities to reduce the number of interface structures ✓ Tackle all forms of hate crime through prevention, awareness and education, and support victims and communities <p>The ADJUST service provides early intervention support and guidance to help young offenders who have had drug and alcohol and/or mental health issues to prepare for release from custody. This support is also provided up to six months post-release which helps to reduce re-offending. By helping to reduce re-offending among this group of individuals, ADJUST contributes to lowering anti-social behaviour and other criminal activities in the community, which is a key aim of the Community Safety Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support PCSPs to work with communities to identify the issues that matter locally and develop solutions ✓ Reduce fear of crime and help people feel safer through regional and local programmes to increase trust and confidence ✓ Give confidence to individuals to report crime to PSNI and others where appropriate, such as Crimestoppers

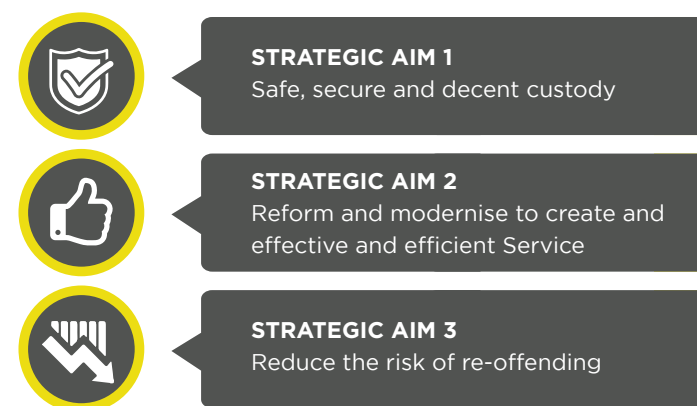
Northern Ireland Prison Service Corporate Plan 2011-2015

The Northern Ireland Prison Service Corporate Plan outlines the strategic direction of the organisation over the 2011-2015 timeframe. It also establishes the key priorities of the Prison Service over this time period. The actions set out in the Plan will enable the Prison Service to continue to deliver on the Department's outcomes whilst addressing the challenges it currently faces.

The core purpose of the Northern Ireland Prison Service is:

“ To improve public safety by reducing the risk of re-offending through the management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody ”

To deliver on this core purpose the Corporate Plan sets out 3 strategic aims:



Some of the commitments set out in the Corporate Plan which are relevant to the ADJUST service include:

- » Developing effective ways to help offenders desist from further offending
- » Creating stronger and more effective links with families, communities and partners outside the Northern Ireland Prison Service
- » Creating environments and opportunities for prisoners to develop, to become responsible, to make positive contributions to others and to realise the possibility of becoming crime-free
- » Developing the prison estate to ensure the needs of the courts and offenders sent there are met
- » Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the broad criminogenic needs of offenders in custody in order to match the services available to meet that need

Northern Ireland Prison Service – An Employability Strategy 2013-2017

The NI Prison Service Employability Strategy 2013-2017 focuses on creating opportunities for people in the Justice system to gain qualifications and move towards employment in order to integrate better and significantly reduce the potential for reoffending. Providing education, training and employment opportunities for offenders is one of the key ways to support their resettlement into the community and reduce their risk of re-offending. This can be seen in research which states that when prisoners find employment on release, the risk of them re-offending drops by between 30% and 50%. In recognition of its importance the Northern Ireland Prison Service has developed an Employability Strategy. The Strategy seeks to assist in the reduction in prisoners' risk of re-offending by ensuring that they are provided with the best possible prospects for gaining employment on release.

The overall objectives of the Strategy are to:

- ✓ Increase the number of prisoners entering employment or related training post-release
- ✓ Increase the number of prisoners working a 'normal' day whilst in custody
- ✓ Establish a contracted working relationship with external employers for the provision of goods and or services delivered by prisoners

To fulfil the first objective of the Strategy the Northern Ireland Prison Service will provide opportunities for prisoners to take control of their own learning and development by involving them in service development and delivery, identify relevant services and develop better ways of delivering to prisoners the sets of achievements required by the current and projected employment market. It also commits under this objective to provide access to effective careers education, information, advice and guidance, create opportunities for prisoners to engage with employers, provide a framework for prisoners to recognise and validate their achievements, and develop effective arrangements with partner Criminal Justice agencies and employers to monitor prisoners' post-release employment.

To meet the second objective of the Strategy the Northern Ireland Prison Service will introduce a 'core day' that replicates as far as possible a normal working day, create more employment opportunities for prisoners both inside and outside the prison,



The Northern Ireland Prison Service will create more employment opportunities for prisoners both inside and outside the prison.

and ensure the development of employability skills is recognised as a core element of sentence plans and that Northern Ireland Prison Service staff are adequately supported in delivering that element. Finally, to deliver on the third objective of the Strategy the Northern Ireland Prison Service will develop effective service partnerships with employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and make maximum use of the working out facilities already in place and improving those facilities where appropriate.

The ADJUST Programme is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Strategy on the basis that it supports young people to consider personal development and to undertake education and training which has the potential to support them to (re)enter formal learning and education and/or experience employment through placements or actual employment.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Working Together for Change – Learning and Skills Strategic Plan 2010-2013

One of the main characteristics of people who commit crimes is their lack of basic education. Therefore, learning and skills development are important elements in helping to prepare offenders for their return to the community and to reduce re-offending. To assist in this key piece of work undertaken by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, a Learning and Skills Strategic Plan was created. The Plan provides a framework for how the Northern Ireland Prison Service will actively promote learning and skills development in the prison environment and increase the number of prisoners undertaking qualifications and training. By enhancing learning and skills development among the prison population it will help to improve their chances of gaining employment and resettling successfully in the community post-release.

The overall objectives of the Strategy are to:

- ✓ To ensure that all prisoners' educational needs are assessed and that appropriate learning and skills opportunities and activity are a key element in a positive regime
- ✓ To prepare prisoners for release and resettlement by providing the essential skills needed to participate fully in behavioural and therapeutic programmes and to engage more fully in a wider range of education and training activity
- ✓ To develop a greater sense of self-worth through participation and achievement by making learning and skills a core element of individual sentence plans
- ✓ To promote and provide a wide range of quality assured externally accredited courses that offer positive and exciting learning experiences for prisoners and improve future employment chances

The ADJUST Programme is consistent with this Strategy and has the potential to deliver its vision and objectives, in part, on the basis that it supports young people to consider self or personal development and take actions in order to create the conditions for them to learn and develop life skills which can position them for employment and/or continued learning. It helps create a supportive environment for personal development including peer support/group activity (learning and non-learning), access to a mentor and workplace placements.

Youth Justice Agency Corporate Plan 2013-2016

In order to reduce crime rates in Northern Ireland over the long term it is important that young people are encouraged not to commit crimes as well as prevented from re-offending. Young offenders are the responsibility of the Youth Justice Agency. Its Corporate Plan outlines the actions that the organisation will take in this area between 2013 and 2016. The Corporate Plan has been designed to reduce offending among young people in Northern Ireland, to reduce the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system by further developing diversionary services in the community and to reduce the number of young people in custody by further developing specialist services for prolific young offenders.

The overall mission of the Youth Justice Agency is:

“ Making communities safer by helping children to stop offending ”

The Corporate Plan sets out 4 priority areas which will help to fulfil this mission:



To make communities safer the Youth Justice Agency seeks to implement programmes and initiatives that will help to manage young people in custody safely and securely. Those programmes and initiatives are also designed to:

- ✓ Promote young people's health, well-being and development
- ✓ Support and supervise young people immediately following their release from custody when they may be most vulnerable and at risk of re-offending
- ✓ Challenge offending behaviour
- ✓ Provide support through restorative and other approaches to encourage young people to recognise the effects of their crime and to take responsibility for their actions
- ✓ Work in partnership with all Departments and agencies (statutory and voluntary) that deliver services for young people at risk of offending or who may present a risk to others
- ✓ Strengthen partnerships with local communities to encourage greater involvement in the Agency's work and a better understanding of young people's needs

To ensure faster, fairer justice, the Youth Justice Agency will, over the term of this Corporate Plan, engage with partners to ensure that custody is used only as a last resort for young people, support and supervise young people whilst on bail to minimise the risk of further offences being committed, and support and encourage family involvement in the services delivered by the Agency.

One of the four priorities is 'Delivering Effective Youth Justice'. The focus of the ADJUST Programme is helping to put in place a person-centred supportive environment and context for personal development which helps the young person to engage with learning, education and employment post-custody, thus significantly reducing reoffending. This type of person-centred approach, delivered in partnership, can clearly contribute to the delivery of this priority objective in the Youth Justice Agency Corporate Plan.

