

**Found in Transition?
Local Inter-Agency Systems for
Guiding Young Adults into Better Lives**

Final Report of the Formative Evaluation of the T2A Pilots

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three Transition to Adulthood (T2A) pilots were introduced as part of a movement to give prominence and priority to services for ‘young adults’ in the criminal justice system, recognising that this is a stage in life when the adjustments and passages in the life-course are at their most challenging and when those already involved in offending are at risk of becoming the most prolific. The Barrow Cadbury Trust (BCT) has been at the forefront of this movement, funding a commission of inquiry, an alliance of interested organisations and three pilots to pioneer appropriate services in their locale.

The broad purpose of the T2A movement has been to put ‘young adulthood’ on the map used by criminal justice and community services so that it is more conspicuous as a distinct area of need, and to achieve a more joined-up approach across the age divide separating services, and across the different sectors. Categories of young adults with different needs or additional challenges – ethnic minority, female, disabled, mentally ill, substance addicted – are particularly within the ambit of the initiative, because of their combined vulnerabilities.

The pilots are in London, Birmingham, and Worcestershire respectively. Two are led by voluntary sector services: the St Giles Trust runs the one in South London as part of its SOS project, and YSS (not an abbreviation) runs the one in Worcestershire. The third one, in Birmingham, is delivered by the Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust. They commenced operation as T2A teams during the period December 2008 and July 2009, though the two voluntary sector teams were able to embed this work within existing projects. Still with one year to run, in effect they have a dual function: on an operational level, they are demonstrating effective work with young adults at risk; on an institutional level, they are blazing a trail for inter-agency policies that will bridge gaps between services and ensure joined up provision for young adults.

So far so good ...

The pilots have made great progress in putting into practice the purposes set for them by BCT’s Commission for Transition to Adulthood and the subsequent T2A Alliance. The inroads they have made are on two main fronts: their present work with service users (that is, at the *beneficiary level*) and their more future oriented strategic planning with other agencies (that is, at the *institutional level*). The work on these two fronts includes many strands. They add up to a complex package which – especially with reference to continuity in the future – might be summed up as the *development of local inter-agency systems for guiding young adults into better lives*.

There are some differences between the three pilots. Building on existing services they are not all at the same stage of development, and they have evolved along slightly different lines.

The London pilot, at St Giles Trust, employs ex-offenders as both paid and unpaid workers. It has integrated the T2A work with other projects with a relevant but

different remit, so that the 'young adult' focus has been somewhat blurred. What it has been able to do remarkably well is engage people who would otherwise have been sceptical about and shunned offers of supportive contact, and with its programme of involving ex-offenders it has been able to turn the helped into helpers.

At Birmingham the probation-led T2A service has, in contrast to when it started, become somewhat less about the direct work with young people and more about becoming a hub that can link them to relevant services. The Birmingham pilot learned and thereby demonstrated that young adult work should not be in a vacuum but needs to engage young people with community services and to integrate public and voluntary sector contributions.

In the Worcestershire model, qualified youth justice workers with help from volunteer mentors provide a sustained supportive role and a wraparound service by drawing on its network of interagency connections. The Worcestershire pilot has been equally strong in its present service delivery dimension and in its forward looking institutional dimension. YSS, the voluntary sector organisation leading it, has been selected by the Worcestershire Probation Trust to be its primary partner, partly as a consequence of the valuable work demonstrated by the T2A pilot.

It is possible to exaggerate such differences between the pilots, however, at the expense of what they have in common.

On the policy front, they have made progress within their areas in stimulating thinking and planning towards durable interagency systems, and in establishing the principle that distinct provision should be made for supporting young adults as a matter of standard practice. The teams are zealous and imaginative in developing links with other services, in raising awareness of the needs of vulnerable young adults and in creating an interface between services. Activities in this respect include forming multi-agency T2A steering groups; holding local conferences to publicise and discuss the work; development of protocols for transition arrangements between youth and adult services; as well as 'bottom up' developments when working collaboratively on particular cases.

Perhaps their main achievement on the policy front, is in publicising on a local level the compelling argument that crime could be reduced, money could be saved and lives improved simply by a more concerted and joined-up approach to helping young adults through the transitions of young adulthood. Through their work they have helped raised awareness that becoming mature is a process and does not happen at the stroke of an eighteenth birthday, and that becoming independent in the modern social landscape is a slippery climb.

The practice ethos of the pilots is one of offering help. The important work to reduce reoffending is integral but contextualised in that supportive framework. The pilots have employed staff to work intensively with the young people, with support from volunteers, and the role combines mentoring and brokerage (connecting them to services and resources). While reducing (re)offending by these service users is a core concern and prime objective, this is woven into the broader purpose of enabling them to 'get on' in their lives and to navigate the transitions they have to make (from post-adolescence to maturity; from the youth justice system to the adult system; from

custody to resettlement). It is therefore, in effect, welfare-based (in the interests of the service user) and, as such, considerably removed from standard risk-based, offender management practice in the criminal justice system.

So far, the pilots are largely successful in engaging young adults in taking up the offered service. The help given is a combination of mentoring and connecting them to services, training and the practical steps they need to take to make progress. All of the pilots are using a person-led, task-focused (or solution focused) model for working with the service users. Through the expression of genuine concern, interest and respect for the individual, the practitioners are able to form a working alliance in which they engage the young person in formulating and following an action plan to help them resolve difficulties, often linked to offending, and to reach their goals.

The early results from the case studies, and the beliefs of the key players, suggest that the pilots are helping young people to avoid involvement in offending and to make improvements in their lives.

Distance-travelled measures and qualitative interview data obtained in a sample of 29 case studies show improvements associated with reduced reoffending. According to their self-reports, half of the young people had not reoffended during the six to twelve month period following T2A support. The other half reported that their reoffending was less frequent and less serious, and they are more optimistic about their ability to desist in the future. Compared against the dramatically high reconviction rate for persistent young offenders, these are encouraging results. The participants mostly attributed these improvements to the support and referrals provided by the pilots. However, in a service that is an interface to other services, it is difficult to say where T2A ends and another service begins, and therefore improvements cannot simply be attributed to the added value provided by the pilot.

Explaining what 'works' and how

By applying a participatory, theory-oriented approach, the formative evaluation has aimed to access implicit theories or reasoned arguments in order to begin to identify social, behavioural and institutional mechanisms that explain why T2A interventions 'work', or are expected to work. This builds on the knowledge base of rehabilitation and desistance research, to achieve a more penetrating analysis of what causes or contributes to effectiveness.

^ The formation of a working alliance (based on mutual respect or acceptance, agreed goals and tasks) increases the young adult's sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, which motivates continuing engagement with the programme and readiness to respond to its requirements (that is, take steps towards change).

^ Similarly, the use of strengths-based principles (emphasising what the person can do and their strengths rather than their mistakes and weakness) also supports this mechanism for engagement and effort (that is, increases the young adult's sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, which in turn, motivates or bolsters their readiness to take steps towards change).

^ The adoption of an action plan which is largely determined by the individual according to what they most want to resolve and achieve (solution focused and goal driven) ensures that the effort is synchronised with their own approach goals. The required application and effort from them coincides with their pursued direction rather than going against the grain of their wishes. They cooperate because what is being required of them turns out to be what they want anyway, providing it does not involve offending. The programme thus respects and promotes their own agency in making changes.

^ The development of a respectful, empathetic, and amicable working relationship results in a positive attitude to the practitioner or volunteer so that there is a readiness to work together with that person. This makes the process easier and more pleasant and, having accepted the support, increases optimism about obtaining what they need and doing things differently.

^ It is a model of work that gives the service user the lead role in making things happen, gives them a taste of being in control and rewards them for achieving small steps thereby building up self-efficacy.

^ Sustained desistance from crime also requires cognitive transformation, and that the individual has access to the material resources and opportunities to lead a law-abiding future. Therefore other social and institutional factors have to be brought into play – and this may take a little longer. In brief, the programme connects them to material resources and opportunities, and promotes changes in self-concept and identity.

To summarise some of the steps that are involved, the following have been identified as making a critical difference to engaging the young person and working towards change:

- The contact with the T2A intervention is optional on the part of the service user (and, in keeping with that, is not rule-bound).
- A friendly, helping relationship is established (a working alliance).
- The meetings are focused on an action plan, suggested or agreed by the service user, to desist from offending and improve their situation and behaviour.
- The purpose and objectives are person-centred and problem focused (for the person's benefit and led by their concerns).
- The person-led action plan respects and nurtures the individual's personal agency and efforts to make changes.
- The worker extends a 'life-line' (rescue service or support and advice) to the young adult; they can be contacted by phone or text during the period of active contact, and subsequently in times of crisis.

The philosophy of practitioners and their mode of working with young adults is attuned to recent thinking in rehabilitation research and desistance theory. It also has much resonance with traditional practice in probation and youth justice before they shifted from a social work ethos to becoming linked to punitive law enforcement services. However, some of that older model was unhelpfully associated with psychoanalysis and over-individualised without reference to structural factors; whereas a desistance paradigm for working with offenders links strengths based,

positive psychology with practical help and environmental factors. Recent application of desistance theory to rehabilitation practice are bringing the Good Lives Model¹ of rehabilitation into prominence, and the T2A model of practice has a clear resemblance to this.

The pilots are demonstrating a practice model which is successful in engaging young people in actions which will help them towards better lives (reduced reoffending and more fulfilling lives) and they have in different ways facilitated inter-agency working and an interest in developing ongoing systems for including young adults in the services that they offer. Both the mentoring and brokerage elements of the service seem vital. The motivation to become self-supporting and to settle into responsible adulthood must be complemented by the practical means to do so. There should be continuity of a helping relationship from someone who knows the individual and is respected by him or her. But neither will work without the young adult being motivated to make improvements, desist from crime and put effort into the process.

... But not there yet

The promising results so far give rise to optimism but there is much further to travel. The early indications are that this programme could make a radical difference in reducing the offending of those in that period of life at which offending behaviour is more prevalent and frequent. Becoming an adult, as well as desistance from crime, typically, take some time. The effects on reoffending, and related indicators of improvement, may be more impressive, or less, after greater 'exposure time' to the package of support being put in place (including both mentoring and pathways to other services and resources). It will take longer to embed 'sustainability' into the interagency arrangements being fostered. Moreover, the effects of spending cuts, reductions in job opportunities and changes to the welfare system will inevitably make the journey harder. Changing lives needs both the *will* and the *ways*.²

Issues in sustaining the good work

The processes and mechanisms involved in achieving lasting positive outcomes or ultimate success, are likely to be somewhat different from those involved at the start of a programme. Transition to adulthood and desistance from crime are not smooth, linear processes and allowing for that involves different considerations in delivering practice. The remainder of the pilot period will provide further opportunity for learning from three T2A teams in relation to such longer term issues and the outcomes for present service users. The changing backdrop will be one of spending cuts, alterations to the benefits service, decreased availability of jobs and accommodation, and new policies in criminal justice.

Looking ahead, and drawing on empirical research as well as the insights shared by T2A participants and stakeholders, the following observations are worth noting. These

¹ Ward, T. and Maruna, S. (2007) *Rehabilitation*. London and New York: Routledge.

² Snyder, C. R. (2002). 'Hope theory: rainbows in the mind', *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4), 249-275.

include practice strengths that may have greater importance than has been fully appreciated; and possible perils that may be foreseen and perhaps circumvented.

➤ As well as pathways to resources and opportunities, the relational work, or the working alliance, remains paramount for those who are struggling with multiple needs. The importance of this should not be overshadowed by the attention being given to referral and involving other services. There should be clarity regarding who will take on the ‘lead professional’ role – that is, the practitioner ‘who takes responsibility for ensuring that all of the client’s needs are identified and met as fully as possible’,³ and who is usually the one who works directly with the young person, maybe in conjunction with a volunteer mentor.

➤ Helping to turn lives around may be brief in many cases, but will need to be prolonged and recurrent in others. Setbacks and barriers to better lives can be demotivating for the young adults, and sustaining a working alliance will help to keep them on track. It will be important to ensure that it is not neglected and that there is continuity and, if a period of concentrated support is prescribed as time limited, there should be a way back for more if needed, or to dip back now and again for ‘top up’ support and crisis intervention.

➤ The T2A worker’s interpersonal skills and attitudinal stance towards the service user seem more important than whether they are qualified professionals or volunteer mentors. What seem to matter more than previous training and professional experience are their genuineness in forming a helping relationship, and their ability to respond constructively to vicissitudes in the young person’s circumstances and state of mind.

➤ That the person can choose or refuse to take up and continue with a T2A intervention, rather than it being a sentence or licence requirement, is understood to be critical to their engagement and co-operation with it. Therefore T2A intervention should continue to be taken up on a voluntary basis rather than imposed as a mandatory requirement.

➤ Given the voluntary nature of the young person’s take up of T2A support, third sector services seem better suited to providing the lead professionals for the relational work with young adults, because they are free from the punitive, offender management baggage which the public sector criminal justice services now carry. Similar benefits could be derived from T2A support as an optional addition to a community sentence or post-prison licence if public sector services commission third sector agencies to deliver the main mentoring and brokerage role.

➤ A continuing ‘young adult’ focus should be safeguarded by making its provision a statutory obligation of public sector services. The present commissioning frameworks for inter-agency work and buying-in services from the community provide the means for contracting this work to the voluntary sector. The benefits at stake from joined-up

³ HM Government (2009) *Taking the Lead: Supporting the Lead Professional Role in Tackling Social Exclusion*. London: Cabinet Office, page 4. <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/321245/taking-lead.pdf>

provision make this ideal terrain for developing better systems for these two sectors to work together. As well as contracting out the service delivery role, statutory provision might include the appointment of a lead manager and responsibility for running a T2A steering group.

➤ The ‘T2A’ brand may be worth retaining once the work being done becomes mainstream. The image of a service may link to a hidden mechanism in engaging otherwise reluctant service users. A good name and other image factors, such as the youth, status, or background of the workers, can make for a service that is more attractive to young adults; that is, which makes it ‘cool’, comfortable or less embarrassing for them to engage with, and makes the service proffered seem more plausible.

If local T2A interventions work to change behaviour and improve lives, they do so by *helping* (as opposed to treating, punishing, restricting, threatening and other variants that are imposed on those who offend). Where social behaviour is concerned, it is at the level of the individual’s response that interventions work. The person agrees to engage and, importantly, applies their efforts because what is offered is in their interests, and is helping them deal with their situation and move towards their, legitimate, goals. The process of maturing and leading a better life cannot be done for the person or to the person; they do that themselves, and intervention can only support and help propel their own agency in making changes. Thus the T2A package is a force driving in the same direction as the person, though with a current towards law-abiding pathways.

The frequency with which transition to adulthood now features in policy and political discourse indicates that the present campaign has struck a chord in public consciousness. There is a growing consensus that in twenty-first century, austerity Britain (and in other parts of the world), it is much harder to get securely set-up as an independent, self-supporting adult. Those with disadvantaged backgrounds and in the criminal justice system have a much steeper ascent. This ties in with an increased awareness of the numerous transitions that young people make between agencies and between life situations, each of which may be critical moments for slipping or progressing in life. The work of the pilots is providing very good examples and insights into how concentrating resources on young adults in transition is a good investment.

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1 Where the Journey Began

1.1 An idea whose time has come

In recent decades there has been increasing recognition and discussion of ‘young adulthood’ as a distinct stage of life. Otherwise referred to as ‘emerging adulthood’,⁴ this distinction focuses on the additional challenges and choices that meet young people in contemporary advanced societies, resulting in a longer period of time before they typically settle into what has traditionally been recognised as adulthood. The difficulties that all emerging adults face are multiplied for those from deprived or troubled backgrounds and who are most likely to get involved in criminal activity or related patterns of behaviour. Young adulthood is a peak age of offending and a time of transition and change which overlaps and goes way beyond the artificial divide of the juvenile and adult justice systems. The organisation of the criminal justice system however does not reflect the significance of this stage in life and therefore represents a long-standing missed opportunity to provide more effective and economic interventions.

A movement for greater priority, and therefore resources, to be given to ‘young adults’ in the criminal justice system began several decades ago. The Council of Europe held a conference on *Young Adult Offenders and Crime Policy*⁵ in 1991 in which it was observed that the difficulties and vulnerabilities for this age group between adolescence and adulthood had been mounting through the last century because of changing economic and social circumstances in post-industrial societies. It was noted that social changes had meant that the “two conventional ritual traditions” that had occurred swiftly and routinely for generations before, “from school to working life and from their original family to the family they create”, no longer straightforwardly

⁴ The term, ‘emerging adulthood’, was introduced by Jeffrey Arnett (2007) to conceptualise the age group from mid-teens to late twenties, roughly corresponding to that of concern to the T2A initiative. Arguably, this is a more appropriate label than that of ‘young adulthood’, which Arnett reserves for those who have already ‘arrived’, beyond that often prolonged period of transition.

⁵ Council of Europe (1994) *Young Adult Offenders and Crime Policy. Proceedings of the 10th Criminological Colloquy 1991*. European Committee on Crime Problems, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

applied, making it difficult for them “to build up their psychological and social identity” and leaving them “floating in a limbo of latency and uncertainty in which their legitimate aspirations come up against harsh reality”.⁶ The conference called for a policy of prevention and diversion strategies, adapted to the specific needs of young adult offenders to protect their human rights and divert them from further criminality at a time when typical adolescent anti-social behaviour can become a slippery slope to prolonged criminal involvement.