The Youth Justice Agency will undertake a series of actions to fulfil the third priority set out in the Corporate Plan. This includes developing a range of specialist interventions to address key aspects of offending behaviour (e.g. sexually harmful behaviour, violent offending, mental health, special needs, drugs and alcohol), assessing the needs of young people to ensure they can participate effectively in the youth conference process, helping young people with communication difficulties to understand what is happening to them within the criminal justice system, and developing best practice in the operational delivery of all youth justice services and seek to influence youth justice policy. Finally, to effectively manage resources the Youth Justice Agency will promote staff well-being and a safe, healthy workplace, deliver value for money through effective use of financial resources, and maintain effective information/data management systems and controls.

The ADJUST Service Contribution to Corporate Plans and Strategies

The following table summarises how the ADJUST service contributes to the documents listed above.

NORTHERN IRELAND PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT 2011-2015

Key Themes, Aims and Objectives	<p>There are five priorities in the Programme for Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future » Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing » Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities » Building a Strong and Shared Community » Delivering High Quality and Efficient Public Services
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How the ADJUST Service contributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » An initiative which aims to reduce re-offending among young people post-release from Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre » Provides mentoring support and diversionary activities such as fishing trips, go-karting and paintballing, to reduce instances of re-offending such as anti-social behaviour in the community » Helps young offenders to obtain qualifications, secure employment, gain access to suitable accommodation and increase confidence post-release, which improves their quality of life
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DOJ: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR REDUCING OFFENDING - TOWARDS A SAFER SOCIETY 2013

Key Themes, Aims and Objectives	<p>The Strategic Framework is based around five themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Prevention » Diversion » Reducing opportunities to commit crime » Effective delivery of justice » Reducing reoffending
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How the ADJUST Service contributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Helps over 140 young offenders who had mental health, drugs and alcohol, relationship and/or accommodation issues to reintegrate into society » Offers education and training which assists young offenders to secure employment or a voluntary position post-release, which diverts them from undertaking criminal activities
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DOJ: BUILDING SAFER, SHARED AND CONFIDENT COMMUNITIES - A COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2012-2017

Key Themes, Aims and Objectives	<p>The overall aim of the Community Safety Strategy is to help build:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Safer communities, with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour » Shared communities, where each person's rights are respected in a shared and cohesive community » Confident communities, where people feel safe and have confidence in the agencies that serve them
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How the ADJUST Service contributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reduces re-offending among young people with the most challenging behaviours » Works with young people in the community up to six months after they have been released to ensure they do not commit criminal acts » Contributes to ensuring a safer community where the young offenders have been reintegrated
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NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE CORPORATE PLAN 2011-2015

Key Themes, Aims and Objectives The core purpose of the Northern Ireland Prison Service is to improve public safety by reducing the risk of re-offending through the management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody

How the ADJUST Service contributes

- » Complements other programmes and initiatives in the Prison Service which help to resettle offenders into the community post-release
- » Works in partnership with the Resettlement team in Hydebank and the Care Team in Woodlands
- » Resulted in 44 young people not engaging in anti-social behaviour or returning to custody after release during year one, which reduced demand on Prison Service resources

NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE – AN EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGY 2013-2017

Key Themes, Aims and Objectives The overall objectives of the Strategy are to:

- » Increase the number of prisoners entering employment or related training post release
- » Increase the number of prisoners working a 'normal' day whilst in custody
- » Establish a contracted working relationship with external employers for the provision of goods and or services delivered by prisoners

How the ADJUST Service contributes

- » Participants can gain an OCN accredited qualification which makes them more employable
- » Helps young offenders understand what a normal working day consists of
- » Enabled 74 young people to move into employment schemes such as Job Assist, Switch onto Employment, and HSC Trust employability programmes

NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE: WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHANGE – LEARNING AND SKILLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2013

Key Themes, Aims and Objectives The key aim of this Plan is to actively promote learning and skills development in the prison environment and increase the number of prisoners undertaking qualifications and training

How the ADJUST Service contributes

- » Service beneficiaries have the opportunity to obtain an OCN accredited qualification
- » In the first year of the service 74 young people progressed into education and training programmes such as Youth Works, Community Training Schemes, GRIT, and Bytes

YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY CORPORATE PLAN 2013-2016

Key Themes, Aims and Objectives There are four key priority areas established in this Corporate Plan:

- » Making communities safer
- » Faster, fairer justice
- » Delivering effective youth justice
- » Managing resources

How the ADJUST Service contributes

- » Provides early intervention in order to reduce instances of re-offending among young people post-release
- » Reduces the feeling of social exclusion and builds confidence among young offenders which helps to make communities safer

Learning from Others

In this section the evaluation considers programmes and projects similar to ADJUST from other regions as well as evaluations and reports to identify any potential learning points and best practice.

Those projects are ADAPT, Inside Out and the Youth Transition Network run by Beyond Youth Custody (a national programme in Britain). The evaluations and reports are an Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board Pilot Resettlement Support Panel Scheme (Welsh Assembly), Young Adults in Custody – The Way Forward (Transition to Adulthood Alliance), Beyond Youth Custody – How Young People Cope with Release and Beyond Youth Custody – Resettlement of Young People Leaving Custody.

BEYOND YOUTH CUSTODY

Beyond Youth Custody is a national programme in Britain set up to examine and promote best practice in the resettlement of young people and young adults leaving custody. The programme is led by NACRO and aims to establish an evidence base of effective practice by combining what is already known

about what works to reduce reoffending by young people leaving custody with an analysis of the impact of a range of approaches. The Beyond Youth Custody programme is funded by the Big Lottery Fund under the Youth in Focus Programme of work. Among the projects it delivers of relevance to ADJUST are:

ADAPT

Delivered in Salford, Trafford and Manchester, by Salford Foundation Ltd, ADAPT is an intensive mentoring, support and advocacy project supporting young men and women leaving custody to resettle back into their communities. ADAPT targets young people aged 15-25 who have served a custodial sentence and provides mentoring and support, helping them to improve their employability skills and providing advocacy and support so they can access other services.

ADAPT project workers build up a relationship with the young person while they are still in custody and provide intensive support to them on their release. The project is characterised by partnership working by key statutory, public and private sector partners and offers young people an opportunity to break out of the cycle of offending behaviour and move forward to a more positive future beyond custody.

Engaging young people is a key priority of the project and ADAPT employs young ex-offenders as peer ambassadors to work alongside professional staff and assist with designing and delivering project work, as well as engaging with other young people who become involved.

Inside Out

Inside Out works with young custody leavers across a number of locations (Darlington, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Stockton) to develop their personal and social skills. The project targets young custody leavers aged 15-21 years, with young offenders with learning difficulties being prioritised. It aims to enable a positive transition

from custody to the community through a three-stage programme as follows:

“

Inside Out is characterised by a strong focus on personal and social development

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1 INTRODUCTORY STAGE delivered within custodial establishments comprising individual meetings and group sessions.

2 ENGAGEMENT STAGE involving a wide range of individual and group activities and ongoing assessment.

3 FOLLOW-ON STAGE involving ongoing support with targeted aftercare plans, which in some cases may last until the end of the funding period.

Inside Out is characterised by a strong focus on personal and social development, this aspect being viewed as underpinning the young offenders' ability to engage fully with supportive provision. The project aims to meet local gaps and improve joint working, with learning being used to develop a service framework to improve support services for young offenders.

Youth Transition Network

The Youth Transition Network project works with young custody leavers and care leavers aged 16-24 years in West London to engage them in education, training and employment and enable a network of community support to be built. The project focuses on providing young people with access to intensive support to overcome the barriers they face, in order to secure education, training or employment. Support can take the form of assistance with CVs, interview skills, job searches and employer expectations. Aligned to this, an employer engagement officer works with employers and training institutions to open up opportunities for the young people.

As well as flexible and holistic support, the model also strives to make best use of existing resources for young people by building up a database of local resources and organisations and introducing young people to these resources, providing them with a directory of support services. The project supports young people to build up their own network of contacts in their borough/community to confidently access services which can assist in their ongoing progression and development when the Youth Transition Network intervention has ended.

EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD PILOT RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT PANEL SCHEME (WELSH ASSEMBLY)

The Youth Justice Board made funding available to enable six selected Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in Wales to expand resettlement for young people aged 12 to 17 leaving custody. An evaluation of the Youth Justice Board Pilot Resettlement Schemes was carried out for the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and the Social Research Division of the Welsh Government. The evaluation was completed in August 2011 and the following conclusions and recommendations are relevant to ADJUST.

Funding was made available to expand resettlement for young people aged 12 to 17 leaving custody.

Conclusions



Resettlement workers

The project assigned a staff member to work with young people on resettlement-related work and in the majority of cases this was a dedicated resettlement worker. The role of resettlement workers varied, with post-holders drawn from different backgrounds. The model was most effective in practice where the resettlement worker developed a positive relationship with the young people, where they understood and identified the young people's needs, and where they were able to put in place effective strategies to meet those needs.

Effective multi-agency working

Effective planning of resettlement support depended on the extent to which all relevant agencies took part in discussions of individual cases and whether those attending meetings had an understanding of what resources needed to be committed. In addition, stakeholder representatives must have authority within their organisations to ensure that decisions were implemented. Achieving 'buy-in' from relevant stakeholders at a sufficient level of seniority was a key aspect of the success of the resettlement work. To be effective this should be underpinned by a commitment to multi-agency working that was translated into practice through agreed protocols.

Recommendations



Amongst the key recommendations drawn were that partnership multi-agency working is essential to resettlement work. Core to this is ensuring that all relevant agencies are represented by staff with sufficient seniority to take decisions and ensure follow on action where necessary. The report also stresses that “dedicated resettlement funding should be used in ways that meet the needs of each individual young person. However, it should not be used to replace support which the young people are entitled to receive from other sources”. This highlights the need for joined up working to avoid duplication/displacement.



The value of tailored, individual one-to-one work with young people was also highlighted, with the focus of resettlement work being to ensure that individual needs of the young people are met. This is best achieved by resettlement workers engaging with young people at an early stage of their involvement with the justice system, including visits while in custody. A key outcome should be development of a structured resettlement plan which takes account of the young people's needs and aspirations and can identify a range of resources/support which the young person can access in order to enable them to resettle.

YOUNG ADULTS IN CUSTODY – THE WAY FORWARD (TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD ALLIANCE)

The Transition to Adulthood Alliance is a coalition of twelve criminal justice, health and youth organisations, which work together to identify and promote more effective ways of working with young adults throughout the criminal justice process, highlighting the multi-agency nature of resettlement.

The report focuses on young adults in the criminal justice system and explores the best arrangements for dealing with these young people and what might be

done to improve the current system of imprisonment for this age group. In pursuit of this, examples from other jurisdictions are considered, including Scotland. This finds that the Scottish Prisons Service has begun work to create a new environment at HMYOI Polmont, the male young offender establishment. The aim here is to promote development of core skills and encourage engagement with learning and vocational training to help achieve more positive outcomes for the young people. A multi-agency Learning and Skills

forum has been set up at Polmont to drive forward change, including professional development for prison staff.

In Germany, the Neustrelitz youth prison in the region of Mecklenburg, Western Pomerania, caters for young people aged 14 and above who are in pre-trial detention and youth custody. The young person's stay starts in a unit which houses those on remand and acts as an induction unit where individualised plans are drawn up which plot a step by step approach towards a normalised regime. There are special units for young people with the most problematic behaviour and violent offences which have a higher staff ratio, in addition to therapists offering individual and group work sessions after education or work and a special unit for vulnerable young people who cannot cope with the demands of the ordinary regime. Specialist treatment programmes are provided for violent, sexual, property, drug and traffic offenders with additional programmes for those who cannot live

in groups, have unstable personalities, learning difficulties and/or are potential victims.

Preparation for release at Neustrelitz is highly structured with a standardised transition from custody to community using a programme called INSTAR. This starts six months before release and involves a clear time line of activities including case conferences and other planning mechanisms using standardised documentation. Special attention is given to those young people with nowhere to go on release through a “Safe landing” programme.

These models highlight the multiple and complex needs which the custodial system and resettlement programmes such as ADJUST are tasked with addressing. The paper goes on to make a series of proposals for reform, recognising that developing custodial establishments which best meet the needs of young adults is by no means straightforward.

Among the key points with respect to resettlement, and therefore of relevance to ADJUST, are the following:



Effective measures for young adults will require specific commitment to meeting the health and wellbeing needs of the age group, regimes

which provide a full daily programme of supervised activities, vocational and work style learning opportunities, effective personal officer schemes and highly proactive resettlement programmes.



A wider range of residential placements should be developed for young adults in conflict with the law, both inside and outside the prison system.



A training course should be developed for those working with young adults in custody, emphasising that staff should take

into account the characteristics of young people's behaviour and stage of development through appropriate role modelling, promoting and maintaining positive behaviour, and clearly defining behavioural boundaries.



A more structured approach to resettlement should be introduced.

BEYOND YOUTH CUSTODY – HOW YOUNG PEOPLE COPE WITH RELEASE

The report acknowledges that there is a gap in the knowledge about the way that young people experience the transition from custody back into the community. In particular, it highlights the stresses reported during a period of disorientation and reorientation immediately following release and has been informed through consultation with 12 - 17 year olds. While this is a younger demographic than that catered for by ADJUST, there remain some important findings, such as:

- » Policymakers and service providers must acknowledge that release involves disorientation and can be stressful. Once aware, they can begin to anticipate and understand some of the likely reactions of young people, and take these into account in planning, carrying out, and enforcing a sentence.
- » Young people also need to be made aware in advance of how they may feel on release. Ideally, the young people should undergo a planned preparation for release that begins as early as possible during their custodial period, helping them to find and adopt coping mechanisms for the huge changes in their lives.
- » Extending the use of Release On Temporary Leave would also facilitate a more graduated process of readjustment, enabling young people to get used to the change of pace and the extent of change they will experience when they leave the confines of the institution over a period of time, thereby minimising the extent of the shock associated with release.
- » Renegotiating relationships and interactions with those closest to them could be aided by focusing more on family interactions while inside - regular communication with as many family and friends as possible should be encouraged.
- » Providers of resettlement services should ensure that they assist parents and other family and friends to visit the young person regularly when inside, if the young person wishes it. Institutions should consider how they can facilitate more alone time between young people and their families before release in order to help start the renegotiation process.
- » The importance of early planning for release, beginning as soon as the custodial period starts and with early confirmation of the resettlement arrangements that will be in place when the young person leaves the institution. This is not only so that interventions are able to start promptly on release, but also so that the young person has an opportunity to prepare themselves for where they are likely to be living and what they are likely to be doing when they leave.
- » A structured timetable should be put in place for the initial period

after release. This should bear in mind the stressful symptoms of disorientation, including withdrawal, so should be flexible and adaptable to the individual. Intervention should be planned in a graduated manner, at a pace the young person is comfortable with and increasing what is expected of them based on how they are able to readjust to life outside of prison.

- » Service providers should consider activities during the initial period after release that specifically aid the reorientation process. These may help readjustment by facilitating families and young people to have more structure to their timetable or lifestyle than they are used to and may help renegotiation of relationships by facilitating sessions and scenarios with family and friends, and guiding interaction in a positive way.

Service providers should consider activities during the initial period after release that specifically aid the reorientation process



BEYOND YOUTH CUSTODY – RESETTLEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CUSTODY

This report comprises the findings of an analysis of research literature about resettlement services for young people when they leave custody. It was carried out as part of the Beyond Youth Custody programme funded under the Big Lottery Fund's Youth in Focus programme. The report acknowledges that there is a lack of literature on the resettlement needs of, and provision for, those aged between 18 and 25, highlighting the value of documenting the performance and impact of ADJUST.

The key conclusions drawn by the review in relation to resettlement are as follows:

- » The importance of the resettlement of young people after custody (or aftercare) has increased significantly in both policy and practice terms over the last 15 years.
- » Although resettlement in England and Wales has focused on the youth justice system's statutory primary aim of reducing reoffending, alternative aims in other jurisdictions may result in a different emphasis, such as promoting social inclusion or engagement.
- » Policymakers have recognised that effective resettlement requires 'co-ordinated and holistic' resettlement to address the complex needs of young people.
- » The period of transition from custody to the community provides a window

of opportunity when young people are enthusiastic to change, however this is impeded by a lack of sufficient, relevant and timely support, leading to disillusionment and a return to offending. In particular, plans for suitable accommodation and education, training or employment are often not established by the time of release.

- » Resettlement provision problems are partly due to a failure in joint working between custody and community agencies, and a lack of sufficient partnership work between agencies in the community. Priorities for custodial

institutions may militate against preparation for release, and information flow through the prison gates can be limited. Once in the community, problems with inadequate resources are exacerbated by the difficulties youth justice professionals experience in engaging the necessary stakeholders across the statutory, private and community/voluntary sectors.

- » There are particular problems in service provision consistency for those who turn 18 during their sentence, when statutory responsibility for resettlement shifts between agencies.