The arguments that applied then have become even more compelling. Most readers of this report probably do not need them to be rehearsed. They are set out admirably in, among others, the reports: *Lost in Transition*,⁷ *A New Start*,⁸ *Young Adults Today*.⁹ Most significantly, and of relevance to all young people regardless of background, the dividing lines are now much more blurred between education and employment; between being financially dependent and independent; between being single and joined with a partner. Whereas ‘identity crisis’, as conceptualised by Erikson,¹⁰ previously was firmly associated with adolescence, it is now more likely to be an enduring or recurrent experience during several years of indeterminacy regarding employment, relationships, accommodation and other landmarks that are associated with settling down. Identity formation takes longer. Theoretically there are more choices, wider access to continuing education and even well-publicised routes to fame and riches, offering the illusion that anything is possible, even for those from humble backgrounds. Although there may be a wide range of advertised possibilities – made more visible by modern media and IT communications – the free exercise of choice is constrained by competition and scarce resources. Dwindling employment opportunities for those with few or no qualifications, and the recent economic crisis and downturn have resulted in further blockages against progression into adult status.

If difficult for any young adult, how much more so then for someone from a deprived background, who is likely to have experienced neglect or abuse in childhood and to

⁶ Lenoir-Degoumois, V. ‘General Report’ in Council of Europe (1994) op cit. pp.127-128.

⁷ Barrow Cadbury Trust (2005) *Lost in Transition* op cit.

⁸ Transition to Adulthood Alliance (2009) *A New Start: Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System*. London: Barrow Cadbury Trust. Available at: <http://www.t2a.org.uk/publications>

⁹ Devitt, K., Knighton, L. and Lowe, K. (2009) *Young Adults Today - Key Data On 16-25 Year Olds Transitions, Disadvantages And Crime*. London: Young People in Focus.

¹⁰ Erikson, E.H. (1968) *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

have a sense of being socially excluded. Offending may be one way of acting out frustration or, among peers, achieving status and recognition,¹¹ as well as acquiring the goods that our unequal society grants more easily to others.¹² For those who are then locked away in correctional facilities away from their families and the community and coming out with the stigma of a criminal record, how much harder for them the challenges of trying to secure those social markers of settled adulthood (a job or training; settled home life). Yet a paradox here¹³ is that many of those from such troubled backgrounds have had an accelerated path into adulthood in some senses because they have been left to fend for themselves from an early age and, lacking secure relationships, have rushed into unstable intimate relationships and early parenthood bringing additional responsibilities.

As well as being of enduring concern in policy discussions, albeit strategically neglected, under the heading of ‘emerging adulthood’ (designated as covering the age period 18 to 29 years)¹⁴ this transitional stage of life has become a multidisciplinary, international field of study, with its own society and annual conferences.¹⁵ A focus on youth has been ever present in the discipline of criminal justice, distinguishing the majority of juvenile offenders who grow out of crime from the few who continue, and the period of becoming an adult as the stage in the life course when most offending begins to tail off into desistance from crime, but when the most prolific generally continue. Desistance researchers focus on the process of becoming an ex-offender, with giving up delinquency as one of the markers of settling down into adulthood.¹⁶ Conceptual and empirical understanding of turning points and psychosocial changes that occur during the transition to maturity are central to desistance research.

In Britain, the initiative of the Barrow Cadbury Trust (BCT), in setting up and funding a programme of work on the Transitions of to Adulthood, has helped to draw attention to the disjointed and inadequate nature of provision for this age group and to develop

¹¹ Barry, M. (2006) *Youth Offending in Transition: The Search for Social Recognition*. Abingdon: Routledge.

¹² Young, J. (1999) *The Exclusive Society*. London: Sage.

¹³ As noted by Inderbitzin (2009) ‘Reentry of emerging adults: adolescent inmates’ transition back into the community’, *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24(4): 453-476.

¹⁴ Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ <http://www.ssea.org/>

¹⁶ Laub and Sampson, 2003; Massoglia and Uggen, 2010.

practice and policies which will harness the potential for constructive work with them. Together with other policy developments focusing on transitions and the above mentioned academic interest, there is gathering momentum for what might be called a Transition to Adulthood Movement.

1.2 Background to the Transition to Adulthood programme

The independent Commission on Young Adults and the Criminal Justice System was established by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, “to develop a way in which the criminal justice system can recognise the importance of the transition between adolescence and adulthood, to develop ideas about how the system can promote natural desistance from offending in young adults in transition, and to find a way in which the criminal justice system could better promote the life chances of young adults”.¹⁷ In its influential report, *Lost in Transition* in 2005, the keystone argument was that young adults are especially vulnerable given the transitions they face at this stage of life and therefore interventions should be dependent on level of maturity rather than chronological age. Its overarching proposal was that there should therefore be more joining together of services, including transfer arrangements to bridge the youth and adult systems, links between the criminal justice system and government agencies responsible for the welfare of young adults, and involvement of the voluntary and community sector.

As an interim solution for achieving this ultimate goal of a unified criminal justice system, the Commission proposed the establishment of Transition to Adulthood (T2A) teams to “support young adults in the current system”¹⁸ and perform a “strategic”, “bridging role”¹⁹ between agencies. These teams (or pilots) would therefore be critical in “developing a criminal justice model for young adults in transition”.²⁰

The recommendations of *Lost in Transition* further specified that the T2A teams should:

¹⁷ Barrow Cadbury Trust (2005) *Lost in Transition*, 2005, p.4

¹⁸ Ibid, p.19

¹⁹ Ibid, p.19

²⁰ Ibid, p.16

- give special attention to the needs and specific circumstances of young Black and minority ethnic adults, and to young adult female offenders, such as by developing culturally appropriate interventions for them.

Other proposals for the initiative were not directed specifically at the pilots but were clearly relevant in shaping their objectives and domains of attention; in particular the recommendations to:

- improve access to appropriate services to meet their needs, including mental health, health and social care, housing, drug addiction treatment, education and employment opportunities.²¹
- develop measures of success, beyond reconviction rates, that focus on the ability of the services to promote improvements in social outcomes for young adults and desistance from crime.²²

The Commission also argued for there to be a campaigning arm in taking forward its ideas. Accordingly, the Barrow Cadbury Trust in 2008 brought together various criminal justice organisations, charities and individuals to form a *Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance* to raise awareness of the needs of young adults and to campaign for policy change. This T2A Alliance is a coalition of, now, 14 criminal justice organisations and charities, chaired by Rob Allen, Director of the International Centre for Prison Studies at King’s College London, and its website includes a lengthy list of supporters from all sectors.²³ Taking up the main message of *Lost in Transition*, the T2A Alliance calls for “a distinct and radically different approach to young adults in the criminal justice system; an approach that is proportionate to their maturity and responsive to their specific needs”.²⁴

The Alliance meets regularly and has produced a series of documents, notably a consultation paper in July 2009 called *A New Start: Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System*²⁵ and their *Young Adult Manifesto*²⁶ in November 2009. The consultation paper proposed a total of 21 recommendations for change. An impressive

²¹ Barrow Cadbury Trust *Lost in Transition*, 2005, pp.62-63

²² Ibid, p.63

²³ <http://www.t2a.org.uk/alliance>

²⁴ T2A Alliance website: www.t2a.org.uk

²⁵ T2A Alliance, *A New Start: Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System*, 2009.

²⁶ T2A Alliance, *Young Adult Manifesto*, 2009.

300 organisations and individuals, including politicians, practitioners, young people and ex-offenders, contributed with their comments over a three-month consultation period, enabling the T2A Alliance to develop its work and clarify its campaigning message in the production and launch of the *Young Adult Manifesto*.

The Manifesto contains 10 recommendations for change, “which would serve to make the way in which we deal with young adult offenders more effective, fairer and less costly.”²⁷ Each of these recommendations related to one or more of four core domains: diversion, sentencing, custody and resettlement. More specifically, the objectives for these four domains, respectively, are to:

- (1) divert more young adults away from the formal criminal justice system into measures which can address the causes of their offending and provide reparation to victims;
- (2) replace short prison sentences for non violent offenders with constructive community sentences;
- (3) make the experience of custody much more educational for those who really do need to be locked up; and
- (4) intensify efforts at reintegrating these young people after release.²⁸

In the run up to the 2010 general election the T2A Alliance was very active in campaigning for its 10 recommendations to be endorsed in all three main political party manifestos and, following the formation of the coalition government, was involved in organising fringe events at each of the parties’ annual conferences.

Where the pilots fit within this development

The three pilots commenced operation as T2A teams during the period December 2008 and July 2009. Two are led by voluntary sector services: including one in London which is delivered by the St Giles Trust as part of its SOS²⁹ project, and one in Worcestershire which is delivered by YSS.³⁰ The two voluntary sector teams were, to some extent, able to implant their T2A projects into existing projects applying a

²⁷ T2A Alliance, *Young Adult Manifesto*, 2009, Foreword.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ SOS stands for Southwark Offenders Support but only the acronym is used.

³⁰ Formerly an abbreviation for Youth Support Services, but now simply titled YSS.

similar model. The pilot, in Birmingham, is delivered by the (now combined) Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust.

The purpose of the pilots, according to BCT and T2A documentation, is to ‘test’ the proposed services and local strategies for improving provision for young adults. The pilots therefore are ‘T2A in action’,³¹ complementary to the campaigning work of the T2A Alliance. Although they have been allowed some scope to develop their own distinctive operational models, the teams were to be regarded as an interim measure and it was part of their brief to envisage how a young adult focus could be integrated into local mainstream practice. Towards the end of 2009 after they had been running for around one year, BCT took steps to strengthen the link between the pilots and the Alliance,³² asserting the need for a two-pronged approach:

- 1) Maintaining and strengthening a national momentum;
- 2) Influencing local practitioners and those working in the field.

The second area of activity here therefore more explicitly involved the pilots in raising awareness and influencing future development.

1.3 Evaluation design and methods

Each pilot is a socially complex programme, with both an operational and a strategic dimension, functioning in a multi-agency local setting, but linked to and influenced by a national initiative and developments. On an operational level they are working with service beneficiaries, and on a strategic level their efforts are directed towards other agencies and towards system building for the long-term future. As befits an emergent and multipart project, the Barrow Cadbury Trust commissioned a Formative Evaluation for the early stages of the initiative. The Centre for Criminology, Oxford University was commenced this phase of the evaluation in June 2009, around the time when the pilots were launched.

³¹ T2A Alliance, 2009, p.17.

³² Nicholas, 2009.

What constitutes a good evaluation is highly contested, reflecting positivist vs constructivist assumptions about social reality and research methodology ‘paradigm wars’, and also the differing purposes which an evaluation may serve. Our own preference is for a combined methodology which incorporates a theory-oriented qualitative approach and a rigorously controlled comparative evaluation set up at the appropriate time and informed by a prior theory-oriented evaluation.³³ Irrespective of methodological preferences, the type of evaluation has to be appropriate to a programme structure and the stage of its development.

The Transition to Adulthood initiative is a socially complex programme which “comprises multiple, human, social, and operational elements and operates in some larger organizational or community setting”.³⁴ The pilots were developmental and encouraged to form themselves, uniquely, according to local strengths, needs and circumstances. We therefore adopted the framework of an extended-term mixed-method (ETMM) evaluation design,³⁵ which emphasises the value of a formative evaluation, in which the insights/knowledge gained during the early implementation of the programme can lead to an agreed hypothesis or strand which can then be made the subject of a systematic comparative outcome evaluation in a controlled environment.

A formative evaluation is concerned with understanding the detail, meaning and subtleties of the intervention or programme under consideration and the kinds of questions asked include things like: How do the program managers and practitioners view and implement the services? Do service users respond to the services as expected? What else is important to service users that may have nothing to do with the programme? A theory oriented approach (or white box approach) is one which looks inside the ‘black box’ between inputs and outputs to tease apart the various elements in the programme and explore their underlying causal logic and how they play out in practice (whether they work out as envisaged, what besets them, and what propels them). In interventions concerned with influencing or changing behaviour, the effect or ‘outcome’ depends on how people respond the conditions put in place.

³³ Chatterji, 2005; Van der Knaap et al., 2008.

³⁴ Chatterji, 2007, p.241.

³⁵ Chatterji, 2005.

It is essential to therefore involve the main actors involved in delivering and receiving the intervention. We have done that through an appreciative and participatory approach, using the following methods:

- focus groups and interviews with staff to uncover their implicit assumptions about how their interventions will ‘work’ to improve services or will help young adults
- shadowing of keyworkers to observe their practice;
- engaging practitioners, and some volunteer mentors, as co-researchers in interviewing service users;
- involving service-users in case studies, explicitly intended to monitor and improve service delivery;
- attendance at steering group meetings;
- analysis of monitoring and policy documents;
- drawing on research literature on rehabilitation and desistance; evidence-based practice in similar interventions; young adulthood and life stage transitions. (literature).

One objective has been to make progress in developing ‘an explanatory account of how the program works, with whom, and under what circumstances.’³⁶ This involves exploring underlying assumptions about how the elements involved are thought to bring about changes or the desired outcome. Even in single stranded intervention this is challenging; and infinitely more so given the multi-faceted nature of each pilot’s programme. This explanatory focus is useful in stimulating thinking about the, generally unobservable, factors that cause an effect, and in identifying suitable elements that could usefully be tested. A comparative evaluation needs stabilised and controllable conditions, well-defined variables and a matched comparison group and a clearly defined causal model of what inputs will lead to which outcomes and why.³⁷

³⁶ Astbury and Leeuw, 2010, p.365.

³⁷ Chatterji, 2005, 2007; Leeuw and Vaessen 2009.

1.4 Purpose and scope of this report

This report is the last of three feedback reports from the evaluators to the stakeholders. It incorporates some material from previous reports and draws out the main findings and observations from our analysis.

The concept of a journey has always seemed appropriate for the T2A pilots because the main goal and ultimate prize was ahead of them and likely to be something that would come to fruition after they have ceased to exist in their present form; and something that they would travel towards, trying out their ideas and maybe discovering things as they go along. All the stakeholders of the T2A initiative, under the umbrella of Barrow Cadbury Trust, are involved in that journey, and we have regarded ourselves as fellow travellers. Most crucially, the young adults are journeying towards maturity and, it is hoped, towards stability and opportunities to lead fulfilled, crime free lives. Indeed, the notion of desistance from crime as pathways and trajectories is well established in the academic literature.³⁸ We also want to emphasise the need to see this as a long process in which the effort and investment of all concerned should be sustained beyond the pilots. Picking up on a theme captured in the title of the Commission's report *Lost in Transition*, we have also incorporated the notion of it being a search or quest to find or rescue something rather than it being a journey just for the ride. At the risk of over-labouring it therefore, this metaphor provides a framework for the report.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide a breakdown of the activities and achievements of the pilot projects, with examples, and difficulties faced, from the perspectives of the practitioners and the service users respectively. Chapter 4 provides a more analytical discussion of these findings, drawing on the reasoning of participants and existing research in order to articulate shared understandings of how and why elements of the T2A approach are believed to be effective; and how the T2A paradigm might be best incorporated into mainstream practice. Chapter 5 considers maintenance of the promising outcomes, with regard to foreseen and unforeseen difficulties over the long-term, and concludes with a review of the journey so far.

³⁸ Laub and Sampson, 2003.

2 Three Pilots Finding the Way

2.1 Introduction to the pilots and their aims

The Commission's proposal that every area should introduce Transition to Adulthood Teams – known from the start as T2As – was enthusiastically received by BCT, which appointed a T2A Development Officer to take this idea forward. After considerable discussion, strategic planning and competitive tendering, three areas were selected to pilot the ideas being projected: South London, West Mercia and Birmingham. Two of the T2As are housed in established voluntary sector organisations and one is housed in a probation service.

South London T2A, launched in January 2009, was the first pilot to be up and running. Based in the London branch of the St Giles Trust, it builds on the Southwark Offender Support project (SOS) but has been expanded to include work with prisoners returning to Croydon (an outer London borough) as well as those returning Southwark (an inner London borough). It is a proactive service, going into prisons to tell people what they offer; which is 'through the gate' mentoring plus practical support, such as finding accommodation and brokering for jobs. Two features are: the employment of people who have a similar background to the targeted service users, namely BME ex-offenders from London to work with BME prisoners returning to London; and the NVQ training of prisoners to provide advice and support³⁹ to returning prisoners and to talk to young people at risk of offending.

London T2A's⁴⁰ project goals are to:

- Support Probation in Southwark and Croydon to consider different models of working, specifically creating specialist Offender Manager posts who will work exclusively with young adults.
- Work closely with Probation, to support young adults leaving Rochester YOI who are returning to Croydon and Southwark, providing holistic support to

³⁹ Leading to an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) qualification.

⁴⁰ From here on we refer to South London T2A simply as London T2A because this is how it is generally named in discussion by stakeholders.

address issues likely to lead to re-offending, such as housing, income, ETE, gang or other criminal affiliations and family relationships.