In terms of moving forward, the review makes the following recommendations which highlight the need for resettlement support such as that offered by ADJUST:

- » Continuous service: Ensuring that there is a continuous service between custody and the community, with sentence planning focused on resettlement throughout. A seamless sentence should see the work undertaken in custody continued into the community, and even beyond the end of the licence period.
- » Preparation for release: This should begin at the point of entering custody, including ensuring that community based opportunities (including accommodation) are available on release. Release on temporary licence schemes can help with preparation for transition into the community.
- » Supporting the key transition period at release with enhanced supervision: As well as presenting an opportunity for positive engagement, the period immediately after release is a
- flashpoint for trauma, disorientation and reoffending. The young person should be prepared for it and their expectations managed, with immediate implementation of support plans.
- » Engagement in the resettlement process: Ensuring that the young person is engaged in the resettlement process will improve their motivation to comply. This involves the development of relationships where the practitioner and young person work together to achieve positive change.
- » Co-ordinating services and the 'brokerage' of multiple stakeholders: This is crucial to meeting the complex needs of vulnerable young people. The wrap-around package of support requires resettlement staff to broker the engagement of partners across sectors, involving high-level buy-in, joint planning and information sharing.

WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

Among the key learning points which can be drawn from these projects and reports for consideration by Start360 and the ADJUST team are the following characteristics:

MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH



- » Partnership working by all key stakeholders with agreed protocols around roles and responsibilities – this requires high-level buy-in, joint planning and information sharing on the part of all agencies
- » Multi-agency approaches are particularly important for the age group targeted by ADJUST as statutory responsibility for resettlement shifts between agencies for those who turn 18 during their sentence
- » Partner representatives must bring decision making authority to the partnership model

SUPPORT



- » Importance of positive working relationship between young person and resettlement support officer
- » Role of peer support workers can make a valuable contribution to supporting young people through the resettlement process
- » Resettlement plans are key to supporting a young person leaving the justice system
- » Support should include provision of practical support such as CVs, interview and job search skills
- » Providing young people leaving custody with a directory of support services and signposting
- » Facilitating the professional development of prison staff working in the resettlement field

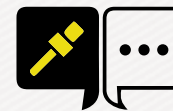
ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION



- » Resettlement programmes should have a focus on promoting social inclusion and community engagement to facilitate resettlement and integration. This can assist the young person's personal and social development in addition to fostering community support
- » Encouraging and facilitating ongoing contact with family members during the custodial period to assist the transition from custody back into the community

Evaluation Findings

This section of the evaluation considers wider feedback and consultation informing the evaluation of ADJUST, based on consultations with the Start360 team, stakeholders and service beneficiaries.



KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

As part of the process to inform the Independent Evaluation, the Venturei Network carried out a series of key informant interviews. These were agreed with the Programme Delivery Team in Start360 and were identified as partners, the funder and other stakeholders who had an influence on or might have an interest in the ADJUST Programme.



Big Lottery Fund

The current Project Officer for the ADJUST Programme (Nuala Smyth) was keen to establish the context for her input to the evaluation process – she had only recently taken over responsibility for the ADJUST service and therefore had limited direct interaction with the Start360 team. However, in order to prepare for the semi-structured consultation meeting, she had discussed the project with the former Project Officer. Key feedback to inform the consultation process from the perspective of the Big Lottery Fund was:

- » From the perspective of the Big Lottery Fund, the ADJUST service and Start360 as a promoter was perceived as 'low risk'; this was qualified on the basis that they received accurate and timely monitoring and interim reports and appropriate financial drawdown information. On that basis the project proves easy to deal with from the Big Lottery Fund's perspective.
- » It was recognised that the beneficiary group with which Start360 is working is challenging and therefore it would not have been unreasonable for the Big Lottery Fund to expect or experience an under-delivery in relation to the targets (programme outputs). On the basis that the ADJUST service has largely exceeded its targets, this would be perceived as a good investment of programme funding by the Big Lottery Fund.
- » Discussion between the Big Lottery Fund and the Start360 team, combined with a review of the end of year reports, confirmed that the ADJUST service met and indeed in many areas exceeded the targets established in the original 'Letter of Offer'.
- » The Big Lottery Fund fully recognises that the current reporting processes focus, essentially, on monitoring progress against targets established in the 'Letter of Offer'. The Project

Officer is particularly keen to review the outputs of the evaluation process in order to identify how the ADJUST service has performed against the outcomes established in the original submission and detailed in the 'Letter of Offer'. In many ways it is perceived that the independent evaluation will put real experience/faces to the process and the potential to demonstrate the difference the intervention provided through the ADJUST service has made to the lives of the beneficiaries and indeed to their parents, guardians or carers.

- » It was perceived as useful if the independent evaluation set out opportunities for refining the ADJUST model on the basis of the learning captured through its implementation over five years (or indeed six years if an extension is awarded).
- » There is a possibility that the Big Lottery Fund will have extension funding for some of its programmes. Given the performance to date if Start360 was to make a submission for additional funding, it would be reasonable for the Big Lottery Fund team to consider it.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

The summary of outputs of the semi-structured consultation engagement with the Northern Ireland Prison Service was held with Brian McCaughey. It is the Prison Service's belief that the ADJUST service had a positive effect on participants but knowledge on the

service was limited due to no direct involvement in it. It was perceived as useful if the Independent Evaluation Team referred the Prison Service representative to the governors of the Hydebank Wood and Woodlands JJC centres.

Partners

As part of the evaluation process the Venturei Network facilitated a consultation workshop with representatives of Start360's partners in the delivery of the ADJUST service. The workshop included representatives from:



The evaluation workshop was used in order for the representatives of the partners to confirm their experience of the ADJUST service, their perceptions of its impact on the beneficiary group and its contribution towards the delivery of their corporate objectives. The feedback can be summarised as follows:

- » There was clear consensus that the ADJUST service was a significant addition to both the process and approach taken to support adolescents in the justice system who were moving towards release.
- » The 'joined up' nature of ADJUST worked very well and confirmed the importance of partnership working in the delivery of better outcomes for young offenders.
- » Also central to the success of the ADJUST service was its comprehensive nature and the fact that it recognised the multitude of challenges and hence support requirements of the beneficiary group. The fact that there was significant communication between partners and with the mentor working directly with the young person provided a focal point to ensuring that all support required was made available rather than individual elements of support 'finding' the beneficiary.
- » The fact that a significant element of the ADJUST service is delivered in the prison environment and post-release has had a significant impact on recidivism. All of the partners identified that they had less return from adolescents leaving the justice system and less requirement for post-release interventions. Largely this is accredited to the comprehensive nature of the ADJUST service, the appointment of a mentor/ buddy to the young person and the partnership approach providing the full gambit of support services in the young offender's prison setting and immediately after exit.
- » There was a consensus view from the partners that the majority of young offenders rarely have realistic plans in place for what they will do once they exit the justice system; central to the success of the ADJUST service was that the mentor worked with the young person to develop realistic plans in respect of accommodation, training, employment, integration and social networks. There was particular reference to the fact that the mentor acted as a critical friend i.e. if the young person exiting the justice system had unrealistic plans the mentor challenged those and tried to bring a degree of realism to them.
- » It was noted by the partners that many of the young people have no real support networks within the communities where they live or lived and that this has a significant impact on recidivism. The fact that the mentor tried to develop support networks and potential opportunities for training, work placement and volunteering helped to provide focus for young people which steered them away from 'risk taking' behaviour which could reengage them with the justice system.
- » The key element of the success of the ADJUST service from the perspective of the partners is that it is not court mandated. As a result, young people tend to accept the support more willingly on the basis that they do not perceive it as part of their judgement.

Conclusions Based on Engagement with Key Informants



It is the view of the Venturei Network Independent Evaluation Team that the following conclusions can be drawn as a result of engagement with the key informants:



It is clear that the service has been well delivered in line with the expectations of the funder

- » It is clear that the service has been well delivered in line with the expectations of the funder and also of the original programme partners. From the perspective of all involved it has been both useful in terms of achieving organisational aims and objectives in addition to being an easy engagement with Start360 on the basis that there were limited unforeseen challenges, combined with effective programme management from a well-managed and motivated programme delivery team.
- » It is clear from the perspective of the resource provider (the Big Lottery Fund) that this is a 'low risk' project. There is comfort that if an extension is granted or if Start360 was to secure funding or mainstreaming resources from other sources, the providers would enter such an arrangement with a high degree of comfort that their resources would be well used.
- » It is recognised that there has been a significant degree of 'turnover' of key personnel in partner agencies over the duration of the ADJUST Programme; this is often the experience of the Venturei Network on five year programmes funded by organisations such as the Big Lottery Fund. It is not unreasonable that key personnel will change roles or responsibilities across a three year timeframe. However, on the basis that the ADJUST project has progressed well in terms of delivery, there is a danger that there is less requirement for the partnership members to actively come together to work on the project on the basis that implementation has run very much in line with what was projected. Whilst this is understandable, there is a danger that the benefits of partnership working are lost in terms of coming together to examine efficiencies, new ways of working and ultimately how all of the partners can

use the lessons captured through the implementation of the ADJUST Programme – which would therefore allow them to embed it within their organisations, bid for additional resources to continue the support provide through it or lobby at an Executive/Departmental (DOJ) level in order to secure mainstream funding. The last point is particularly important on the basis that it is likely that, given the outputs and evidence of outcomes, the approach brings significant value for money or cost savings to the Department over the medium to long term. However, if these are to be effectively communicated and an effective and robust lobbying process is to be undertaken, it is the view of the Independent Evaluation Team that this could be better achieved through a collaborative or partnership approach rather than through Start360 on its own.