- Deliver this support using a mixed team of paid staff and volunteer peer advisers, demonstrating the value of this model.
- Support ex-offenders to gain NVQ 3 in IAG and progress through voluntary work into paid work.⁴¹

Its strategic goals are to:

- Influence practice and policy relating to the treatment of young adults in the criminal justice system.
- Establish a model of good practice capable of replication in other parts of London and the UK.
- Provide evidence on issues relating to T2A that can be used by Barrow Cadbury in promotion of their general policy on young people.
- Provide opportunities for service users/ young people/ offenders to contribute to the development of policy/ practice so that sustainable changes can be achieved in the provision of services.
- Promote more positive perspectives of vulnerable young people that reduce stigmatisation and promote the concept of young people in need.
- Create long term opportunities for a more strategic approach to the needs of young people involving the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.
- Clarify the role of mentors involved with young people.⁴²

*Worcestershire T2A*⁴³ is being led by the Youth Support Services (YSS), a well-established, successful voluntary sector organisation with much experience of delivering youth justice services. It was launched in April, 2009 and, focuses on vulnerable young adults in Worcestershire. It builds on existing projects, including ACCLAIM⁴⁴ and the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Scheme (ISSP) that YSS has already delivered to a high standard.

⁴¹ London T2A Project Proposal.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Initially known as West Mercia T2A, and referred to as such in some earlier documents.

⁴⁴ A package of interventions which aims to Assist, Coach, Co-ordinate, Liaise, Advocate, Integrate, Mentor.

The main aim of the Worcestershire T2A is: “To ensure that young adults receive their statutory entitlements, and wherever possible are prioritised as a target group within local strategic plans”.⁴⁵ Some of their planned outcomes and outputs include:

- A well established multi-agency advisory group to influence and change local policy/practice.
- Evidence of policy and practice changed at both a local strategic and operational level with a particular emphasis on Probation and YOS.
- A clearly defined Worcestershire T2A strategy post BCT Funding.
- Fully developed T2A Referral, Assessment and Case Management systems.
- Service User Toolkit for T2A teams, Probation and YOS.
- Police Engagement Forum best practice.
- T2A Staff training programme and guidance materials.
- T2A Probation/YOS staff training programme and guidance materials.
- Range of statistical data recorded and evidenced.
- Lower rates for breach within the target group.⁴⁶

Birmingham T2A was launched in July, 2009. The T2A team is based in and employed by Birmingham Probation Service. It has been set up to work in partnership with other services in order to support low to medium risk young adults across the artificial age divide which separates youth and adult justice systems. Birmingham T2A’s expressed vision at its launch and in publicity material is: “To enhance the lives of young people in their transition to adulthood through and beyond the Criminal Justice System.”

They aim to:

- Motivate selected participants to become confident citizens.
- Effectively work in partnership to support participants to complete their planned actions.
- Adopt a structured process and project management approach to managing the quality of our work to reduce re-offending.
- Develop an approach that ensures all participants complete their planned objectives consistent with their sentences.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Worcestershire T2A project proposal.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Information from Power-Point presentation at the Birmingham T2A Launch.

2.2 Key differences and similarities

Each of the three T2As is building on existing expertise and provision and characteristics reflecting different histories, starting points and local needs. As well as differences in size and scale, there are variations in the risk levels and age limitations of those being targeted and in other characteristics of the target groups. The management structures, staffing arrangements and referral procedures are among other variations (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 around here.
Presently a separate attachment

While each of the pilots is unique in some respects and has common ground in others, there are also some characteristics which each shares with one but not both of the others. Notably, they distinguished along the following dimensions: public sector led vs voluntary sector led; starting ‘from scratch’ vs building on similar provision; overt employment of ex-offenders in the principal professional role vs conventional trained staff; city based with high ethnic minority population vs rural based with low ethnic minority population. It was not clear at the outset the extent to which their differences would be of importance.

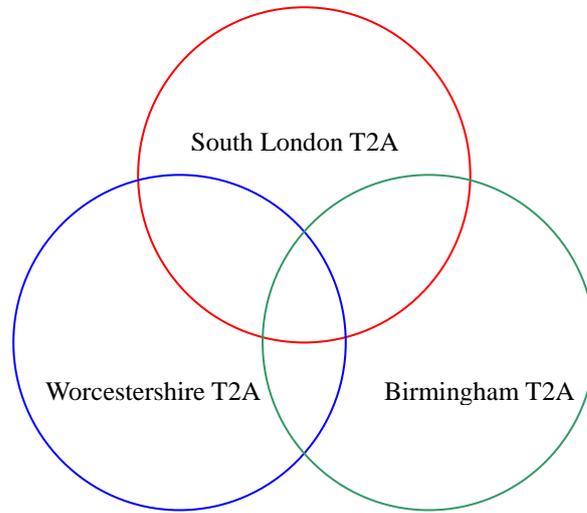
Importantly though, they were commissioned as pilots because of their shared capacity and readiness to meet the objectives and principles specified by Barrow Cadbury Trust as the funding body. Each pilot was required to meet the same selection criteria and to agree to various rules of engagement.⁴⁸ It is therefore not surprising to find that there is considerable overlap between them in these respects and in their activities.⁴⁹ Our discussions have found a change in perceptions of the extent of overlap between them (shown symbolically in the two diagrams in Figure 1). Although their differences remain of interest and potential relevance, there is perhaps more recognition of the significance of common ground in their principles and activities than was the case when they commenced.

⁴⁸ Cerfontyne (2007)

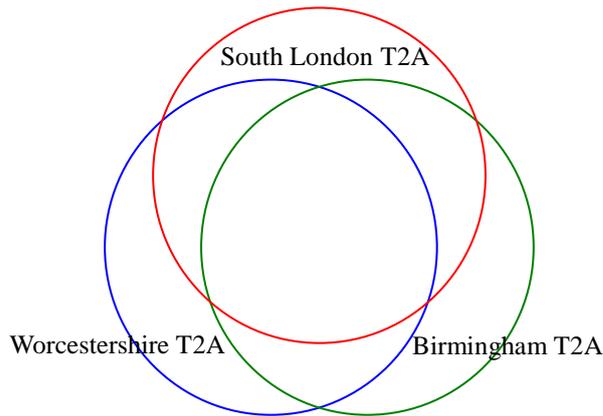
⁴⁹ See also: Burnett and Hanley Santos (2009)

Figure 1: Varying perceptions of overlap and difference between the pilots

(a)



(b)

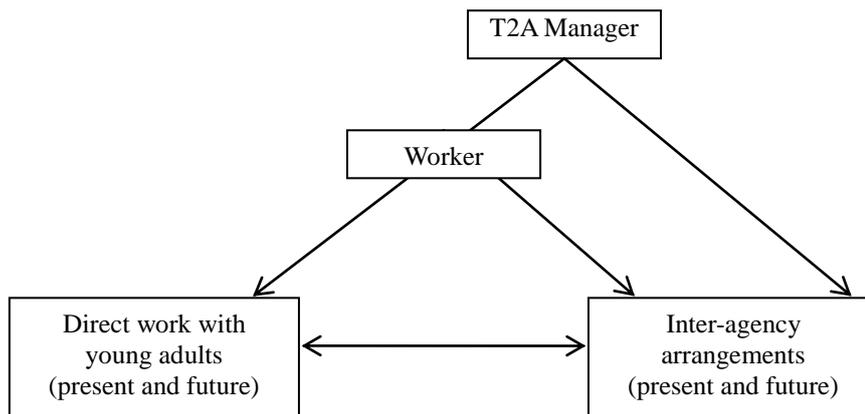


Common ground in their activities

In piloting services for young adults, all three pilots have a dual function: working directly with young people, and trying to ensure that others do. On a direct practice level, they are involved in mentoring or counselling young adults and brokering for them to access services. On a strategic level, they are, in effect, modelling how to work effectively with young adults, being a torchbearer for the needs of this group, and demonstrating how to align services. The strategic policy development has naturally been led by the chief executives and directors of services, though line

managers and practitioners played a clear part in this. Figure 2 is a simple model of these dimensions and levels of the work. Though these two levels of activity have to be integrated, to underline their fundamental difference, they could be termed the beneficiaries dimension and the institutional dimension.⁵⁰

Figure 2: Beneficiary and institutional levels of work by the pilots



The theory oriented approach of the formative evaluation requires that the pilots are appraised both holistically and in their component parts. This involves identifying the range of activities and the outcomes expected or intended, following how these are being implemented and played out over time and in chaotic real world conditions; and through a series of discussions, observations and analysis of documents, attempting to make the underlying causal assumptions about how they will lead to change or improvements.

Thus, the next task is to identify and analyse the specific components within the two broad undertakings discussed above. The aims, objectives and principles which were specified in setting up the pilots provide can be divided into themes which provide a framework for documenting and analysing specific strands of activity. This thematic

⁵⁰ A distinction used by Leeuw and Vaessen, 2009.

framework was applied in the previous feedback reports,⁵¹ but has been modified here to reflect more recent developments:

Direct work with service users

1. Working intensively with young adults during transitions
2. Addressing ‘diversion’, ‘sentencing’, ‘custody’ and ‘resettlement’
3. Engaging with diversity, difference and the hard-to-reach
4. Service-user involvement

Inter-agency arrangements

5. Improving transition arrangements across the gaps between services
6. Bringing statutory and voluntary services together
7. Identifying fault lines and blockages in accessing services

While each of these has relevance to both immediate service delivery and policy building for the future, and explication of each has been informed by discussion with practitioners, managers and executives, we have explored the first four themes primarily with regard to beneficiary level activities and the last four from the perspective of institutional level activities

The rest of this chapter describes the work of the pilots in each of these aspects, with examples of the issues involved. Participants’ logic models – that is, their understandings of how the inputs are expected to lead to the desired outcomes, or how impediments prevent this – are discussed in Chapter 4.

2.3 Direct work with service users

Each of the T2As have applied a model of working with young adults which provides holistic support, rather than being focused on offending, and which is geared to their immaturity and need for guidance through crossroads of experience which are new to them. Although it is a service model which has many of the hallmarks of traditional

⁵¹ Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2009; Hanley Santos and Burnett, 2009.

social work and probation service practice,⁵² in the present era of more punitive risk-focused offender management it stands out in some contrast to typical criminal justice interventions.

Working intensively with young adults during transitions

All of the pilots provide some form of one-to-one support for service users. The initial description of its service model provided by Worcestershire T2A, in its proposal and launch event, succinctly brings together many of the important ingredients which each of the pilots is delivering in their direct contact with young adult service providers:

The T2A team will offer a key worker and mentoring service provision and they will for each young adult determine the level of support they require, including support for family members. The key worker will aim to steer them through available provision overcoming any barriers, real or perceived, and will provide feedback to service agencies to influence service policies and developments. The team will advocate for young adults to be prioritised to access specialist provision and will advocate for change locally [...] Service delivery will concentrate on a motivational and coaching approach, across the reducing reoffending seven pathways. Each young person will develop their own action plan with smart objectives and will be supported by their key worker to implement, review and adapt the plan. Staff will be responsive to need and flexible in their approach due to the potential changing and chaotic lifestyles of the young adults involved. On average action plans and service delivery could involve up to 3 contacts per week to start, tailing off as required and will last up to 4 months. Support needs to be ‘empowering’ however where there are significant needs or significant areas of vulnerability the service can be extended. Once a young adult leaves the project they can access telephone/advice support up until the age of 24 years, however they can be re-referred by a partner agency or consideration given to a self referral at a later date.

While there are some differences of emphasis in each of the pilots and variations in the anticipated duration of intensive support offered, each of the pilots is likely to identify with much of this passage as a description of its own operational practice. Other shared features are that the contacts often take place in the community and involve home visits and family contact; the support is often practical (or ‘hands-on’) in nature; and the take-up of the service is optional for the young person. It recognises that “what young people value is ... a supportive relationship with a non-judgemental adult who is able to help them navigate their way through difficult circumstances”.⁵³ This echoes the finding in countless other qualitative studies that have “consistently identified positive relationships with key practitioners as an essential element of an effective service”.⁵⁴

⁵² Burnett and McNeill, 2005.

⁵³ France and Homel, 2006, p.9.

⁵⁴ Revolving Doors Agency, 2010, p.3.

The nature of the support offered is holistic. While there is detailed attention given to the specific issues presented by the service-user, and the importance of working with other services to address those needs is stressed, it is the person as a whole and their plans in the round which are important, unrestricted by the 'tunnel vision' that might result from services focused on particular outcomes:

We're not driven by objectives and target ... We look at the whole person ... [Other services have] got their own objectives and their own targets and they only do a certain amount. ... when you get to the end of their programme you get referred to another ... But that's it, no one's going to monitor you – how did you do at college? How did you find that transition? Are you coping? How's home life? ... Is that now a problem that you're at college? How's finances? All of that sort of stuff. Whereas we continue that journey all the way so it is invaluable and I'm hoping once everyone comes together and they can truly see that working together is efficient but the T2A method of sticking with a person outside of the 9 to 5 hours, outside of going to this project or that, looking at their social development, everything, and sticking with them on that journey...it is what they need. It's what some people actually need.

The intensity of contact and the duration of support is tailored according the person's degree of difficulty and need:

It's not everyone that has that intensive involvement ... because some people are just ... they just need a leg up, a chance, they're raring to go, loads of motivation, they know what's happened, they want to put that behind them. They just can't get past that young 'I'm an ex-offender with nowhere to live and no job and no trade or education to speak of, how do I turn my life around?' And that's what T2A is all about, it's helping that person put them on...getting them into secure accommodation, putting them on an effective training course that can give them long term prospects of earning a living, and mentoring their mental state that takes you from that, keeping you motivated, keeping you focused to wanting to achieve those kinds of things. So that's the T2A model.

Although Birmingham now favours a specified 12 week limit in most cases, whereas the other two do not specify any limits and give out the message that they are there when needed, all three of the pilots discriminate between those who need minimum intervention and those whose degree of vulnerability require a considerable investment of time, and for whom a helping hand needs to be extended over a longer term:

Some people require that level of support that is hands-on and all the way through the journey right to the end. Whereas some you just give them a leg up and they will run and they will do well, in their lives, but there are some people that have come from particularly disadvantaged backgrounds, care leavers that have no social skills or independent living skills or all that – those are the kind of people that we really try to reach and it's those people that can't be left to just get on with it. You give them a leg up and nothing will happen, they won't advance, they'll just stay there until they fall back down because they don't know how to cope with that young adulthood life basically of taking charge of your life in a positive direction.

Essential to the T2A model is the use of solution-focused action plans. Importantly, these are determined by the young person in discussion with the worker, built around

what they most need to tackle and most want to achieve, within reason, and set out as specified goals and steps towards those goals. In Worcestershire and Birmingham the action plans are based around needs defined by the NOMS seven pathways, namely Accommodation; Education, training and employment; Health; Drugs and alcohol; Finance, Benefit and debt; Children and families; and Attitudes, thinking and behaviour. Another key element of this style of working is putting the young adults in touch with relevant services to meet their needs, and helping them to access these services. It could be described as brokering. In explaining this role to us, one metaphor that was used was that of 'glue'; indeed this metaphor was seen as more appropriate than the bridge metaphor that has been proposed in BCT documentation:

It's a question again of linking in because I don't think the links are there. So, as an organisation and as a project, T2A can act as the glue. It's what sticks the young person between one set of resources and probation, we're looking at the criminal justice system.... that's a better metaphor. Rather than the bridge, ... we're the glue between the criminal justice system, wider society and those agencies in that wider society that are set up to work with this group. [...] So we're a bridge if we're an interface or a link.

The approach is person-centred in that the frequency of contact and issues of focus are, to a large extent, determined by the client.

It would depend on the individual. Some contacts would be, you'd have more contacts with one young person depending on their need and what they have decided they want, because we are very much leaving it up to them, what they think it important. Because they might have certain things they have to do with, like for example, Probation or the YOTs and we actually wanted to be driven by them. You know if there is something they really want ... want us to, you know, support them with and advocate on their behalf and then that's what we do. I mean I might have one young person I see twice a week and that is sufficient for them and then another young person I might have phone calls coming in relating to their housing. I might be making a lot of contacts.

Some paperwork is intrinsic to the solution-focused method of working with the young people in order to monitor progress, and each of the pilots have developed or introduced a system for achieving this. They make use of 'user-friendly' forms so that the action plan can be built up in discussion with the client and so that relevant activities and steps towards achieving goals can be noted and seen to be done. Given the present abundance of assessment and performance monitoring tools in the criminal justice system, notably the use of Asset and OASys, the T2A practitioners are wary about overwhelming their service users group with forms, and time their introduction sensitively, especially during the initial meeting. Depending on the referral route, previous assessment data is sometimes available to them. The two voluntary sector pilots prefer to avoid overt use of such tools: "... if we were to start

inputting those sort of assessment tools and those sorts of practices, I think that it would give a conflicting message really, of what are we about, what are we trying to introduce”.

As well as referring them to other services in the community, an emphasis is given to the importance of guiding them through the bureaucratic complications, helping with the practicalities by providing information or going through procedures with them. The T2A workers, or volunteers in the team, go with them to the various services to give moral support and to help guide them through the process and, literally to show them the way. The metaphor of ‘sherpa’⁵⁵ was used in early discussions envisaging of the transitional worker’s role, and this continues to be a concept used in describing the operational model:

How we describe our work is as being the Sherpas to help them navigate through this multitude of systems. ... it’s about integration, so what our workers are doing is introducing them to the local citizens advice bureau, local benefits agency so when we’re not with them they’ve got a much better understanding of what’s available.