- » The Venturei Network has no concerns in relation to 'buy in' from the partners but feels that as the ADJUST Programme moves towards the end of its delivery timeframe and that an independent outcomes focused evaluation is available, it is important that the partners are re-energised around this in order to make the best use of the learning and the evaluation.



CLIENT INTERVIEWS

The following pages set out the outputs of a series of interviews with ADJUST clients, establishing their experiences and the impacts of the service.

Client Journey

1

YOUNG
MALE A

The ADJUST client provided the independent evaluator with some background information in relation to his situation pre-offending and entering the Justice System. He lived in a relatively unstable home environment typified by:

- ✗ Parental use/abuse of drugs and alcohol
- ✗ Ongoing family friction, particularly between his parents, and the periodic breakdown of the relationship with one or other parent exiting the household
- ✗ Limited encouragement to make progression in school or to consider employment as an opportunity
- ✗ No focus on gaining vocational education skills as opposed to academic learning.

The ADJUST client had a pattern of not engaging with formal and informal support structures. He had a poor experience in school, felt that he didn't 'fit in' and felt that the teaching staff were of little direct support to him. Over his time at secondary school he began to avoid going to school and spent his time with some other young adults who were largely disaffected with school and had become involved in petty anti-social behaviour, alcohol misuse and dabbling in drugs. He had a number of minor connections with PSNI but eventually was charged and entered the Young Offenders System.

“

He is very clear that without this focus to his life there would be a significantly high risk of him reoffending again.

”

He found the Young Offenders Centre very challenging. Given that he had very limited social networks prior to entering the system, he found it difficult to make friends and found himself under pressure, bullied, scared, isolated and lonely.

He described himself as being at a point of despair, losing all focus on preserving himself and at the point where he was afraid that he might have taken decisions which would ultimately put his life in jeopardy or lead him to taking his life by suicide.

The engagement with the Start360 ADJUST mentor was the first stage in his engagement with the Youth Justice System and the Young Offenders Centre where he felt that there was some potential to arrest the decline in his personal/life circumstances. The process helped him to achieve the following:

- ✓ Focus on the fact that there could be a life outside the Young Offenders Centre; this was not the end of a meaningful life
- ✓ Actions that he might take in the Young Offenders Centre could significantly impact on his ability to move on and not reoffend. His core concern was having to return to a Young Offenders Centre and the ADJUST service gave him hope that if he looked at his life positively and positive choices, reoffending was not an inevitability

The project helped him to examine what he was good at and what he might like to do once he was out of the Young Offenders Centre.

The key aspects that worked well from his perspective were the following:

- ✓ No one was judgemental
- ✓ People understood the challenges he would face and were honest with him about them. Very often it was reinforced that not all his experiences would be positive, that he would face challenges both in the Young Offenders Centre and outside it and that he would often find it difficult to make the right choice
- ✓ The mentor was available on an 'as needed' basis
- ✓ The mentor spent time with him individually but encouraged him to get involved with other group activities which helped to develop his confidence to socialise

A key outcome of the involvement with the ADJUST service from the client's perspective was that it provided support to consider entering the world of employment. Placements with voluntary organisations were organised and through this he has now secured a part-time job in a charity organisation.

He is very clear that without this focus to his life there would be a significantly high risk of him reoffending again.

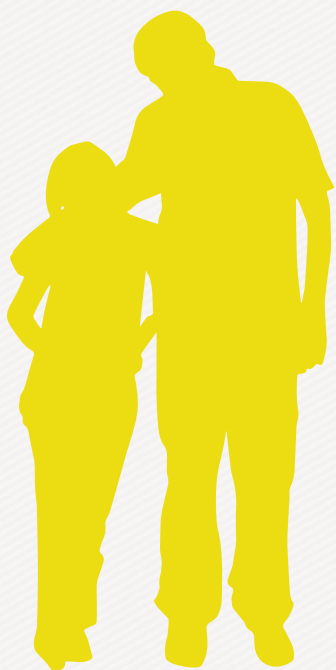
However, having moved from volunteering through to an actual paid (part-time) position he now has a sense of responsibility and ensures that, when he encounters situations which could drag him back into reoffending, he has sufficient confidence to resist.

Client Journey

2

FATHER OF DAUGHTER WHO RECEIVED ADJUST SUPPORT

Evaluation Findings



“

They have someone in the role of ‘honest broker’ who they can turn to in order to seek support or advice.

”

The father explained that his daughter had a relatively uneventful childhood through primary school and up to third year in secondary level education. She then became subject to verbal and physical bullying which had a significant detrimental impact on her self-esteem and her performance in school. In addition, he noticed she was more withdrawn in terms of contact within the household and reticent to become involved in developing friendships outside the house and connecting with formal and informal groups.

Around that time, it became difficult for the parents to encourage their daughter to attend school. She began to display erratic behaviour and there were concerns in relation to suicidal thought processes and displaying activity linked to potential willingness to action suicide. Statutory mental health support was of some benefit but the daughter did not willingly engage with the support provided. Eventually she was admitted to the Mental Health Unit.

Despite significant warnings that if she physically abused staff she would end up entering the Young Offenders Centre, this advice went unheeded and she was charged and sentenced. This proved a very challenging time for the family on the basis that the father has, over the medium to longer term, had to live with the impact of mental illness. Clearly he found himself unprepared for his daughter's entry into the Young Offenders Centre and was unaware of how to help, where to access help and what would happen next. He indicated that his daughter began to become more forward looking and positive in respect of her time in the Young Offenders Centre once she had become engaged with her ADJUST service mentor. It is his belief that this change in behaviour was as a result of:

- ✓ His daughter's first experience of engaging with someone in the broad Government/Agency/Authority sector who treated her with respect and as a young adult
- ✓ It was clear that the mentor understood her circumstances and was very clear in relation to what would happen, why it would happen and how she should deal with the challenges presented by the Young Offenders Centre
- ✓ The mentor was available to react very quickly when the daughter experienced crises both within and external to the Young Offenders Centre. This had never been the family's experience in relation to

support for either the daughter's or father's mental health challenges

- ✓ The mentor could be frank in relation to providing advice and constructively critical when the daughter was entering into patterns of behaviour which could lead to potential for reoffending

It is the father's opinion that the ADJUST service delivered the following outcomes from his daughter's perspective and his own perspective:

- ✓ Whilst his daughter has had a recurring battle with mental illness and is currently hospitalised, the father is of the opinion that without the support provided through the ADJUST service the likelihood is that she would either be back in the Young Offenders Centre or may have tried or succeeded in actioning suicide
- ✓ The daughter and the family understand that they have someone in the role of ‘honest broker’ who they can turn to in order to seek support or advice
- ✓ The father is very clear that, whilst he is dealing with challenging mental health issues, the absence of this support from the ADJUST service would have made it impossible for him to cope with his daughter's involvement in the Young Offenders Centre. In addition, he believes that this is also the case for the other family members

Evaluation Findings



Client Journey

3

YOUNG MALE B

This ADJUST client had a very mixed experience in the education environment. By his own admission he did not relish his experience at either primary or secondary school. Whilst in his words he found primary education bearable he found the transition to secondary level education very challenging. He lost most of the networks that he had at primary school and found it difficult to integrate in the new school environment. As a result, he became very withdrawn and summarised his school experience as follows:

- ✗ He had no real friends at the school
- ✗ He tended to 'keep himself to himself' and became withdrawn
- ✗ Eventually other pupils identified that he did not integrate with them and he became a focus for bullying

Over his transition through secondary school he found that he had no particular focus in terms of exiting school and at around 15 he became involved in anti-social behaviour around his home area. Largely by his own admission this was as a result of peer pressure and in order to try and find ways of fitting in. Whilst the people he became connected to were involved in misuse of alcohol and some aspects of drug taking, the majority of risk taking behaviour focused around anti-social behaviour, destruction of property and attempted burglary. He found his position on leaving the school environment even more desperate in that it was clear that there were no obvious pathways for career or training progression and he had come to the attention of PSNI. Eventually, after a number of warnings, he was charged and progressed into the justice system. Whilst he found the transition to secondary school challenging he found his entering to custody significantly challenging. He was caught between two core thought patterns:

- » Feeling absolutely helpless with no control over his own destiny (suicidal thought processes)
- » Feeling that he needed to take this as a significant warning and start to examine a more positive approach to life.