The West Midlands T2A now gives a stronger emphasis to this aspect of the work through its renaming of the practitioner as Community Engagement Workers; though they are careful to limit the escorting aspects to those who most need it:

It’s about making those phone calls before, during, after, and if need be doing the baby-sitting if some of them are particularly struggling, picking them up and going to the appointment in the first instance and then setting up a structure for them.

Addressing ‘diversion’, ‘sentencing’, ‘custody’ and ‘resettlement’

How T2A practitioners work with service-users is inextricably linked with *what* they are striving to achieve, and this second theme is therefore artificially separated from the first in order to consider the tactical operations being applied to achieve the goals. The overarching goals are those specified by *Lost in Transition* – reducing offending and facilitating more fulfilled lives – and, towards these, the T2A Alliance distinguished four focal points or goals towards which the provision of young adult services should be channelled, and which the pilots’ promotional work might influence: ‘diversion’, ‘sentencing’, ‘custody’ and ‘resettlement’. There is some overlap between these: diversion from court proceedings and from custodial

⁵⁵ Guides for mountain expeditions, originally to early explorers in the Himalayan regions.

sentences; providing information to sentencers to facilitate sentences which have regard to maturity level and transitional needs; supporting resettlement by services to young adults during and following their custodial sentences. There are some noteworthy examples of how the pilots are helping to address these.

The goal of diversion includes both diversion from the criminal justice system and from custodial sentences. Referrals can be made to T2A of young adults at risk of involvement in offending or who have not yet been committed to appear in court so that pre-emptive support can be given. In Birmingham, as well as intervening with those at risk of breaching requirements or facing custody, there are ambitions to intervene preventatively:

Community Engagement Unit Manager: Ideally what I'd like to see is as a young person gets their first warning, a referral to T2A is made and then we do all the motivation and engagement work with them.

With respect to the Worcestershire pilot, the YSS is proposing the development of a senior attendance centre for 16 to 24 yr olds, which could be used as a pre-court disposal, perhaps linked to a conditional caution:

The idea is that they'd come to that on Saturday and have three hours there, for something really constructive where they can do independent living skills, they can do learning a trade, we can do all that wrap-around support for them while they're there but it's a restriction on their liberty at the same time.

The proposed attendance centre, to be located in a vocational training centre in the area, would also provide an alternative disposal for courts who are reluctantly considering a custodial sentence:

So if they feel that they should sentence to custody but the imperative is that they shouldn't, what have they got of a robust nature that is punitive enough but also has got a rehabilitative element to it? And I think attendance centres, if run creatively, have the opportunity to do that. [...] There's nothing new that we're talking about here, but packaged in a different way, a few tweaks, and there's something that's potentially ready made. Inappropriate referrals for young adults either being sent to custody, or being inappropriate with unpaid work and then breaching, maybe an electronic tag with an attendance centre might be something we can get them through and maybe come out with something positive at the end of it and they don't end up in custody. So they're the type of things we're exploring and Probation are really keen on developing. That would be a major result for us if we actually got that attendance centre, because there aren't that many senior attendance centres... in the whole country. Some I think are run in a bit of a regimented way: stand up, sit down let's do some running around the courtyard and others are a bit more imaginative in how they engage with people and we'd be a lot more in the latter.

All of the pilots get involved, in varying degrees, in court work with a view to either speaking up on behalf of young people already known to them, or perhaps influencing

sentencing decisions by increasing magistrates' awareness of the additional needs of young adults and the issue of maturity. By attending courts on a regular basis they can also be available to make a first contact with young people who may subsequently be referred to them and they can promote T2A services as a way in which those being sentenced can be supported in the community. Birmingham pilot gave specific examples of how this court presence is impacting on sentences:

Community Engagement Unit Manager: 'Courts' we've already talked about, early intervention in the courts – T2A staff are already attending court at the moment. It's promoting the service to the court and ... increasing our profile there. I know orders have been made on the back of 'Well this person's going to be working with T2A' so it looks good for them and it's included in the community order although not as a statutory requirement.

Steering Group Chair: So is T2A included in the pre-sentence report?

Community Engagement Unit Manager: What's happened is the key worker has stood up in court and said 'This person wants to engage with T2A, this is what we're going to offer, and he's really motivated to do this work' and it's just highlighted the profile...

Assistant Chief Probation Officer: We've already shown that being in court at breach stage that we can be effective, and one of our good news stories earlier in the year was that a T2A worker was in court and the young person was in custody and with the influence of the wrap around service the individual was sent back to us.

Other points at which T2As can be involved in supporting diversion and in influencing sentences are via involvement in breach processes and also by speaking up, where appropriate, for the early termination of orders:

Community Engagement Unit Manager: The next part of the plan is to reduce the number of breaches through the Probation Service of 18 to 25 yr olds and we're talking about capturing young people in courts, keeping involved with courts so we know what breaches are coming through and maybe offering our services at that point, engaging with unpaid work, so that if young people are struggling to engage and struggling with the attitude on the unpaid work we can actually pull them back into T2A for a short period and then put them back into unpaid work [...] And last but certainly not least encourage earlier revocation of orders because that can be quite successful and it's a good way of helping the young person to move forward.

The extent to which the pilots have been involved in resettlement work has varied considerably. At one stage, the Worcestershire T2A became concerned that most of the referrals from the Probation Service were at the PSR stage or linked to a community order but for around 12 months there were no referrals of people coming out of custody. This is an omission that they have sought to remedy.

The London T2A is complemented by other St Giles projects, notably the 'Through the Gate' resettlement project which, like the T2A is a bridging service "from A to B". The emphasis is on continuity of contact from the prison context to the community context:

We have to get a worker some way out of London to go to these prisons to spend some time with people, um, and then we have that same worker on the same team, ideally the same worker actually, giving the service in the community. And we think that really, really works because you have this great opportunity to build up a relationship with people when there's no distraction, less distractions, and then in the community that relationship is already existing, you haven't got to form it on the day of release or straight afterwards or just before, or something like that.

A similar argument applies in Birmingham, which includes objectives to 'Provide additional support for young people leaving custody' and to 'Engage with the young people when they're in custody' in its strategic plan:

Unit Manager: Engaging with them when they're in custody, I think, is really important because they're quite motivated. While you've got young people in custody they're talking about what they want to do when they get out. When they get out and get back in touch with their mates it might be very different. So catching them before, sorting out the action plan with them and getting straight in there with interventions before they come out is quite important and something we really want to focus on. Though obviously we'll have added expense because we're talking about prison visits there and it could be anywhere in the country. [...] Offender Managers find it really difficult to find the time to make regular prison visits; with the YOS you're expected to go once a month and go to reviews. Once a young person reaches 18 – because I had a young person I was working with, he moved prisons, he went to [distant prison] – and there was no expectation of anybody to see you, and so that's where we would link in there and start working with them.

T2A Strategic Director: And obviously because we are in court, with that age group we'll have met them and at that point we'll have the referral then. What we're doing now, we're identifying, and actually doing what [the Unit Manager] was saying - we need to refer this person to the Unit so we do it that way as well.

Engaging with diversity, difference and the hard-to-reach

The pilots are intended to target in particular young adults in the criminal justice system who are vulnerable or who have additional needs. Females, young adults from minority ethnic categories, those with mental health or learning disabilities, are among such vulnerable categories. All of the pilots are alert to the importance of prioritising these and finding ways to include those who might be overlooked or neglected without special attention.

The Worcestershire YOT targets only 17 to 19 year olds but widens its age group up to 25 for minority categories and women. Not surprising perhaps then, at times about one third of their service users are female; another factor here is that probation offender managers "recognise their vulnerability". It is an area with a low minority ethnic population.

The London pilot staff are confident of their own success in engaging people who tend to be in the hard-to-reach bracket, but less so when another service is referring people to their projects, including T2A : “it depends on who is selling the service”.

They gave this example of recruiting prisoners to their projects:

[Name of Prison] keeps kind of restructuring and they've completely restructured their IAG around the seven pathways, you know these pathways they love so much they keep trying to do is to manage referrals on to our project and that's what we absolutely don't want them to do. We don't mind taking referrals from them, but we also want access to the, you know, unmediated access, to the young people. Because what we found is, I mean the way Z3 traditionally recruited was to do the LIDS search, the officers would obligingly get all the new ZS people into a room, Z3 would give them a talk, almost everyone would say, 'Yeah, I'll go for that. It's voluntary. I like the sound of it, that's great'. And so this would not just be the good lads, the ones the officers would see as the good lads, it would be the ones the officers would see as a pain in the arse. The ones who weren't engaging with education, the ones who weren't, you know, had no privileges in the prison. But they would still engage with our project and our concern is if officers mediate our referrals, then we are going to get the ones seen as good as gold. We want them as well, but we don't just want them. I mean the people the officers think of as a major problem need the service far more, most definitely and also they are the ones much more likely to take a service from us because they would reject it from an officer. And again, it's very difficult. You have to be very delicate in explaining this to prison officers, actually you selling a service and us selling a service are two very, very different things (laughs). And they'll say, 'Oh, but I spelt out the advantages. I told them'

With regard to reaching minority ethnic groups, the London T2A suggests that while having a similar ethnic identity to service users may be helpful in engaging someone, shared area of origin and local knowledge are at least as important:

Head of Community Services: You work the demographics of the group. In any group of London offenders there's going to be a lot of black people in there. And the staff group ... in any prison, even in London, is quite white, but you go out into Kent and they're all white, everyone, you know, and that doesn't help; but I think the key thing isn't specifically ethnic background, it's the local knowledge, because [one of their practitioners] is a white woman and she's going out, but the young lads from London completely relate to her. [Interviewer: Is she an ex-offender?] Yeah. And you know, she's going out there and talking to them in any way that our other staff would talk to them. And that's not the issue, they are just so pleased to see someone from where they come from.

Practitioner 1: Yeah. They're like, 'Oh my God, what's going on? You understand the difference between Peckham and Lewisham!

Practitioner 2: Someone who looks like me and sounds like me! [yeah].

Head of Community Services: Yeah. It's a huge relief. And they just don't get that. And often there's good things on offer in prisons, but the young people can't engage with those workers because they can't. I mean we work in Portland, you know, down in the depths of Dorset, you know, these blokes with funny accents (laughs). Half the time they just don't get it. And they might be offering some great courses and often our workers can persuade them to engage with those courses. But without that bridging involved, they are just gonna twiddle their thumbs during their sentence and get on nothing, whereas they might have got a pretty good qualification

Service-user involvement

Another core principle of the T2A approach is that service-users should be consulted. This applies to both policy development and immediate practice.

A key feature of London T2A and what is argued to be a significant factor in the success of the St Giles Trust services is their use of ex-offenders to provide the services. In fact, for London T2A, 100% of their direct staff are ex-offenders and they also provide NVQ training of young offenders to provide advice and support to young people within the criminal justice system and to talk to young people at risk of offending. They state in their proposal that:

The principle of user involvement will be central to our whole service; some paid staff will be ex-offenders as well as all the trainees. We see ex-service users as integral to the way we deliver services... We confidently expect that by the end of the project 50 young adults will have achieved an NVQ 3 in IAG [Information, Advice and Guidance], and we expect many of these to gain employment in the IAG sector - bringing the ex-service user perspective to other organisations.

Worcestershire T2A has service user involvement as one of its key aims. Towards this they hold forums to bring service-users together to share their experiences of practice and explore issues of relevance to them, and with a view to following up suggestions made by them (for example, inviting representatives of different agencies come to talk to them about services offered). One output of these forums is the creation of a *Service User Toolkit* for T2A teams, Probation and the YOS. Service users have also contributed to the creation of a film which was presented at a local conference attended by the YSS patron, HRH the Princess Royal.

Operations Director: The film they made was hugely powerful in terms of what they were saying. And the brief was completely theirs so this wasn't us trying to take them where we wanted them to go. On the feedback from them and on the opportunity for them to meet HRH, it was fantastic for them.

Chief Executive: People say 'Can I come and see a T2A project? Can I see the programme?' Well no you can't; there isn't a programme to see. There isn't that type of thing to see. So getting a group together like that is kind of an artificial experience, but some of them get a lot of benefit out of it, getting together as a group occasionally and we have wondered if we should have it more, but it is incredibly intensive to arrange and sort.

A similar service-user group is being planned for the Birmingham T2A, in the form of a young persons' Council. The idea is to bring some young people together for meetings on a six weekly basis, involving them first in "some sort of dynamic

activity” and getting them comfortable with talking in that setting with a view to then forming a “T2A Council” and perhaps getting them involved in producing a newspaper. The objective is for these discussions to “feed into some of the ideas we want to move forward”.

We discussed with whether such service users consultations might be tokenistic, or another way of supporting the change process towards desistance through the skills and other benefits that the young people acquire, rather than genuinely influencing policy. Practitioners refuted this and gave examples of suggestions that has led to operational changes (such as timing appointments so that they had regard to when bus services are running). It is arguable, though, that the most fundamental way in which there is service-user involvement is through the tailored, person-led action plans which are the basis for the direct work with young adults. Such was the view expressed by the chief executive of the Worcestershire pilot:

Interviewer: Are these forums genuinely useful for policy development, or something that’s ethically good to do?

Chief Executive: No it’s not tokenism, but for me it all starts with them having a say in their action plans, and then it’s getting them together in groups, because it’s not normally about group work. [...] But I think service user involvement also means for us more importantly the action plans, because they develop those in partnership with their key worker. They’re having a complete say in how they’re asking for help and what shape that help actually looks like, so they’ve not being delivered a packaged service, they’re actually designing the service they’re receiving.⁵⁶

2.4 Inter-agency arrangements

The second area of work expected of the pilots, is one of influencing thinking and decisions about young adults, their level of maturity and their needs, both within operational practice, and in strategic planning. The Alliance Manifesto and related documents see the pilots as taking on a local role in this respect, with a focus under each of the four headings that they specified: diversion, sentencing, custody and resettlement. Such activities have included organised events and involvement in a “targeted local media campaign”,⁵⁷ thereby bringing the work of the pilots and the Alliance closer together.

⁵⁶ Service-user involvement is also built into the present evaluation – see Chapter 3.

⁵⁷ T2A Alliance, 2009; Nicholas, 2009; Nicholas et al., 2010.

The Chief Executive of the Worcestershire YT2A gave a very clear exposition of the project's strategic role in a pre-evaluation interview, clearly seeing this as one of their twofold aims:

One [aim is] to form local strategy and to get them to realign policies and systems based on the feedback that we're finding on the ground. So that's why there's a big service user element. So when we're talking about the project, I think that's 50% of the project as far as I'm concerned and then we can feed-up into the national debate and the national alliance and stuff. [...] if we're going to be successful in what we're doing with T2A, it isn't just about the on the ground practice. We need to be informing the local strategies about what our practice is telling us, and we need them on board to be able to change from the top, and realign their strategy and policies accordingly.

Similarly, the broad purpose of the St Giles T2A is to “work in conjunction with other Barrow Cadbury funded Transition to Adulthood (T2A) initiatives, and other agencies, to support broad cultural and systemic changes in the way the Criminal Justice System works with young adults”. More specifically, among its strategic goals, it set out to:

- Establish a model of good practice capable of replication in other parts of London and the UK
- Provide evidence on issues relating to T2A that can be used by Barrow Cadbury in promotion of their general policy on young people
- Promote more positive perspectives of vulnerable young people that reduce stigmatisation and promote the concept of young people in need
- Create long-term opportunities for a more strategic approach to the needs of young people involving the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors

Some of this work has been ‘bottom-up’. As discussed above, and illustrated in Figure 2, the work on an institutional level – that is, interactions with other agencies – has been on two levels. Liaison with other services is part and parcel of the key workers’ casework individual service users whom the teams are supporting during the pilot period. But it is also more general, in developing policy to improve future provision. In the latter respect, the push from BCT and the T2A Alliance has been to raise the profile of young adults with other services. The practitioners have got involved in this through their attendance at partnership meetings, steering groups and local events.

The other thing for the key workers as well, so they've got their roles in terms of their caseloads doing that work you've described, but they're also attending local forums and steering groups and they sit on a housing groups again they've got a role, these are the more operational groups about what the issues are, so again that's part of their role as well.

The chief executives and managers of the pilots have been actively involved in promoting the T2A concept locally and in strategic development for local partnerships. All the pilots held widely attended launch events and subsequent

conferences to promote the work and stimulate partnership approaches. As well as more immediate developments these events contribute to strategic thinking about the funding and integration of this focus into local frameworks. The directors have also been involved in lobbying for change on a national level. At least one of them has presented papers at national and international conferences on youth justice.