In his early days in the justice system he was frequently subjected to bullying, and the first real escape from this was when he shared his experiences with his

appointed ADJUST mentor. By his own admission this was the first time over his transition to secondary school and into the justice system that he felt that he had anyone with whom he could unload and share his problems, thoughts and concerns. Initially he was of the opinion that by sharing his problems he was admitting his fear and at some level guilt in relation to the risk taking behaviour he became involved with. However, by sharing with the mentor he unloaded some of the pressure and for the first time in a number of years he was in a position to start to think positively about where his life might take him and what he might like to do.

“
As he began to feel more confident and developed some self-esteem he started to formulate thoughts of career paths
”

As he began to feel more confident and developed some self-esteem he started to formulate thoughts of career paths he might want to enter and how he might get there.

He found that the mentor was positively critical of his plans - some they would have agreed with, others they would have challenged and by working together he was fit to develop a plan for the next stage of his life post release, which in his opinion was realistic and achievable.

He felt the support of the mentor post his release was very important in helping him to integrate back into his own community; a key part of the support being the fact that he did not reengage with people he had been 'hanging out' with, but began to engage himself in some physical activity, better lifestyle choices and consideration of career and training development. Initially the mentor was in a position to secure a volunteer placement for him.

Client Journey 4

YOUNG MALE C



From the perspective of the independent evaluator who interviewed this ADJUST client, he came across as a very confident, thoughtful and balanced young person/adolescent. He identified that had a relatively happy home environment but around his mid-teens he began to lose a lot of confidence in his own abilities and found that whilst in the early part of his school/education career most things 'fell into place', he suddenly felt that he had no particular thoughts of what or how he wanted his life to unfold.

As a result, he began to engage in minor drug abuse which led to more significant engagement with illegal substances. Subsequently he found himself involved in what, from his

perspective, he felt to be relatively minor anti-social behaviour. However, this led to ongoing connections with PSNI, formal warnings and eventually being charged.

When entering the custody and justice system he is clear that it provided him with, in his words, 'a significant wakeup call'. He realised that he had significantly hampered his ability to secure a job on the basis that he had a criminal record and that this would have significant influence on the rest of his life. Equally, he felt particularly guilty in relation to the stigma that this brought his parents and this was probably the most difficult thought process for him to deal with in his early days in the prison system.



Volunteering led him to securing part-time work in a retail store in Belfast.

The introduction to the ADJUST mentor had a significant impact on him. Very early on, the mentor gave him confidence that the fact that he had made wrong decisions which had led to a criminal record would not on its own prove an insurmountable barrier to ongoing personal and career development. Moreover, the mentor provided examples (without using names or identification) of people his age who had undergone similar challenges in their own lives but had progressed to training and employment. He had identified that he needed to get a medium term (in his words 'one year') plan in place to take control of his life and start self-determine the choices he would make. He found the ADJUST mentor's input invaluable.

The mentor proved to be a strong listening ear in respect of him developing

and refining his plan for what he would do post-release. The key thing that the mentor did was to link him with other people through a mixture of social and peer learning activities.

However, the key value from his perspective was that the mentor organised some volunteering. This led him to secure part-time work in a retail store in Belfast. This provided a significant input of energy and self-esteem on the basis that he had secured real paid employment post-release and therefore proved to himself that whilst he had a criminal record, it had not proven to be an insurmountable barrier to gaining employment. He is now actively considering a third level education qualification which will hopefully provide a springboard to ongoing career development.

Client Journey

5

YOUNG FEMALE



This young female ADJUST client found it difficult to communicate her overall experience via the interview process as 'she has good and bad days'.

She said she has never had any real stability in her life and no home which she could describe as safe and secure.

Her mother had a number of substance abuse issues, had previous court appearances and served some terms in prison when the ADJUST client was in secondary level education. As a result of a variety of relationships her home structure changed frequently as did her actual home. This ongoing disruption led to a lack of her ever 'putting down roots'.

Equally every time she began to develop her own network of friends via school these got broken up as she moved on. Eventually she became withdrawn and never sought to make friends as this would only break down over the short to medium term. She felt alone and had decided she was not worthy of friends and that was why she had no real friends of her own, no ambition and no self-esteem. As she moved from one school to another she had poor self and body image, put on weight and had to deal with bullying, both

face to face and online. With constant partying by adults in the home and a lack of any positive role models, she began to experiment with drugs and shoplifted in order to fund her emerging habits. In simple terms she lost all concern for herself and did not care about any risk taking behaviour and if she damaged herself or worse.

There is no doubt in her mind that whilst in many ways her life is 'still a mess' she believes that she would probably have acted on suicidal thought processes. She knows that she did really engage with the ADJUST service and did not involve herself in group work. Based on her experience at school she had an aversion to group work and initially resisted the offer of assistance from ADJUST on the basis that she expected to be 'dragged into' group work and residential which 'were her worst fears'. The fact that the mentor was available on a one to one basis changed her perspective and therefore allowed her to make some progress in the context of dealing with her own mental illnesses. She commented on the non-judgemental nature of the mentoring and the fact that the mentor was available face to face or by telephone when she was facing challenges or a crisis moment.

Measuring Outcomes

As part of its internal monitoring and evaluation processes, Start360 undertook entry and exit assessments (ASI) with ADJUST programme participants. The mentor supported the participant to score their perception of their position/life against a range of factors (see list on right).

Participants scored their position on entry to the ADJUST intervention and on completion of it.

As part of the independent evaluation process the Venturei Network team reviewed 121 responses or approximately 30% of the overall number of male and female adolescents who received support from the ADJUST intervention. Specifically, the analysis sought to capture the average improvement in the position of programme participants against each of the seven factors. The following table sets out the outcomes for participants resulting from the support they received from the ADJUST intervention:

	Factor	Average Improvement/ Progression (range out of 10)
	Medical	.42
	Employability/ Support	.74
	Alcohol	.66
	Drugs	1
	Legal	.43
	Family/Social	.60
	Physiological	.60

Factor

- Medical
- Employability/
Support
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Legal
- Family/Social
- Physiological

“The overall sample shows that there was progress (or delivery of outcomes) against each of the seven factors.”

On the basis of this analysis the independent evaluation team draw the following conclusions:



- » The overall sample shows that there was progress (or delivery of outcomes) against each of the seven factors.
- » Whilst the average progression appears small it must be put in context; this is the average progression out of a sample of 121 ADJUST clients; for many of the sample group they may have no issue with a specific factor (e.g. alcohol) and therefore indicate that they have made little progress. In real terms this means that the issue has remained static from their perspective which would be expected if they don't have an issue. On that basis the average progression from the entry assessment to the exit assessment is two (out of an assessment range of ten). This is particularly impressive given the complex and multiple challenges faced by this group of beneficiaries.
- » Outcomes are achieved over the medium to long term and this ASI measurement is an assessment over the short term (and therefore it is reasonable to assume that the positive impact from an outcome perspective will be retained and added to over the medium to long term) but when linked to the significantly reduced rate of reoffending of the ADJUST client group, it is clear that the collaborative and person-centred delivery model has, in a practical and sustainable manner, supported adolescents in the justice system to deal with a range of factors and issues which present the real risk of engaging in actions and decision making which lead to reoffending.