The part played by chief executives and T2A directors in promoting the goals and advantages of this programme of work is an example of how pilots have been involved in ‘top down’ strategic development. The day to day work of practitioners can also be valuable in achieving policy change in local systems. Some of the T2A practitioners were actively involved in, what is unattractively labelled, such ‘bottom up developments’, as the following account amply, and admirably, demonstrates:

Some of the early setbacks that I found was the different organisational objectives, batting your head against a brick wall all the time, sending people off in good faith to do things and then having them come back and say ‘Well it’s not actually what you said it was going to be’. [...] So one of the things I’ve been really trying to do over the last year is going to these services, going to these places where I’m going to make referrals to and spending a day there, meeting young people and talking to them and saying ‘How do we work together to support them?’. And that I’ve found has worked a lot better. The YOT and Probation were two main culprits of this [...] they are ruled by their organisational objectives and their job descriptions, and so we had this battle between us: Are we supporting this person or are we surveilling and monitoring them? Because that’s their job, and it’s on my list to help. So we had that tug of war, and speaking to Probation and all that, they then appointed a specialist probation officer to work with me [for young adults linked to gangs], and that just made life easier because then she had leeway, even though she was a Probation Officer, to go beyond the constraints of Probation and she could come on our side of the fence and realise that to get this young person from A to B takes more than a 15 minute interview saying ‘Are you ok?’. And for a Probation Officer she does this, does what I do: if you’ve got interviews [e.g. JobCentre, Housing] she will come and get you out of your house and take you to your interview [...] We do have some of the same clients so we’re constantly in communication so there’s no duplication, and things like that, and we cover for each other because we know all the clients and we meet and we talk at our Intelligence Meetings. [...] I rely on her for a lot of the information within the statutory system held on their databases, and she relies on me for my referral routes to the third sector, so the one couldn’t really be without the other.

This practitioner also explained that, prior to the appointment of the specialist probation officer, too many cases were being referred to T2A by the probation service because they were “clients that they’d washed their hands of basically” and “clients that no one else could work with”. The T2A service then achieved some success, leading to even more referrals. This example also usefully illustrates the tensions that can arise between services which have different principal aims and differences in their standard way of working, and how finding common ground can result in a constructive approach for some of the most challenging cases.

Improving transition arrangements across the gaps between services

One of the starting points for the T2A initiative was the objective of a unified criminal justice service or one that would bridge the gap between the youth and adult systems. The Ministry of Justice and YJB have now produced a national transfer policy, and local services are required to develop their own local protocols.⁵⁸ The T2A pilots are being consulted about these, generally in the context of multi-agency meetings and other local authority transitions protocols.

The Birmingham T2A has made such transfer arrangements one of their priorities. They already had a local protocol for the transition between YOS and Probation, but this is now being revised and piloted. The Probation Service is nurturing “T2A champions” in Probation, and offender managers who have particular interest or willingness to work with this age group, and plans workshops to provide joint training for YOS and Probation staff involved in transitional work.

This T2A is now in effect acting as a clearing house for 18-24 year olds, which involves assessing the young adult’s needs, developing a plan and making an assessment if these are not already available, and acting as a broker to make sure they have access to all the services they need, and that there is co-ordination with other systems that might be relevant, such as MAPPA. They will be referred to an offender manager in most cases who will then be the lead professional. However, a T2A worker (now called Community Engagement Officer) will provide up to 12-weeks ‘wrap around’ support for those who need it. To support the decision making process, they have introduced four-way transitions meetings, involving the Youth Offending Service, T2A, the Probation Service offender manager and the young person. Another priority for Birmingham is to raise awareness among offender managers and youth offending services of the distinct young adult needs and relevant services in the community. The following discussion at a steering group meeting, indicates the thinking involved in the revised transfer arrangements and clearing house approach:

T2A Strategic Manager: We’re talking about being a broker, with cases coming to Birmingham, so they’re coming to the Unit first. By the time they get to the Offender Manager

⁵⁸ YJB, 2009.

they're doing a three way and whether they take them on without the T2A support, the Offender Manager will have an awareness of the vulnerability of that young person...

SG member: So even if they don't do T2A?

T2A Strategic Manager: Yeah they still come through so they've got a better start in terms of not being treated as an adult, and it's also the way I see it as being viable for the managers.

SG member: How long before their 18th birthday can they come?

Community Engagement Unit Manager: Up to six months before their 18th birthday a referral can come through. It should be transferred over to Probation within three weeks of their 18th birthday so it's the lead in period we're looking at and making sure that everything's in place so you know (the Offender Manager) that the young person's moving on, all the paperwork that's involved, the ASSET has been pulled over and the OASys set up.

Chair of SG: I think this is really important because if we could show, and we've probably still got time to do this, that the transfers that were facilitated through T2A have a much better outcome than those who don't, then we're talking really significant stuff. But we've got to get referrals earlier, to try and talk to YOS about raising the profile...

Community Engagement Unit Manager: YOS managers are really keen on that process because they find it really difficult to get hold of SPOs [Senior Probation Officers] and know which office they've got to use.

The Head of Community Services at one of the other T2A pilots proposed that the best solution for joining the Youth Offending Services and Probation Services might be for a suitable voluntary sector service to be that bridge, and to, so to speak, carry the person across:

The gap between YOS and Probation is dreadful... My big thing now is that the voluntary sector should be commissioned across the gap and that's not happening. I mean predominantly we're commissioned to mirror statutory service, so, you know, Probation would fund us for 18+. If YOT funded us, they would fund us for under 18s. Whereas actually I think we should be funded for 15 to 25 or something like that.

In another discussion, the same shrewd T2A leader widened this point to gaps between services more generally, with an argument that has relevance beyond the pilots to future interagency systems for unifying services (see Chapter 4, section 4.3). There are numerous 'gaps' between services where the same concerns about the chasm between the youth and adult justice systems apply. Notably, it is particularly ironic that some of the most controlling interventions, such as a period of being 'looked after' or in secure containment, can end abruptly, leaving the young person suddenly adrift and without any formal oversight.

Bringing statutory and voluntary services together

Involvement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS), or third sector, has long been important to BCT, and probably in no respect more so than for assisting disadvantaged young adults. The T2As were seen a compelling opportunity for

bringing this sector more integrally into play within joined up approaches, and giving them a bigger role where their potential can be fully realised.

As well as established voluntary sector organisations, the contribution that small scale local community groups can make, and do make, is in general unseen and underestimated. Supporting ‘grass roots’ organisations has always been central to the BCT’s vision and grant giving agenda, and the pilot projects were expected to seek ways to include them.⁵⁹ All the pilots are active in referring young people to these, and also making strategic links between such local initiatives and public sector services. The probation-led T2A employs its own staff as the transitional workers but they work closely with a local consortium of voluntary sector organisations as well as other partners in order to refer the young adults to the openings they need.

The two voluntary sector pilots are already exemplifying this integration, through their present management and delivery of the T2A service, steered by operational and strategic multi-agency committees; the lead agencies also have close links with other VCS groups. However, the amount of funding to sustain the present dedicated T2A teams might prove prohibitive for continuing such an arrangement, especially in the present precarious situation for voluntary sector organisations (see also section 4.3).

In an exciting development, the YSS has made a significant leap in the direction of linking the voluntary and public sector. From a field of several large voluntary sector and private sector organisations which tendered, it has been selected by Worcestershire Probation to be its preferred partner. This is indicative of a high level of trust and engagement between the two sectors and, as the Chief Executive of YSS notes, is “relevant to the current political and policy context”.

We’re almost like a bridge between the statutory agencies and the people in the local communities [...] it wasn’t formulated in response to The Big Society or the coalition, this was their direction of travel anyway following years of discussions from working with us, in the probability of a contracting financial climate in the public sector.

The ‘preferred partner’ arrangement means that “they will work with probation to commission services from other local third sector providers. They will also develop the

⁵⁹ Including the community sector was one of the ‘rules of engagement’ (Cerfontyne,2007)

capability and capacity of local voluntary organisations to create innovative solutions to working with offenders”⁶⁰.

Other aspects of relevance to securing voluntary sector involvement are discussed in Chapter 4 section 4.3 in relation to commissioning frameworks, the spending review and anticipated blurring between the sectors.

Identifying fault lines and blockages in accessing other services

Although generally satisfied with the standard of service they were themselves delivering to service users, the T2A practitioners often expressed frustration about the responses of other services in relation to their clients. Sometimes they were critical of limitations or omissions in provision by other services. In other instances, it was the managerial approach, different values or an absence of holistic thinking that presented sticking points or tensions in their respective work with the service users.

Even though some services may be excellent in their own terms, they are not necessarily delivered in a way that will result in positive outcomes. For instance, they may be applied without sufficient regard to other circumstances of service users, or they may sacrifice quality of service to the achievement of targets which must be reached in order to meet funding requirements. A very experienced St Giles Trust practitioner gave this example to illustrate how targets can get in the way of responding holistically to the service users’ needs:

Team Leader SOS Gangs Project: Can I just say one thing though? ... The housing situation in most prisons is set up to fail. And the reason why is because they are completely just chasing these key performance targets and they’re not looking at the bigger picture. The workers of that housing grouping inside [name of prison in south England] I’m not going to mention their names, but they fail because they have got something like 900 prisoners, and only two workers covering the whole of the prison for the whole of the return boroughs and they will not see a client until just before release. That is not giving them enough time to do the work. And I have personally seen [the problems this causes ...] The prison does not like releasing to ‘No Fixed Abode’, but [a recent client] he’d been saying for a year that he was going to be homeless for a year, but they missed him. He came out, ‘No Fixed Abode’, it ended up falling down to us although he wasn’t even within our borough. But the key thing as well is they are not working holistically. One recent client that we just had, the prison got in touch with us and they were in such a rush to get that key performance target because yes, they found him employment, but his family is in [town over 50 miles away] and the employment was in

⁶⁰ Press Release: Accessed 26 Dec 2010.

<http://www.westmerciaprobation.org.uk/media/releases/2010/july/Preferred%20Partner%20Agreement%20signed.pdf>

London and they wanted him re-housed in London so that he could take up that employment. But they hadn't thought it out because the kid's mother, the kid's girlfriend, everybody is in [town over 50 miles out of London]. So what we now have was a problem of trying to relocate this kid in London, but he's going back to [the distant town] every night and he hasn't got enough money to come back to his job. And I was really, really annoyed because, in a way, they set up that him up to fail. Instead of them finding employment for him in [the distant town], which is a logical answer, or they working out some way of him, or talking to the employer so that they can negotiate some sort of travel arrangement for him. ... Another thing, he was due to start employment the day after he got released, so where's his resettlement? He's got a girlfriend. I mean we know what's going through his mind and you know, we could do with giving him a little bit of a break [Yeah], settle back in to the community, catch up on a few things and then he might well be up for this commuting to London business or staying down in London. But it's very few people who can land down out of a prison sentence and hit the ground running and be completely functional. But it is entirely driven by the prison's key performance targets. Because for them to claim an outcome, housing or employment, it has to fall within the same calendar month within which they are released.

We asked the pilots about services which their young people had difficulty in accessing or which were delivered in a way which was unsatisfactory for meeting the additional needs of the services users. Section 3.2, and Table 4, include some relevant examples as they occurred in everyday practice. Some of these were also raised in discussions from a more future orientated perspective. For example, there are concerns about young adults' access to mental health services in Worcestershire:

Operations Director: A lot of our cases keep on demonstrating that they don't meet the threshold [for mental health services], and it's all, you know, how can we help them to access services? So we're hoping to get [person's name], a senior manager in Health, who's interested in particularly in dual diagnosis and early onset psychosis, and thinks they should they be swimming further upstream to do some preventative work with 16 to 25 yr olds instead of having to deal with all the problems with the 25 plus age group? [...] Of course just when we're meant to be delivering all of this, services are going into meltdown. So it's just chaotic out there, you can't get a response out of anyone. There are lots of good individuals who are committed to what we're trying to do....So we've opened the door with mental health [and with] the project group we're sat on it is in terms of training, and it's about staff.

Chief Executive: We can do a lot more ourselves.

Operations Director: Yes it's about the staff skills to recognise – and what the mental health teams are really interested in is – when people's mental health deteriorates and at what point does it become acute or critical. So it's about us working alongside them and those dialogues have just started to take place now which I think is hugely positive and of course we were telling them about T2A and what we're doing and what our findings are and that's going to inform their strategy which is going to be released [next month].

Birmingham have noted the need for more focus on young adults in the local provision of substance abuse treatment, and in services for those with mental health issues and learning disabilities.

3 Service Users on the Journey

On a policy and political level, there is now a consensus that the views of service users should be included in the development of policies which affect them, and the principle of ‘listening to young people’ is now incorporated into the monitoring of criminal justice reforms and initiatives.⁶¹ It is human rights principle that the greater weight should be given to what is said by children and young people.⁶² Just as importantly, the experiences and insights of the beneficiaries of services are critical to explaining their responses. It goes without saying therefore that the narratives and perceptions of those receiving services must be included in evaluating those services, and in understanding which aspects are most relevant to achieving the shared goals. Also, the young people’s own words, explaining their perspective, provide the most vivid picture of what the pilots mean to them and the impact they are making. To highlight their importance, this chapter therefore provides a separate account of the Case Studies which were part of the evaluation, and which were undertaken in collaboration with key workers and volunteers in the pilots who have taken on the role of interviewers. The service users’ thinking about how the T2A services have helped or not, and about what helps them to desist from offending and move on in their lives, links in with and is likely to be influenced by the views of their key workers, which are discussed especially in Chapter 4.

The case study interviews have been designed not only to access the young adults’ views of T2A and their access to other services but, more broadly, to gain their self-stories and to obtain snapshots of their concerns and situation at different points in time. Services can help young people to build better lives and move away from circumstances associated with offending, but the desistance process belongs to the service users. How people make sense of their own lives, their identity and their motivations are fundamental to achieving the twin purposes of the T2A services: helping young adults to avoid involvement in crime and to move towards better lives. Desistance from crime and associated behaviour occurs at the interface between the

⁶¹ For example, see Hazel et al 2002; Lyon et al 2000

⁶² United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

natural process of growing out of crime,⁶³ social structure and opportunities, and the subjective dimension of people's lives.⁶⁴ The importance of subjectivity (motivation, agency, values and perceptions) requires us to access their narratives; and these case studies – made possible by the cooperation of the T2A workers and some willing service users – have provided us with a special opportunity to do that.

3.1 Co-researching the experience of service users

In accordance with the ethos of the formative evaluation, the T2A teams were consulted on how best to include the service user voice in assessing and shaping T2A services. After much discussion, it was decided that the T2A workers would work with us as peer researchers, inviting 10 to 15 service-users from each T2A site to give their feedback on the emergent services at two points during the pilot period – one at the beginning of their T2A experience and one four to six months later, to also include some measure of 'distance travelled'.

Two training days were held for the T2A workers (as well as an administrative assistant from one of the T2A sites and two young adult service-users who, now acting as peer mentors in their T2A, wanted to be involved in the research project as peer researchers). During the training days, those present were guided through the skills required for gaining informed consent and qualitative research interviewing. They had opportunities to practice the two interview schedules and learn of typical challenges which arise, through observing and taking part in extensive role playing with the case study questionnaires. This process also allowed us to work collaboratively with the practitioners in refining the interview schedules and consent forms.

Both interview schedules were semi-structured, with open-ended and close-ended questions. The content of the first interview broadly fell into 3 categories: (1) the young adults' thoughts on the T2A service as well as other services (statutory and voluntary) and on whether they thought their needs were being addressed; (2) getting into crime and getting out (i.e. what causes young people to get involved in crime and

⁶³ Rutherford 1992

⁶⁴ Maruna, 2001; McNeill, 2006; Burnett, 2010.

what helps them 'go straight', including a look at the strengths they have as a person); and (3) looking ahead 6 months (the improvements, if any, they think there will be; potential challenges and stumbling blocks; their thoughts on offending; and self-assessment of whether they will stay away from offending). The content of the second interview schedule also fell broadly into 3 categories, this time: (1) looking back over the last six months, how it has been and whether they have reoffended and why or why not; (2) thoughts on the T2A service as well as other services and on whether they thought their needs were met; and (3) looking ahead 6 months again. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Three research participants in both rounds refused permission to record their interviews and so their answers were recorded by hand on the questionnaire. These questionnaires and the transcripts were coded by hand and analysed thematically, with data being collated under the key interview topics and common themes being identified.

A 'distance-travelled' soft outcome measure, designed by the research team, was also presented to the peer researchers, but only London T2A used it with four of its interviewees. It was therefore decided that the distance-travelled measure would be used directly with the T2A workers and would reflect their views on the case study interviewees' progress. Towards the end of the formative evaluation, each T2A worker was interviewed about their case study interviewees and was asked to fill in the distance travelled measure, thinking back retrospectively as to where on the measure their young adult was when they first arrived on T2A and where they were now.

The sample

The peer researchers were encouraged to invite a cross-section of young people from their site (from different areas; different ages; different offending backgrounds; both sexes; and different racial and cultural backgrounds). They were also asked to ensure that the service users interviewed were at the beginning of their T2A experience and to avoid 'cherry picking' only those who viewed T2A favourably.

In all, 29 young adults were included in the case studies: ten each from London and Worcestershire T2A and nine from Birmingham T2A. Of the 29 service users interviewed, 19 are males and 10 are females. Twenty-two are White British, four are

Black British, two are Asian and one is mixed race (Black and White). Service users ranged in age from 16 to 24, with most being 19 years old. At the time of interview, only ten had been on T2A for less than two months; the majority (19) had been on T2A for over two months.⁶⁵ Of these, 23 were referred from Probation, 4 from YOS, one from a voluntary sector organisation and 1 from the Police. The table below illustrates by T2A site, at what stage in the criminal justice system they were at when the case study participants came onto T2A:

Stage in CJS	London	Worcestershire	Birmingham	Total
Police	1	--	--	1
Pre-court	2	--	--	2
Post-court	4	10	7	21
Post-custody	3	--	2	5
Total	10	10	9	29

Given the small sample size, there is clearly a need to be cautious about the validity of these findings, They may be biased towards those with favourable views simply because the optional nature of the service means they are likely to be in contact because they are favourably disposed towards it. Despite our hope that workers could avoid recruiting only those who might be expected to speak well of the service. In practice, it would be unreasonable to expect a random sample. For obvious ethical reasons, the participants are ‘self-selected’. They have volunteered to take part in interviews following a careful explanation that their views and experiences could influence the shaping of the T2A. They are therefore likely to be those who feel well disposed towards the worker inviting them to take part, and perhaps those who have made sufficient use of the service to feel that they have something to say about it. Those who are adverse to using the service or who might have been disappointed – if there are any – are for obvious reasons unlikely to be available for comment. Nevertheless, the interviews provide good insights to the service user perspectives on T2A and other services, and provide some rich data to illustrated some encouraging ‘distance-travelled’, soft, outcome measures.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Three for 2 to 4 months, twelve for 4 to 6 months and four for 6 to 8 months.

⁶⁶ A more detailed analysis of the data from the first interview can be seen in Hanley Santos and Burnett (2010).

3.2 Main findings from the case studies

The perceptions of the young adults, as revealed in our case-studies, have been resoundingly positive in favour of the help and benefit they have gained from the T2A. The reoffending data, based on self report and their keyworkers' reports, are mixed but distance travelled measures, obtained with the help of their keyworkers, show improvements in personal and social circumstances that are related to offending and desistance.

The first interviews with service users were carried out between November 2009 and April 2010 (see Table 2). The second case study interviews, carried out between five to 10 months after the first interview (between May and November 2010). Altogether, 16 service users were re-interviewed – five from London T2A, seven from Worcestershire T2A and four from Birmingham T2A. Of the 13 who did not carry out a second interview, one no longer wanted to participate in the research and the other 12 could not be contacted for various reasons, including having moved out of the area and being in prison.

Table 2: Numbers re-interviewed by Pilot

	London T2A	Worcestershire T2A	Birmingham T2A	Total
First interview	10	10	9	29
Second interview	5 (50%)	7 (70%)	4 (44%)	16
Further info	5	3	5	13

Progress towards desistance from crime

We did not set out to collect official reconviction data for this small sample, but obtained self-report and practitioners' report on whether they had reoffended and if so whether the offending was more or less serious. Note that self-report data within the context of a trusting relationship is likely to inflate the re-offending figures because interviewees may report behaviour which may have not led to a prosecution or conviction. Although it did not prove possible to re-interview all of them, the

practitioners were able to provide some information on those not interviewed a second time, either from their own or colleagues' continuing contact, or from other sources. For those who did do the second interviews, there was also further, more recent information - hence the last column in Table 3.

Table 3: Numbers re-interviewed and reoffended

	N=29	Did not re-offend	Re-offended	Not offending when last contacted
Re-interviewed	16	8	8	14
Information only	13	8	5	8
Total	29	16 (55%)	13 (45%)	22 (76%)

Despite the fact that only 16 of the original 29 service users were re-interviewed, we do have some information from the T2A workers about the other 13 and, although we do not have their direct perspectives on their experiences between the first and second interviews, according to the feedback we have received, most (19) are known to be 'going straight' and doing well. Even all of the five who are now in custody again want to stop offending and return and to T2A. For the 29 service users who were in the initial sample, the following is the position according to the most recent information from their caseworkers:

- 19 Known to be 'going straight' (including five not re-interviewed)
- 3 Believed to be 'going straight' (these were not re-interviewed)
- 5 In prison, but wanting to get back on T2A when they get out (includes three who were not re-interviewed)
- 1 On bail for further offences (not re-interviewed)
- 1 Warrant out for arrest for breach (not re-interviewed)

While this is perhaps based on the most optimistic account of available information, it indicates that 76% of the 29 case study participants were either known or believed to be 'going straight' – a significant improvement on current national reconviction rates.

Overall, the end goals of the T2A pilots are to help the young adults they work with desist from crime and better their life-chances. By interviewing the same service user twice across a five to ten month period of time, as in this case, we can chart their

change in perceptions of the T2A service – which, as seen above, did not change; they continued to see T2A in a positive light – as well as the perceived change in themselves, if any. As all of the 29 service users in the first interviews wanted to stop offending and were confident in a more positive future for themselves, we can also examine whether they were successful in their desistance from crime and chart the facilitators or barriers that enabled or undermined their pathways to change. Also important in this analysis, especially considering that only 16 of 29 initial research participants were re-interviewed, is the T2A workers’ perspectives on their clients’ growth and change process, as garnered through the soft outcome ‘distance travelled’ measure. First let us discuss the service user perspectives on their progress, as obtained through the second interviews with 16 of the 29 participants. Then we will discuss the results from the perspective of the T2A workers and the distance travelled measure.

Of the 16 service users re-interviewed, 8 said that they had not reoffended during the last six months, 3 said they had been involved in undetected offences and 5 had reoffended and been detected (with 2 now in prison). Of the 8 interviewees who had stopped reoffending most stated that it was because they were now occupying their time more constructively. Chris states: “I haven’t got time to get into trouble really” and along similar lines, Simon states:

I got into things that take up my time, so now I don’t have that extra free time on my hands to maybe associate with the certain friends that are still involved in that kind of crime.

Some also spoke in terms of their lifestyle having changed, of “hanging around different people” now, and of their “day-to-day living” being different to before. One mentioned that it was through his “pure will” that he had managed to stop offending. Another spoke of changes in behaviour and T2A support:

Talking to people more, opening myself up more instead of lashing out all the time ... Just having people, having [my T2A worker] there to talk to. (Jackie)

Of those interviewees who had reoffended, 6 said that it was for less serious offences, one stated that it was for the same offence as before and one stated that it was more serious than before. Reasons given for reoffending included: “hanging round with the wrong people”; having “nothing to do and being bored”; “being broke” and needing

money; provocation and “to let out a bit of frustration”. In talking about what might have helped prevent them from offending they mentioned: “having something to do”, “not being in the wrong company” and “not being on drugs”. One stated that he would have liked: “More support off my family and getting told I was being better, than being told I was a waste of space”.

Despite some having reoffended, most of those interviewed (13) said they had seen improvements in their lives in the last six months⁶⁷. These included concrete achievements – such as getting accommodation; attending school again; getting into college or university; gaining qualifications; being employed; having money; and participating in leisure activities – as well as more subjective outcomes, such as feeling “more positive, less depression” and feeling “better in myself”. Gordon remarks on his internal changes:

Basically things haven’t changed much [externally] since the last six months, I have to admit, but it’s just the way I’m dealing with things and the head has learned.

Four of those who had seen improvements, when given a list of choices to describe these, had said that they had been massive improvements. Patrick was one of these and says, referring to his T2A worker:

When I had all those problems before it felt like I couldn’t tell anyone what I was thinking, when I was going through these problems but now I’ve got someone I feel I can talk to and actually listen to me.

As in the first case study interviews, all those interviewed for the second time, wanted to stop getting involved in crime. All of the 16 participants were confident that they could do so, including those who had reoffended between the first and second interviews. Reasons for this confidence in their ability to stay away from crime were similar to the first interview: personal agency, support and structural opportunities.

Because I just trust in myself that I’m not going to go out and offend and I believe that makes the whole difference – the fact that I believe I don’t want to offend, even when I am stressed out still in the back of my head I know I don’t want to offend. (Gordon)

Because I’m not in that company anymore, I’ve started doing different things to occupy my mind and I can’t see myself going back to what I was doing... I just want to get the right guidance and do something constructive with my life. (Christine)

⁶⁷ Two said that they were worse than before and that was because they were in custody, among other things. One said he was the same as before because, although he had been “doing good since the last interview” he had re-offended, got arrested and had been prosecuted.

I've come this far now, I've got what I wanted in life, so there's no point in ruining it all.
(David)

When asked if there was anything that made it harder for them to stay away from crime and look forward to a positive future, 7 stated that there was. The situations mentioned included: a lack of money, the area or house they live in, peer pressure, boredom, and teenagers who confront them. One young man also spoke of his status as an ex-offender as hindering his possibilities of gaining employment:

They say it's not hard to get a job but it is when you've got a criminal background because once they do the CRB check no one wants to employ you really, because it's like a stamp's been put on you so it makes it that extra harder for you to get employed. (Simon)

He states that prospective employers should "give people a chance" and gives the following metaphor:

I'd say life's about risks, you would never know what's inside the book if you don't open it ... You can read the cover and it can give you a little inkling of what it's about, but until you open the book you can never say yeah I understand it.

Most (14) of the 16 interviewed for the second time were also confident that their lives would improve six months from now⁶⁸. For some it was because they had seen how things had progressed so far:

Because how I am now from a year ago, I think in six months it'll be even better, because of already how it is going... I think I'll be able to like change, like I'll be a different person. I'll probably get myself in to a job, I'll be attending college, just having a positive way of life.
(Christine)

For another, it was because she hoped to get back on to T2A after having relapsed and reoffended.

I hope it'll improve massively. If I get with you again, with T2A. (Mary)

Most cited that they thought there would be improvements in physical circumstances – like getting better accommodation, getting out of prison, getting into college, getting a job or getting voluntary work, and having money. One also mentioned improved family relationships and another two spoke of changes to their mental state:

I would be in like a better mindset (Simon)

More focus, sociable, happier (Paul)

⁶⁸ As for the other two, one said he did not know and one did not want to answer the question.

Most (14) thought that it would be likely that there would be these improvements⁶⁹.

As previously, reasons for this had to do with personal agency, support and structural opportunities:

I now have determination and I am willing to try hard. (Paul)

I'm ready for change. With the help of T2A I can do it. (Brett)

Because I know what I want in my life, and I know what I want in the future. I want to be able to work in a nursery full time and have my NVQs. (Jane)

The 16 service users interviewed for the second time were also asked to reflect on how the last six months would have been if they had not decided to participate in T2A. All, except for one who said he did not know, said that it would have been more negative and pointed to the positive aspects of T2A and how it has helped them make changes in their lives and way of thinking:

[It would have been] absolutely terrible. I'd have no job. I'd be properly homeless and I would have nothing going for me and I'd probably still be in an abusive relationship. (Chloe)

Mentally I'd probably be breaking down at the moment. There've been times when I felt like I needed someone really badly. . . . just needed someone to point me in the right direction again, so then times in my life in these last 6 months, every now and again when that situation does come up that's made a big difference in my life to . . . just get back on point you know? So . . . instead of going right off the Richter scale and messing up my life and ending up in prison or something like that I'm still working towards something better you know? (Gordon)

I think it would have been terrible, I think I'd have been back into crime because I would have been mixing with the same old friends, I wouldn't have seen the different side of things. I would have just come out of prison and just gone back to the same lifestyle and the same living. (Simon)

Now let us turn to an analysis of all 29 case study participants, as discussed by their T2A workers through a soft outcome 'distance travelled' tool.

Progress towards opportunities, resources and improved lives

In collecting more detailed and specific information the focus has been particularly on 'distance-travelled' measures; that is, indicators of intrapersonal and social change compared to an earlier period. Traditional measures of 'success' have focussed on 'hard' quantitative outcomes, such as the number of service users housed or gaining qualifications or employment. However this method of measuring outcomes does not

⁶⁹ One did not want to answer the question and the other, referring to getting a job, thought that it would be "unlikely" but he's "hoping it might work out".

take into account the more subtle but real changes that occur or need to occur in tangent to or as a precursor to these ‘hard’ outcomes. Also a reliance on ‘hard’ targets by services can mean that service user needs are neglected as short term outcomes are focused on rather than long-term gains and sustained outcomes.

For those who are vulnerable and who face many obstacles and barriers, such as young adults in the criminal justice system, it is all the more necessary to chart progress or ‘success’ with a tool that takes into account ‘soft’, qualitative outcomes, such as improved confidence and sense of self-efficacy. For this purpose we designed a ‘distance-travelled’ measure that we named the ‘T2A Distance-Travelled Map’ (see Appendix 6).

The T2A Distance-Travelled Map⁷⁰ is based on a model of change⁷¹ that involves various steps. Each number below corresponds to a step on the Distance-Travelled Map and each step corresponds to how a young adult feels and acts with regard to changing a particular aspect of their lives. At the beginning a person can feel stuck, with little interest in change. With support, they gradually progress to taking responsibility for change and achieving their goals. This map helps chart that progression. By signalling what step they are on in each particular aspect of their lives, their journey through change can be mapped over time.

Based on the NOMS seven pathways to reducing re-offending,⁷² the T2A Distance-Travelled Map covers ten areas of relevance to T2A’s work with young adults: 1. Accommodation; 2. Finance, Debt and Benefits; 3. Drugs and Alcohol; 4. Attitudes and Behaviour; 5. Relationship with Family; 6. Relationship with Spouse/Partner; 7. Relationship with own Children; 8. Social Support Networks; 9. Employment, Training and Education; and 10. Mental/ Physical Health and Wellbeing.

T2A workers were interviewed about their case study participants and were asked to fill in a T2A Distance-Travelled Map for each of them at two points in time: one

⁷⁰ This T2A Distance-Travelled Map is an adaptation of the Outcomes Star developed by Triangle Consulting for the London Housing Foundation (Burns et al., 2006).

⁷¹ Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984.

⁷² Home Office (2004). *Reducing Re-Offending: National Action Plan*. London: Home Office.

reflecting where their case study participant was at the beginning of their T2A journey and one reflecting where they were at the end of their T2A journey or at last contact. In this way, distance travelled information was collected on each of the 29 case study participants from the perspective of the T2A worker.

Overwhelmingly, the distance-travelled data showed that improvements were made in all areas that T2A workers addressed (see Table 4). Only a relatively small proportion of case study participants showed no improvement in some of the areas addressed.

Table 4 Outcomes according to ‘distance travelled’ measures

Category	Numbers. needing intervention	No improvements	Slight improvement	Significant improvement	Improvements made but currently lapsed ⁷³
Accommodation	23	1 (4%)	4 (17%)	13 (57%)	5 (22%)
Finance, Debt and Benefits	25	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	15 (60%)	5 (20%)
Drugs and Alcohol	12	2 (17%)	2 (17%)	8 (66%)	--
Attitudes and Behaviour	28	3 (11%)	5 (18%)	14 (50%)	6 (21%)
Relationship with Family	25	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	19 (76%)	1 (4%)
Relationship with Partner	8	3 (37.5%)	2 (25%)	3 (37.5%)	--
Relationship with Offspring	2	--	--	2 (100%)	--
Social Support Networks	27	3 (11%)	6 (22%)	13 (48%)	5 (19%)
Employment, Training and Education	29	3 (10%)	4 (14%)	15 (52%)	7 (24%)
Mental/ Physical Health and Wellbeing	27	3 (11%)	3 (11%)	15 (56%)	6 (22%)

⁷³ This refers to those who had made improvements during their T2A journey but were not able to sustain these for various reasons, such as now being in custody.

Space limits permit only selective discussion of the findings here. The most significant improvements were made in participants' relationships with their family (76%) and, for the two who were parents, their children (100%). Although not a priority for most service users in drawing up their action plans, the mentoring and supportive nature of T2A means that other areas get addressed while T2A workers try to achieve the best possible outcomes for their service users. According to T2A workers, two areas that are usually of priority for service users in drawing up their action plans are: accommodation, and employment, training and education (ETE); it is therefore worth focusing on those here.

Accommodation: Of the 29 case study participants only six did not need housing intervention. Of these, five were living with their families and one was living on his own. Of the 23 who needed intervention, 2 were homeless (sofa-surfing at friends' houses); 3 were living in unstable hostel or hotel accommodation; one was living in unsuitable shared accommodation; 7 were living in their own accommodation, but not managing; 9 were living with family in a conflictive or unhealthy environment; and one was living in his own flat but his tenancy was to end. However, following the T2A intervention, 3 were accommodated in supported housing; 12 were housed in either shared or independent accommodation (with two of these then going on to live with their partners; one going on to live with a family member; and five losing their accommodation because they went into custody); 2 went to live with their partners; 2 moved house to live with another family member; 3 continued in the same accommodation; and one stayed in the same situation.

Employment, Training and Education: On initiating T2A, only one case study participant was in employment, be it casual employment. Twenty-eight were not in education, employment or training. At the last point of contact:

5 were employed

5 were in education or training

2 were in both employment and training

1 was volunteering

5 were in custody (with one participating in training there)

11 were not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Of the 11 who are NEET, during their T2A journey:

1 was in employment

7 were in education or training

1 was in both employment and training

1 was volunteering

By the last time of contact with T2A, all these ten had left their employment, volunteering or education opportunities for various reasons including: going to custody, relapsing, not liking the course, because some would lose job seeker's allowance, and because of mental health issues.