PROGRESS AGAINST INDICATOR TARGETS

A review and analysis of ADJUST's monitoring information provided the following findings against the stated project delivery targets:

Outcome 1

Young people will develop coping strategies in dealing with their high risk behaviours and managing negative peer and community influence resulting in reduced antisocial and offending behaviours: Annually

Indicator	Progress	Remarks
20 young people can demonstrate a reduction/cessation of anti-social behaviour and will not return to custody six months post engagement	Year 1: 44 young people = target exceeded Year 2: 120 young people = target exceeded Year 3: 104 young people = target exceeded	The project has performed very strongly in this area, providing young people with access to coping strategies which enable them to address anti-social behaviours and support a successful reintegration into society and community life.
60 young people demonstrate a reduction/cessation of offending behaviour	Year 1: 66 young people = target exceeded Year 2: 221 young people = target exceeded (of a cumulative total of 285) Year 3: 104 young people = target exceeded	The support provided by ADJUST has assisted young people develop skills and coping mechanisms in key areas around personal development and self-confidence.
60% of young people report an increased ability in managing negative community influences	Year 1: 77% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 86% of young people = Target exceeded Year 3: 81% of young people = target exceeded	Of particular note is the increased ability of young people to manage negative community influences and negative peer influences.
72 young people report an increased ability in managing negative peer influences	Year 1: 74 young people target exceeded Year 2: 70 young people Year 3: 71 young people	This reinforces the findings from the review of comparator projects which highlighted the value of personal development and social inclusion work as part of resettlement programmes in order that offenders are best placed to fully engage with support services to assist in their resettlement.
75% of young people report an increase in coping strategies in dealing with 'High Risk' situations	Year 1: 77% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 86% of young people = target exceeded Year 3: 81% of young people = target exceeded	
75% of young people report an increase in self confidence	Year 1: 77% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 86% of young people = target exceeded Year 3: 79% of young people = target exceeded	



Outcome 2

Young people will have increased awareness regarding the impact of social and economic exclusion and how this can be addressed successfully. This will have a positive impact on the proportion of young people who are involved in offending behaviours: Annually

Indicator	Progress	Remarks
100% of young people report an increased awareness of the impacts created by social and economic exclusion	Year 1: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 3: 100% of young people = target exceeded	Key to a young person's progression route to a more positive future is awareness of social and economic barriers and how best these can be addressed.
40% of young people who report an increase in knowledge of possible solutions to social and economic exclusion	Year 1: 62% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 69% of young people = target exceeded Year 3: 86% of young people = target exceeded	ADJUST has addressed this area successfully with young people now being better informed about how best they can tackle social and economic exclusion. This enhances young people's potential to successfully re-enter society and generate positive outcomes post-release.
75% of young people report an increase in confidence in achieving their identified goals	Year 1: 77% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 86% of young people = Target exceeded Year 3: 79% of young people = target exceeded	



Outcome 3

Young people are better supported to further engage in education, training or employment: Annually

Indicator	Progress	Remarks
100% of young people will complete an individual action plan including personal development components	Year 1: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 3: 100% of young people = target exceeded	Development of a personal action plan provides young people with direction and focus, including awareness of support service they can access. By providing direction for training, education or employment ADJUST has enabled young people to undertake positive progression routes and provided a positive framework for moving forward.



Outcome 4

Young people will become more employable as a result of increased literacy, numeracy and ICT skills which will positively impact on reoffending behaviours: Annually

Indicator	Progress	Remarks
120 young people each year explore employment options and the positive impact they can have on the economy	Year 1: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 3: 100% of young people = target exceeded	By providing young people with opportunity to develop key skills sets, ADJUST has increased the employability of young people. The project has performed very effectively in this outcome area which can positively impact on reoffending behaviours by providing young people with confidence, direction and motivation to explore employment opportunities on leaving custody. ADJUST's performance in this outcome area is also evidenced by beneficiary progression to various forms of training including community training schemes, Job Assist, Youth Works and ESF programmes.
120 young people each year have the opportunity to explore the positive impacts of achieving essential skills such as Literacy, Numeracy and ICT and their motivation around these areas	Year 1: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 2: 100% of young people = target exceeded Year 3: 100% of young people = target exceeded	

The table below outlines the performance of ADJUST against the key needs identified in the terms of reference:

Need

Progress



The high reoffending rate historically and interminably associated with youth offending

Resettlement support is vital in tackling reoffending and ADJUST has provided a comprehensive support system, enabling young offenders to tackle social and economic exclusion through skills based programmes, including life skills, employability and personal development, in addition to six month post-release support.



The underachievement in education and incurring employment barriers which these young people experience

ADJUST has provided young people with personal development plans and equipped them with vital skills sets which can assist them to undertake positive progression routes in training/education/employment. These action plans can foster a sense of young people taking ownership of their future through developing individual pathways. The impact of ADJUST in this area is evidenced by the fact that 74 young people have progressed to various forms of training including community training schemes, Job Assist, Youth Works and ESF programmes.

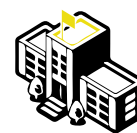


The disastrous results of disengagement and detachment from mainstream services resulting in personal problems, problems in the community in forms of nuisance and crime, leading to long term costs and increased criminality, welfare dependency, housing, and a wide range of social and economic factors

Resettlement requires a multi-agency approach. The ADJUST model facilitated new partnerships with other agencies, providing a holistic framework for resettlement. Developing personal action plans provides awareness of and signposting to support services, while ADJUST has also worked to address the threat of both social and economic exclusion through its Key Workers who have provided young people with support and encouragement across a range of areas. In addition, ADJUST recognises the need to lobby and influence policy makers in the topic of resettlement and the needs of young offenders.

Need

Progress



The serious implications of non/poor attendance in previous formal education in terms of their ability to communicate, socialise and function within today's society

ADJUST recognises the need to address marginalisation and has responded with a needs-led model which has provided key worker support in a range of areas including coping strategies, managing/avoiding high risk behaviours and confidence building.



The impact of the political conflict in NI and related civil disturbances in terms of our young peoples' feelings of isolation, marginalisation and discrimination experienced, which has impacted on their ability to actively engage as citizens within their own communities

ADJUST has provided a range of tools to address social exclusion and marginalisation. This has included diversionary activities and support to uptake training/employment/volunteering which provides young people with confidence, skills and motivation to address isolation and marginalisation.



The requirement to self-explore the above issues and address feelings of anger, frustration, depression, loneliness and increasingly damaged self-esteem

ADJUST acknowledges the value of family work for young offenders in order to develop positive relationships which can sustain and support them post-release. Through modules covering topics such as coping skills and access to diversionary activities, ADJUST has developed a positive and constructive resettlement model. Diverse mentoring has provided opportunity to explore and address many of these feelings in a supported environment with the support of Key Workers, while the ASI assessment tool addresses key psycho-social area to promote positive progression.



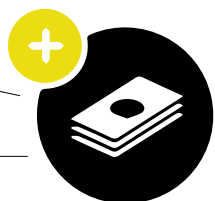
VALUE FOR MONEY

It must be recognised from the outset that it is difficult to accurately assess value for money in an advice project; especially one so specific in nature as the ADJUST service. At a very basic level there are a limited number of direct comparator projects against which the costs (inputs) and number of services provided (outputs) can be accurately benchmarked.

In addition, it must be recognised that the contextual situation will not always be a mirror image from one delivery arena to the other. However, it is the view of the independent evaluation team that some useful value for money observations can be made in respect of the project. The key factors used to assess value for money in the evaluation are as follows:

Inputs versus outputs

Benchmarking against other models of advice provision



Linkage to strategy and policy

A non-monetary approach to assessing value for money

With regards to inputs versus outputs, it is the view of the Independent Evaluation Team that the Start360 ADJUST service provided sound value for money on the basis that it consistently exceeded its performance targets as outlined in Section 6.

Clearly, investment of public funding should represent an investment against key strategic/policy direction. Section 4 of this evaluation examines the strategic and policy context for the ADJUST service. It identifies very strong linkages between the programme and a number of

key strategies/policies including:

- » Programme for Government
- » Department of Justice: Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending – Towards a Safer Society 2013
- » Northern Ireland Prison Service – An Employability Strategy 2013-2017
- » Youth Justice Agency Corporate Plan 2013-2016

On the basis that the project made good use of public/lottery funds (i.e. its delivery team, led by Start360, provided the required level of services within the

investment provided by the Big Lottery Fund and ensured that all key delivery (outputs) targets were achieved) it is the view of the independent consultant that this investment was used to directly contribute, in a practical and tangible manner, to strategic and policy direction for the sectors, both youth and justice. On that basis the investors in the programme can have comfort that their money was used to directly contribute to their strategic objectives. Therefore, it is not unreasonable for the Independent Evaluation Team to confirm that value for money was achieved.

From the perspective of the Independent Evaluation Team the value for money presented by the ADJUST Programme can be assessed at a number of levels:

1

Delivery of outputs

2

Delivery against outcomes agreed with the Big Lottery Fund

3

Strategic impact

4

Impact on recidivism

5

Projected savings for the public purse

The following table sets out the Independent Evaluation Team's assessment of the value for money performance of the ADJUST Programme against these five areas:

Area of Value for Money Impact

Objective Assessment of Performance

1

DELIVERY OF OUTPUTS

A review of the three end of year reports confirm that the ADJUST Programme has delivered its year on year targets; indeed, it is reasonable to suggest that it has exceeded its outputs. As an example, the projected output of 150 people becoming involved in some form of training, education or employment at the end of the project has been exceeded by 76 young people with a cumulative for the 3 years of 226. The target of 120 young people who have the opportunity to explore the positive impacts of achieving essential skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT and their motivation around these areas annually was exceeded by an average of 20 young people per year with 140 people offered the service. The target of 120 young people exploring employment options and the positive impact they can have on the economy was exceeded by 20 with 140 people annually engaged per year across the programme.