All of the encouraging improvements shown in the distance-travelled data, however, should not be allowed to mask the range of difficulties that young adults have in trying to access resources and services that they need. As discussed in section 2.4, there are various sticking points when referring young people to services they need, and the case study interviews and subsequent discussions with the key workers who interviewed them revealed an alarming number of these. A selection of them are set out in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 around here.
Presently a separate attachment

Their perspectives on the T2A service

The qualitative evidence from the interviews indicates strongly that the service users have benefited from the T2A intervention and that it has been instrumental in helping them to access services to resolve their difficulties or move towards their goals, and in instilling in them a greater sense of control in tackling these issues.

Overall the user perspective on the T2A service is overwhelmingly positive. Indeed the only recurrent complaint is, in effect, a back-handed compliment: insufficient contact, especially among the London participants who expressed the view that more

workers were needed in their area⁷⁴. Moreover, services users are experiencing T2A in a way that is closely aligned to project intentions and practitioners' intervention and implementation theories on how their service is working to ensure positive outcomes for young adults.

Throughout these case studies, when the young adults have identified progress or had slip-backs, we sought to access their reasoning about what underlies these changes, and if T2A has been instrumental in such progress or setbacks to explain how it has been helpful to them. In the workshops we held to prepare the practitioners for their interviewing role, they were encouraged to probe for such information.

In sum, the main insights emerging from key findings from the service users' explanations of what helps them, and the part of T2A in this are as follows:

- The young adults valued the supportive and person-centred relationship with their T2A key worker.
- The T2A worker acts as a broker and advocate helping young adults access services and overcome barriers.
- T2A provides holistic support and promotes attitudinal changes
- The majority of those interviewed expressed their confidence in a more positive future and in their ability to desist from crime.
- Some made suggestions for improvements to T2A, but the nearest to a substantive criticism was that their worker was too busy to see them more often.

Each of these findings will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Supportive and person-centred relationships.

In the first interview, of the things about T2A that had stood out for the service users as being helpful or that they liked, the majority stated something about the supportive, genuine, caring relationship they had with their T2A worker, the sense of having someone “there all the time” who listened to them and supported them; “someone to

⁷⁴ London T2A has one full-time worker in the community compared to the other two sites that have three full-time T2A workers each.

talk to on the same emotional level”. Those interviewed for the second time continued to talk about the importance of the “non-judgemental, understanding” and supportive relationship with their T2A worker:

Someone to talk to, felt supported, not isolated as before. (Paul)

I know that someone’s there for me... they help me along with things that other people can’t help me with. (Chloe)

More of a friend that will listen to me and my problems. (Brad)

Essential to the service users feeling that T2A workers were “there all the time” was the fact that they are “always on the other end of the phone” and that they can call them anytime. Most T2A workers will answer their phones outside office hours and that they made themselves available in this way was strongly valued by the service users across the three sites and mentioned again by some in their second interviews:

Just feel like that if I got a problem then I can ring ya to see if you can help me out. (Patrick)

That I can have one-to-one sessions with my T2A and he’s there whenever I need him at the end of the phone. (Kirsty)

Also mentioned by the service users was the fact that they are able to feel more relaxed around the T2A workers; can meet outside the office; and can have flexible appointments. A couple of young adults spoke of the fact that they liked seeing their T2A worker outside of Probation:

The other thing was like I can see him in other venues, than just [Probation]... Because when I come here I don’t really feel comfortable ... When I’m outside, when I’m at Starbucks or something. When it’s just me and him. You know people don’t think of me as a bad person because I’m in Starbucks.

Another theme that came up was the non-judgemental nature of that relationship. One young Asian man stated:

T2A services are for everyone: Everyone is welcome ... They don’t care about your colour, your race, where you come from, what area you were born in, nothing like that.

Also significant to some was the person-centred aspect of T2A support. In other words it is the young adult who brings their needs to the table and then a solution-focused action plan is drawn up based on these. As one young adult said: They “give you the help that you want and not the help that they think you need.”

Others liked the voluntary aspect of T2A, given that the arrangement was not tied to a court order or requirement. Some talked about feeling “more free” and not experiencing their contact with T2A as an added pressure – they could cancel appointments, if need be. One liked “going to do something you want to do and receiving help that you want to get”.

T2A worker as a broker and advocate in helping access to services.

On the whole, T2A has had a vital role in making sure that the needs of service users are being met, with the T2A worker acting as both a broker and advocate in helping young adults access services and overcome barriers. This has included identifying such needs and making referrals. For example, in the case of mental health needs, T2A workers speak of helping young adults enrol with a GP so that they can receive referrals for mental health services as well as accompanying service users to such appointments. One service user who noted that he suffers from depression and anxiety has liked the fact that his T2A worker accompanies him to his meetings with the health worker as this, he states, “helps with my anxiety.”

For one young woman, T2A has been the crucial link to get her to accept and deal with her newly discovered schizophrenia:

Basically my doctor says I have mental health issues ... how do you say it, like what is it, a schizophrenic, and I've only just accepted it if you know what I mean. So I don't really know about it, I've just like blanked it out really, but [my T2A worker] knows and he says he'll help me, but I don't know how, if you know what I mean, because I don't know how to help myself with it ... I know that one minute I'm fine and the next minute I'm like a lunatic and there's nothing else to control it really, so. I don't know. I'm fine I think anyway. (Chloe)

Before T2A, Chloe knew that she had a mental health need but did not know what specifically what it was and chose, instead, to self-medicate through heavy cannabis use. It was her T2A worker who facilitated her diagnosis and referral to a GP and counsellor. Even with these services now in place, Chloe needs the constant support and reassurance of her T2A worker who is in regular contact.

Appreciated by the service users is the fact that T2A helps them with their needs and helps them access other services that they either did not know about or did not feel comfortable approaching on their own. As one of them said, “When I've got someone

with me I feel like I've got a little bit of protection ... I would say I've got more confidence".

Participants in both interviews spoke of the practical support that T2A provides, helping them find accommodation, get into college, write a CV, find a job, getting to appointments, and accessing services:

It's helped me with college, getting places, getting to appointments, helped me with paying for food. (Jackie)

You sorted stuff out for me and helped me out because I wouldn't have done any of that on my own and that. (Chris)

For one young woman it was about needing support with her court case:

They attended court with me and just explained to me what could have gone on in court and what could have been said and what is getting said and making me aware of what's going to happen in court.... it gave me a lot of confidence because ...if [my T2A worker] didn't come with me I don't think I would have attended court. I don't think I would have been sitting here and going to college in a month's time. (Jane)

Another young man spoke of the importance of T2A helping him to access courses that he would not have known about on his own:

With my T2A adviser now I'm talking about certain courses that I want to do as career options. I wouldn't have had no way of even contacting these people without T2A. There's no information. You wouldn't know kind of thing. But T2A makes it known that these people are here to help you. (Simon)

Nevertheless, many of the service users interviewed talked about their frustrations at various barriers they have encountered – barriers that T2A sometimes could not help them surmount. Mentioned by some has been the challenge of trying to gain qualifications in order to improve employment prospects, just to have these plans dashed because it would mean losing their only source of income – job seeker's allowance (JSA):

I do think things have gone wrong, in the things that we try and do, but that's not been T2A's fault. I think it's been down to the system. I think you know what I mean, like with college, for instance, I couldn't do full-time college or I lost my benefits. You know that's the only thing that's annoyed me but that's not been down to T2A. (Mary)

One young man, Mike, wanted to do a motor vehicle maintenance course, but because it was classified as a full-time course (even though it was for only 16 hours a week) it meant that his job seeker's allowance would have to be suspended should he do the course. As he has no other source of income, Mike had to drop out of the course, despite attempts by T2A to get the Job Centre to make an exception. According to

Mike, the frustration of this situation made him contemplate returning to prison because those with longer sentences have access to various courses inside: “I’d do 12 months just to do that course!”

Some young adults also spoke of the challenges of finding suitable accommodation because of housing waiting lists and because housing benefits for under 25-year-olds is so much lower and so they can only afford to be in shared housing, which is not always suitable. Some spoke of challenges in gaining access to mental health services and drug rehabilitation services. One young adult was actually on a drug rehabilitation requirement and yet had to be put on a waiting list, so that by the time she an opening came up for her she had reoffended and was back in custody.

Other service users also mentioned wanting to enrol in courses, but the barriers in these cases were lack of funds to pay for the courses. One service user, Susan, wanted to take dance classes, but even though they were only £2 an hour, it was money that she did not have.

Others spoke of the challenges of being unemployed and living on benefits. Lack of money and employment were the greatest problems mentioned by most service users, be this because it means that they have nothing to keep them occupied or because of the challenges of living on benefits, on a low income. For one young woman being unemployed makes her feel like she is “nothing” and she turns to alcohol for respite.

Each of these examples of the various gaps in services and barriers faced by the young adults illustrate the structural constraints that bear down on individual lives, often undermining feelings of self-efficacy and personal motivation in moving away from crime. They also illustrate the importance of T2A in providing continual support and motivation in the face of obstacles.

T2A provides holistic support and promotes attitudinal changes.

Different from many services, T2A provides holistic support for young adults, trying to address each of their needs as well as promote attitudinal and behavioural changes

(such as increasing self confidence, teaching alternative thinking skills and empowering young adults). This was valued by some services users:

They can help you with any problem. Organisations that you go to only deal in certain matters, but T2A if they can't do it themselves, they'll point you somewhere else to help you out. (David)

That you could come here and there's someone to meet your needs, like anything you can have a problem [with], there's someone that will listen to you and, if not, help you, put you on the right track to helping you. (Simon)

T2A helps me with any problems I have that I usually might put off by myself (Gordon)

As well as helping the young adults gain access to services and opportunities, most also stated that T2A had also helped them overcome other difficulties they had. For those in the second interview, these included: helping to improve family relationships; teaching alternative thinking skills (such as "learning to calm down"); helping to improve communication skills; building confidence and advocating on their behalf.

For one young woman, it was about T2A supporting her in her choice to get out of a negative relationship:

I had a really bad abusive relationship and it was horrible, and they helped me stay strong and helped me really to get out of it really. (Jane)

One young man spoke specifically about his transition to adulthood and the significance of T2A support in navigating that:

Because it's like that form of guidance, it's like when you become a young teenager or like your early twenties and you start to take independent steps it's not always easy to survive, sometimes you do need a bit of that guidance or like that person that you can turn to and ask 'How do I do this?' and 'How do I do that?' which is not always there....Because certain things that I wouldn't be able to do on my own I do because I've got the T2A behind me. I've got them helping me. (Simon)

For others it was support with attitudinal changes:

He encouraged me to look into myself and my thought processes. I want to change my life and the positive outlook helps. (Brett)

When I get into the wrong mind frames, every now and again, it's hard to think straight, make the right decisions for yourself until you've calmed down and sometimes it's not always easy to calm yourself down so asking for guidance, or some kind of advice with someone you know, always helps. (Gordon)

For some young adults from Worcestershire T2A, who hold 'Service User Forums' to gain feedback on services, they specifically mentioned the Forums when asked what

they liked about T2A⁷⁵, because they felt it gave them “confidence” and helped them “socialise a bit”. One thought it helped him improve his social skills: “it’s meeting other people, my social skills and things like that”. What they enjoyed was having the opportunity to meet up with others like them, “having a chat with other people”, “meet different people”, “see what their problems are, what they’ve been through”. One liked that in the Service User Forums he was in contact with others from a similar background and with a similar desire to change their lives – what he called “decent people”.

Service users in the first interview were also asked to name the greatest plus-point in their lives. The most commonly cited plus-point was the T2A support they were getting, mentioned by eleven⁷⁶. Many of the other plus-points mentioned by service users had been brought about because of T2A intervention.

This T2A is really good at the moment; it’s really helping me. (Jackie)

I’ve got everything that I need ain’t I? I’ve got my mum that looks after me... I’ve got you that comes up, helps me go out, get my bank and everything, all the major things in life sorted. And I’ve got my family to help me. (Gary)

Probably the fact that I’m with T2A and trying to sort this out actually. Trying to sort out college and I’ve just sorted my place, you know that is my plus side. I’m going to move somewhere, I know that I’m going to get somewhere. (Gordon)

Confidence in a more positive future and in the ability to desist from crime.

In the first interview, all 29 service users said that they wanted to stop offending and all were confident that they could do so⁷⁷. Reasons given for feeling confident were to do with personal agency, support and structural opportunities:

Because I don’t want to put my family through it. And I don’t want to put *myself* through it, I want to make a life for myself, get a good future. Because I’m having good help off of T2A. (Andrew)

⁷⁵ Three mentioned it in the first interview and two in the second interview.

⁷⁶ This was followed by seven who mentioned getting accommodation and four who stated the fact that they were no longer offending. Three talked about the course they were on; two mentioned the good relationship they had with their family; two stated their girlfriend. Other reasons were cited by one individual only, such as: their job; new hobbies; living alone; college; moving out of the area; their voluntary work; and having no-one “running after” them.

⁷⁷ Using our multiple choice labels, 13 stated that they were ‘completely confident’; 13 were ‘reasonably confident’; and 3 were ‘slightly confident’.

Because I'm determined not to, and I'm on the course, so I'm occupied. I'm not hanging around with the same people that I was before so I won't be led into doing anything more. (Kirsty)

Now I can say no, before I couldn't, now I can say no. I've got self-belief, do you know what I mean? I can say no. I can stand up to anything right bad now. Anything and anyone and anything, I can say no. (Rauf)

Those who felt only slightly confident recognised that change is hard and that there are obstacles to overcome. Some referred to the difficulties of "being known by Police" and a sense of being stigmatised by those who do not believe that offenders can change.

In looking ahead six months, all in the first interview anticipated improvements in their lives⁷⁸. Reasons given for feeling confident in these anticipated improvements again reflected the role of T2A support in their lives:

Because of the help I'm getting as well, I think it's looking up, to be honest ... Because when you are on your own, it does affect you mentally. And when you've got a lot more help around you, I think you get more confident with yourself. (Jackie)

Because of all the support I'm getting now that I didn't have before. (Jane)

Six months to a year on, most were known to be going straight and most of those re-interviewed were still confident in a more positive future and in their ability to desist from crime.

Suggestions for improvements to T2A.

In the first interview, the great majority said there was nothing about T2A that annoyed them or disappointed them. When asked what they would do if running this service, most said they would run it the same. Nevertheless, the interviewers encouraged them to make suggestions for improvement, and several were made.

The most frequently mentioned issue in one site was the need for more than one T2A worker. This was London T2A which currently has one T2A worker in the community, whereas the other two sites have three T2A workers. Five of the 10 London service users in the first interview stated that they felt there should be more

⁷⁸ Using our multiple choice labels, 12 thought these improvements would be 'massive'; 12 thought these would be 'reasonable'; and 5 thought these would be 'slight' improvements.

than one T2A worker in London because they wanted to spend more time with their current worker and did not want to “wait around” to see him. Four of the five interviewed the second time round also suggested more T2A workers in London:

Sometimes it is a bit long or a bit hard to get hold of a T2A worker or to get a meeting that's not been scheduled already. Like I can't phone up and say I need to see you today. Like it's not that easy. (Simon)

With regard to the other two sites, in the first interview, one service user at Worcestershire T2A also said that he wanted more time with his T2A worker and at Birmingham T2A one service user said he wanted “more contacts, ring every day” and another service user said they needed more T2A workers as they run “around too much”.

Apart from having more T2A workers, several other suggestions for improvement to T2A services were given by service users in the first interview. One service user, at Birmingham T2A, suggested that T2A provide a programme of activities at the weekends, as that is when he gets bored and more at risk of what he, perhaps euphemistically, described as “messaging about”. Other ideas included: separate buildings for T2A; make funds available for people to do courses; make apprenticeships available; give financial advice and help with budgeting; “help transport offenders to appointments”; “more training”; go to “different areas and talk to young youth”; have “a separate housing worker from my T2A, so it would be quicker”; know “a little bit more about some of the services” available to young people; and support a person past the end of their order⁷⁹.

In the second interview, one young adult in Worcestershire thought there should be more Service User Forums and “more rights” given to T2A workers on a policy level for them to be able to effectively advocate for young adults. One in Birmingham thought there should be more visits to those in custody and another in Birmingham suggested having young adults, who have been through T2A, help others:

I'd like to get more young people in as well, talking to other people, telling them their stories and how they could change. A lot of people that's been through it... people like listen to them a lot more, you know what I mean? (David)

⁷⁹ This was a suggestion from a young adult at Worcestershire T2A. This practice of supporting a person until their order finishes happened during the first six months of running; now young adults at Worcestershire T2A get support beyond the end of their order, if necessary.

3.3 Examples: Three case study journeys

T2A intervention is different for each individual depending on their needs and on what they want from the service. Both the practitioners and service users talk of change occurring only if an individual first wants it to occur and then has the support and structural opportunities in place to help them undertake that change and allow them to move forward. Case study participants came onto T2A with varying levels of motivation and need. Some required only a brief period of intervention as their needs were few and motivation levels high. Nevertheless, a helpful steer at the ‘right moment’ can prove an important turning point towards maturity and prosocial behaviour, as with Rauf in the first case study example below. Others are harder to engage and, when they have multiple problems, as in the case of Harriet below, some initial progress may not be sustained, but even in such a challenging case, the early efforts and the formation of a working alliance or bond may prove beneficial at a later point if as a result the young person feels more inclined to return. A few were initially resistant but then managed to move forward in leaps and bounds. Many service users are grappling with mental health issues and/or addiction and the accumulation of arising problems, and so their pathway out of that situation can be more winding, difficult and prolonged, as illustrated by Mary’s story.