Area of Value for Money Impact

Objective Assessment of Performance

2

DELIVERY AGAINST OUTCOMES AGREED WITH THE BIG LOTTERY FUND

The end of year reports and the interviews with ADJUST Programme beneficiaries demonstrated the impact of the ADJUST service against the four agreed areas outcomes (coping strategies, increased awareness, better support and more employable). Indeed, it is the view of the Independent Evaluation Team that these outcomes have been exceeded.

3

STRATEGIC IMPACT

Section 4 of the evaluation report establishes the impact of the ADJUST Intervention against a range of regional and organisational strategies and plans. It is clear that the investment by the Big Lottery Fund via Start360 in the ADJUST Programme not only delivered the outputs and outcomes contracted by the Big Lottery Fund, contributing to Start360s vision, mission and aims, but also delivered in respect of the aims and objectives of DOJ, Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Youth Justice Agency. This delivered significant value for money and contribution to public sector/statutory objectives.

4

IMPACT ON RECIDIVISM

Recidivism amongst under 18s and 18-20 year olds in Northern Ireland is marginally lower than the equivalent rates across other regions in the UK. From a Northern Ireland perspective, they are 69% for under 18s and 54% for 18-20 year olds. Significantly they are higher than recidivism rates for adults which average 33% annually. Perhaps one of the most significant results of the ADJUST programme is that the average recidivism rate for ADJUST Programme participants across the 3 years of the programme was approximately 20%. It is noted that this is significantly lower than the current position for this age group (in absence of a flexible person centred support model such as ADJUST) and indeed lower than the average annual recidivism rate for adults.

Area of Value for Money Impact

Objective Assessment of Performance

5

PROJECTED SAVINGS FOR THE PUBLIC PURSE

As part of the examination of the value for money of the ADJUST intervention the following assumptions can be made:

- ✓ The programme provided the support to some 140 people per annum across 3 years i.e. 420 young people
- ✓ Historically, the recidivism rate for this target group would have been 69% or 290 out of the 420 young people (under 18) across 3 years
- ✓ DOJ estimate the annual cost per prisoner place at £73,762 (this is the figure for an adult and the figure for adolescents is likely to be closer to £200,000 per person per annum)
- ✓ If it is assumed that the average time spent by adolescent reoffenders is six months, the historic cost to the public purse (without ADJUST intervention) would be $290 \times £73,762 \times 50\% = £10.7$ million over 3 years
- ✓ Based on the performance of the ADJUST Programme intervention across 3 years the cost based on a recidivism rate of 20% would be $84 \times £73,762 \times 50\% = £3.1$ million
- ✓ In simple terms there is real potential for a saving of some £7.6 million over 3 years.



There is real potential for a saving of some £7.6 million over 3 years.

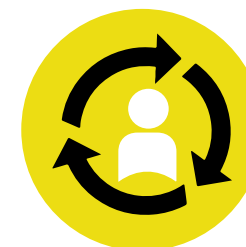
It must be noted that this value for money assessment does not reflect any additional long term cost to public purse of young people reoffending who subsequently exit from education, learning and employment over the medium to long term and thus are dependent from an economic/income point of view on the public purse/welfare system for the majority of their adult life (i.e. lifetime cost).

Key Learning Points

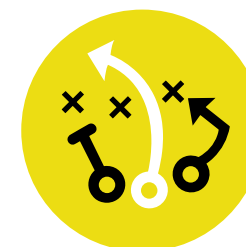
The following key points can be drawn from analysis of the information gathered during the consultation process informing the evaluation:



ADJUST has performed effectively in developing a model of partnership working, recognising the holistic nature of resettlement which requires multi-agency co-operation



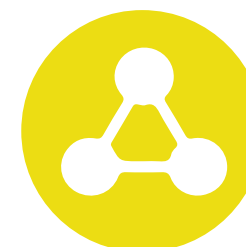
Putting young people at the centre of the intervention ensures that partnerships develop in terms of meeting their needs and creating an enhanced chance of success in terms of both better outcomes for the person and reduced reoffending



Honing the potential to develop a flexible programme/intervention around the young person (mentoring, peer support, learning, social activities, group events) was central to its appeal to the young person



The appointment of a dedicated buddy/mentor who acted as a 'sounding board' was imperative to the success of the intervention



This holistic approach is also reflected in the comprehensive programme of support which ADJUST covers, including personal development, training and employability and diversionary activities



Action plans which are tailored to individual needs based on ASI assessment ensure that every young person is furnished with a personal development plan which is specific to them, providing personal progression routes



The experience of ADJUST has highlighted the importance of family work and positive relationships to support resettlement



The effectiveness of ADJUST is evidenced by the fact that the service has been successfully integrated into the Offender Management Unit as a support pathway for resettlement.

Given the success of the partnership approach piloted through the ADJUST Programme it is important that the partner agencies do not exit this model of working when the Big Lottery Fund funding ceases to be available. Clearly the challenge to current agency budgets can place pressure on partners to continue to resource the process, but, given the linkages established to their Corporate Plans and Strategies and the demonstrable value for money/potential for cost savings, it would be short-sighted in the extreme to exit at this stage

Conclusions & Recommendations



Given the success of the partnership approach it is important that the partner agencies do not exit this model of working .

It is the conclusion of the Independent Evaluation Team that:



ADJUST has proven to be a very effective delivery model in addressing the four core outcomes in the Big Lottery Fund's Letter of Offer.



In terms of delivery efficiency, the Start360 led team delivered all of the key indicators. Indeed, in the majority of cases these were exceeded and in some cases significantly exceeded. The ethos and value base of Start360 meant that it was an ideal organisation to meet the needs of adolescents in the justice system. It is clear that the culture of the organisation was ideal in creating meaningful engagement and building trust within challenging youth relationships, and using this engagement and trust for advisory signposting for training, employment and the overall betterment of the young person.

Based on a review of the information available to it, consultation with ADJUST Programme participants and with a range of key stakeholders, the Venturei Network as the independent evaluator draws the following conclusions:



» From the perspective of the Big Lottery Fund, the ADJUST Programme promoted by Start360 delivered both the outputs and outcomes which were developed through the application process and specified in the Letter of Offer. Indeed, in terms of outputs there is significant evidence that the core outputs of the programme were not only delivered but were exceeded.

» It is acknowledged that outcomes can only be effectively measured over the medium to long term; in simple terms a measurement of the impact of the ADJUST intervention on a young individual's lifetime journey post-custody and engaging with the Justice System. With that said, there is a significant body of evidence that the programme has delivered against the four core outcomes established in the application and Letter of Offer. The fact that these can be evidenced within the lifetime of the programme/ intervention bodes well. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is a difficult client group with individuals attempting to cope with a multitude of complex life challenges, the engagement with the programme client group and development of client journeys confirmed that positive choices were made or positive actions taken as a result of the intervention. By the acknowledgment of participants it is unlikely that these positive decisions would have taken place. It is the view of the independent evaluator that, without the intervention (and in some cases buffer) provided by the ADJUST Programme, young people would have put themselves in positions of significant risk or taken decisions which were detrimental to their physical and emotional health and wellbeing, or indeed their lives.



There is significant evidence that the core outputs of the programme were not only delivered but were exceeded.

- » The strategic partnership working which was led, facilitated and encouraged by Start360 in order to develop the concept of the ADJUST Programme was central to its success. In line with many medium-term funded initiatives (3-5 years), the level of partnership working required to develop the initiative drops off over its delivery. Whilst this may be the case to some extent with ADJUST, it is noted that at an operational level the level of connection between representatives of the partnership was significant and indeed central to the success of the programme.

- » At its most basic level the ADJUST Programme was developed in order to provide flexible person-centred support to young people in the justice system to ensure that as they exited they were less likely to engage in behaviour which resulted in their return to it. There is enough quantitative and qualitative evidence available to the Independent Evaluation Team for it to state that the person-centred ADJUST model has reduced recidivism due to its focus on support in entering and exiting the Justice System, combined with meaningful communication with other statutory and voluntary agencies which have as much as 50% either a statutory or support connection to the young person.

- » Whilst the focus of the ADJUST intervention is with the young person in the Justice System, engagement with ADJUST Programme participants and members of their family has confirmed that the ADJUST model of support not only delivers outcomes for the young person, but also better outcomes for their family/parents/guardians.

- » Whilst the focus of the evaluation is on the impact or effectiveness of the ADJUST Model in delivering outcomes (positive) for the young person, it is clear that the model has captured an approach and learning which should be shared across statutory and voluntary agencies with a responsibility for supporting young people in the Justice System to re-settle and integrate into society/community post-custody. From a value for money perspective it is clear that the delivery costs are significantly minimal compared to the potential savings to the public purse.

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