Rauf’s journey

Nineteen-year-old Rauf came onto T2A because he wanted help finding employment. He was living with his parents and had a good relationship with them. He wanted to continue living there and had no other specific needs; Rauf had a good sense of wellbeing. He spoke of not realising that he and his friends were committing a crime; to them it was “having fun”:

I think basically sometimes when you just go over the limit with your friends you don’t know what is a crime, but you’re committing it, do you understand me?

T2A intervention included helping Rauf write a CV; looking for employment with him; carrying out home visits as well as providing much support and motivational work. Rauf credits his T2A worker with helping to “turn” things around:

But personally for me, it took [my T2A worker] to help me turn my old thing around, you know what I mean. Because [my T2A worker] used to sit me down, ‘Look bruv, I’ve been through this, this is my experience. It’s your choice’. But then once I really did have a deep think about it and I thought if my Mum and Dad are telling me that and somebody brought out here to help me is telling me the same thing, then it must be right, you know what I mean?

The T2A worker states that Rauf “just needed a little push in the right direction”. T2A provided him with the support to reinforce his level of motivation and sense of self-efficacy or, as Rauf terms it, “self-belief”:

“Now I can say no, before I couldn’t, now I can say no. I’ve got self-belief, do you know what I mean? I can say no. I can stand up to anything right bad now. Anything and anyone and anything, I can say no.”

For Rauf, his experiences with his T2A worker inspired him to be a youth worker. He found a position volunteering at a charity for young people and his T2A worker provided a reference letter for it. In Rauf’s words: “I loved the way he done his job, I loved it so much that I’ve gone out there and got a job similar to his.” Rauf is now a full-time paid employee of the charity, working as a Coordinator of Youth Activities. For him this is the plus-point in his life:

“The way I’ve just turned everything around, you know, doing youth work... I don’t want to be like out there selling drugs when I can change a child’s life to be a doctor, to be a lawyer, to be a fireman, to be a policeman. Do you know what I mean? I’ve got the self-belief that I’ve got the confidence of, do you know what I mean, talking someone into having a good future for him.”

Harriet’s journey

Harriet was 18 years old when she was referred onto T2A by her probation officer. Initially she needed help finding stable housing and employment, but in fact had many other mental health issues that also needed attention. Harriet self-harmed through cutting her upper arms and was a substance abuser.

At the time she came onto T2A, Harriet was living in a hostel. She had left home and her parents did not want her to return; she lived for periods of time with friends as well as moved from hostel to hostel. She came onto T2A because she was at risk of losing her place at the hostel; she had only signed on for her Jobseeker’s allowance intermittently, and therefore the hostel was not receiving her housing benefit. T2A helped her organise her housing benefit and accompanied her to some signing-on appointments at the Job Centre. T2A also helped get her into supported shared

housing. Harriet seemed to settle in well at first. Nevertheless, she found it difficult to confide in her housing support worker as well as her T2A worker and overdosed on one occasion, having to be hospitalised. T2A suggested that she go to counselling, but Harriet refused to go and did not want to talk to her T2A worker about what had happened. Eventually Harriet left the supported housing, preferring to 'sofa-surf' with friends and then live with a new boyfriend.

Throughout the six months that Harriet was on T2A, she would oscillate in her engagement with the service. Harriet would continue to miss her signing on appointments at the Job Centre as well as miss appointments with her T2A worker and Probation officer. She stated that she wanted help finding a training course, but could not decide which one to do. T2A would make appointments at colleges to discuss courses, but Harriet would not show up. She often became distracted by new boyfriends, some of whom were controlling and aggressive. Her T2A worker tried to engage her in thinking about what constitutes a healthy relationship, but Harriet "just thought that's how relationships were and she was happy with that." In a sense she isolated herself as she had no support network around her, only her boyfriend and his friends.

Harriet eventually stopped showing up for T2A appointments and stopped answering her phone, which later was disconnected. She also missed her appointments with Probation and they have issued a warrant for her arrest as she has breached her Community Order and missed a court hearing. T2A has no information on her current whereabouts.

Mary's journey

Mary is a young 20-year-old woman who first came on to T2A in 2009, when she was 19 years old. She was referred onto T2A by her Probation officer who felt that she needed the extra practical and emotional support to help her overcome her heroin addiction and find appropriate housing and employment.

Mary's brushes with the law began when she was 12 years old. She got involved in shoplifting and arson with a new group of friends because, as she states, she "wanted to look big" and "fit in". Mary believes that she "went down such a wrong road" because of the area she was living in. For Mary, it was a combination of what was happening at home, with a move to a council estate "rife with drugs and weed and coke and base" and wanting to make new friends:

"I'd moved to a new area and I wanted to make friends, you know. And when they did offer me weed and stuff, I had a drag, it didn't hurt me so I did it again. And I was with my mates everyday and I was having a laugh and it was getting away from my Mum and Dad as well when they were arguing and stuff. It was my little get away, my friends ... my friends were my family at the time and they were my little get away."

Mary first tried heroin at the age of 16, with her new boyfriend at the time, 23-year-old James. Her father had recently died and Mary was devastated by this loss, explaining that heroin helped her numb the pain.

Mary moved in with her boyfriend and her involvement in crime increased as she began to shoplift to feed their heroin addiction. It was her shoplifting that got her arrested and prosecuted. She received a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) on a Community Order and was to start methadone treatment, but, because of a waiting list, she had to wait three weeks to begin it. In that period, she reoffended and was sent to jail for seven months, serving three and a half. For Mary, custody provided a welcome respite from her "groundhog" day-to-day existence of heroin use and crime:

"It was the stability, the routine, everything about it, I really enjoyed it, I really did ... It was alright because I had been in this groundhog life, you know, for the last 9 months and so to go to jail it was a totally different experience ... I had a job and everything. It was wicked. I loved it."

When Mary came out of jail she went on a methadone script and her Probation officer put her in touch with the Community Drugs Team and six months later referred her onto T2A.

Mary progressed well on T2A. She was determined to overcome her heroin addiction and to stop offending:

I was sick of groundhog day and waking up and doing the same old thing and just having to please people and ... I said to [my boyfriend and his sister] one day, 'What do you think about getting clean?' and they just laughed at me, 'Oh shut up you sound like a drugs worker'. And I don't know something clicked in my head and I thought that was it, I don't want to do it no more...It was horrible [while I was on heroin], I was alone, no-one spoke to me. I got looked at in funny ways. Lost friends, everything. You lose a lot, you lose a lot. And you lose the trust of people because heroin has got this big like people have stereotype of it. Just because you're on heroin they think they're going to rob you any chance you get, but some of us ain't like that. We still have our morals intact...It was an upsetting time really. I had 3 birthdays on the

gear and all three of them were bloody horrible. On my 18th I'm meant to be turning into a bloody woman and I'm crying my eyes out. Quite a low time... I was so isolated it was untrue.

With support from T2A, the Community Drugs Team and her own determination, Mary was able to stay heroin-free for 10 months.

In her first interview, after she had been on T2A for 6 months, Mary spoke of what it took to help her change:

It takes a lot of bloody will power and a lot of help and a lot of people to be able to push you into the right direction because you do need help, you do need it. You just can't do it on your own. And like with the drug that I take, heroin, you've got so many factors towards it. You've got the rattle which you've got your methadone for, then you've got the triggers which, you know, you got your drug workers for and then because the drug is such, like one of them drugs where you get depressed you need someone to talk to.

For Mary, her T2A worker was someone she could talk to: "a friendly face to speak to". She also felt that T2A helped her "progress in life":

You gave me sort of my confidence back. You've been able to get me back on to courses, show me there's different ways around, you know, not to blow my top and actually listen and be able to not think so negative on what's coming next ... You've helped me with housing issues. Everything, college, some money... If I ever feel low I know I can come and speak to you. Oh my God, you've done quite a lot really.

T2A initially tried to also help Mary with housing issues and training. Nevertheless, her T2A worker came up against structural barriers. Mary wanted to move as she was living in shared accommodation with other heroin addicts, including her boyfriend. With her T2A worker's help, Mary was put on the housing list but, as she was already in housing, she was not a priority for the Council. They then looked for private rented accommodation but found it very difficult to find a place for the £58 a week housing benefit allocated for a single person under the age of 25, at the time. As only other shared accommodation was available, Mary chose not to move as she did not know the other people she would be living with. Instead she continued to live with her boyfriend and flatmates and would leave early in the morning everyday and only come back late at night to avoid being in contact with heroin there.

T2A also worked with Mary to improve her employment and training prospects. Mary wants to work with the elderly in care homes and for that reason wanted to do a full-time course in social care. Nevertheless, much to her disappointment, Mary could not enrol in a full-time course as she would lose all her benefits (jobseeker's allowance

and housing benefit). So, instead, she enrolled in a part-time social care course. Mary however found the course difficult and felt she “didn’t fit in”.

At the time of the first interview, when Mary had been on T2A for six months, she had a “blip” as she called it and started using drugs again. During her interview, she maintained a positive outlook and seemed determined to get over this lapse and get back on track. She was confident in a more positive future:

I’m starting to think a bit more positive now and getting back on the right tracks as I was before and just keep saying in my head, ‘I’m am better than this’. Like I don’t have to feel that I have to fit in with people, I am my own person and just be able to, just be comfortable with myself.

Nevertheless, Mary relapsed drastically. She dropped out of her course and began using double the amount of heroin than she had before.

In her second interview, carried out 8 months after the first, Mary reflected on the combination of reasons for her relapse, which occurred around the anniversary of her father’s death:

My Dad, I thought obviously I could get over it but it still pulls heart strings at me and I was doing really well obviously and I said to [my boyfriend], ‘I wanna get rid of this pain, you know, I’ll smoke a little bit of weed’. And he was like ‘I’ll sort you out’ and ever since then I’ve just sort of started using again. And God it was difficult because I sort of went into myself again, and ...because I was at college and that and I felt like ...I didn’t fit in. I don’t know whether I explained to you before with the hoodies and stuff like that, it wasn’t a comment made at me but there was a comment and that got to me and there was other things that got to me as well, like my mum gave me ultimatums and stuff ... At the time as well my mum was depressed and, like I said to you earlier, she was leaning on me and I just couldn’t deal with it, and I sort of like ...I don’t know if you understand, but it was my little thing that I could do. No one could talk to me, or touch me. I felt like I was wrapped up and I felt warm again.

At the time, Mary’s probation order was coming to an end and she worried that T2A support would also come to an end as a result. She feels that this also contributed to her relapse:

I think also that might be the thing that made me relapse as well, because I knew everything was gonna finish soon and everything, I think that upset me a bit as well because I didn’t want it to end, because I was doing so well and I could feel myself slipping back due to what happened with my Dad and I knew it was going to end so I just thought I might as well.

Mary began to avoid her T2A worker and her family. Mary’s T2A worker tried to re-engage her, but Mary stated that she did not want to be seen in the state she was and preferred to come off T2A. She felt ashamed at her relapse and thought that she had let down everyone who had been helping her. As Mary later reflects:

I was so upset and everything, and that’s why I sort of like went ‘That’s it, I don’t wanna really see anybody’. Because I sort of like let everyone down and you know people had gone out of their way to help me and I’d just went, basically I felt like I was sticking my middle

finger up at people... For me to do that I just thought, Oh God, no, I don't really wanna face these people.

T2A thus closed her case.

Four months later Mary was arrested for a new offence. At court she asked to be put on a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement so that she could access drug treatment services and requested that she be re-referred onto T2A. At the time of her second interview, she was waiting to be re-referred to T2A and was looking forward to getting the support to help her get back on track:

I'm starting to think actually I am better than this and I need to start letting go of like my Dad and that. It's going to hurt obviously but I can't keep [relapsing] every time a year comes. I can't keep [relapsing]... I hope things will improve massively. If I get with you again, with T2A and you know, then get back on my meth script and that, then definitely [things will improve].

Mary even took an apologetic tone in her second case study interview, wanting to explain why her second interview was "not as good" as her first interview:

You know obviously this is the second interview and I know it's not as good as what the last interview was but I am wanting to change, I am stuck in this hole at the moment ... but I'm like, I'm kind of glad that I did go to court because now I'm getting help... I know I'm 20 and I should be doing it all on my own but since I've been 16 I haven't really had the right [guidance]...like since before I met you [the T2A worker] I didn't really have the right guidance, you know what I mean? My mum didn't guide me nowhere.

As well as wanting T2A to help her find volunteering work with the elderly, Mary wanted her T2A worker to help her move out of the accommodation she continued to share with other heroin addicts:

Since I was 16 all I've done is I've been in shared accommodation and it would be nice to get a flat and... where we're living at the moment like we can't... keep food downstairs because it'd get robbed so you know... it gets me angry because then we're eating shit with not eating properly and like you know I love going to Tesco and cooking, because Tesco's only up the road and I love having a little walk and cooking and stuff but you know I put it in the fridge and it gets eaten... I feel like I'm stuck at the moment, stuck in this mundane life, it's just going on and on and on.

Mary is now back on T2A and has been for three months. During that time both her and her boyfriend have been heroin-free and are determined to stay that way. With the help of T2A, they have both managed to move out of their shared accommodation into a 2-bedroom private rented apartment. According to the T2A worker, Mary is very happy to finally have her own place and takes great pride in looking after it. Her relationship with James has improved as a result and they are more focused and look well.

During this period, Mary's T2A worker has also undertaken family mediation as Mary and her mother had not spoken to each other since Mary's relapse. Mary is now in daily contact with her mother. T2A is also currently helping Mary to find part-time employment as well as voluntary work with the elderly. Her T2A worker feels that Mary is now back on track and fully committed to achieving her goals for a more positive future.

Conclusion on case studies

Each story reflects an individual situation and the different ways in which T2A intervenes to support young adult's pathways out of crime. Mary's journey illustrates the significance of prolonged holistic support in helping young people in their transition to adulthood. Many young adults in the criminal justice system, like Mary, struggle in their pathways to change. They can come up against structural and personal barriers which undermine their motivation or sense of self-efficacy making their journey towards change a long and bumpy one. On a practice level, T2A strengthens a young adults' agency (i.e. level of motivation, determination and self-efficacy) by supporting them to gain access to services and structural opportunities as well as overcome barriers in their journeys towards a more positive future. The T2A worker is not simply someone who refers young adults to other services, but is there providing support, promoting attitudinal changes and empowering young adults to continue on that pathway themselves. T2A strengthens social relationships and social capital by working with families and linking the young adults to their communities in a positive light. Services such as T2A become essential in helping young people deal with the challenges of the transition to adulthood in a system which sees them as fully functioning adults at the age of 18 when, in fact, developmental research shows that young adults are still developing emotional and cognitive maturity. What comes across most evidently in the service users' feedback is their appreciation of the T2A worker as a broker, guiding them to the services they need and, importantly, supporting them in the changes they want to make in their lives. The service user perspectives are in harmony with, and probably influenced by, the practitioners' perspectives on how T2A constructively contributes towards positive change - as will be explored in the next chapter.

4 Analysing How Best to Get There

There is a “fine line between evaluation and explanation”⁸⁰ and this chapter seeks to elucidate shared explanations and the underlying reasoning about how and why the T2A programmes work or are expected to be effective. If we are primarily concerned with the outcome of a programme, then understanding the underlying processes or mechanisms that led to that outcome may seem unimportant. On the other hand if we want to repeat the process or pass on the know-how to others, or check that it was indeed the programme that resulted in the observed outcome, then the inner workings of the programme’s ‘black box’ need to be examined.⁸¹

Fortunately, the participants in the T2A pilots were often keen to share their reasoning in advocating the various measures being put in place. Main players in the pilots often fervently believed in the model they were applying or had clear arguments for advocating the approach they were taking, and each practitioner, as well as many of the service users, came with their own understandings of what will work to achieve the various objectives and why. Interestingly though unsurprisingly, given such a heterogeneous programme, there are various difference in focus and emphasis in the theories being put forward with equal passion and certainty. These are not necessarily contradictory and – rather like the proverbial blind people feeling different parts of the elephant – may all be correct but incomplete.

As is very clear from the previous sections, the T2A pilots have been providing a service of many parts. When we put these together we could describe the total sum of their work as the promotion and provision of a local inter-agency system for guiding young adults into better lives. Taking account of all the different issues that might be presented by young adults, the entire package is important. We still need to understand how the components singly and in combination make a difference. Sifting through the various metaphors and assembling the most frequent insights and messages, we can arrive at an understanding of essential ingredients for an added value service that will make a difference for young adults in need.

⁸⁰ Scriven, 1994. See also, Astbury and Leeuw, 2010.

⁸¹ Astbury and Leeuw, 2010; Pawson and Tilley, 1997.

4.1 Theories of what ‘works’ and how

The pilots were intended to introduce something extra to mainstream provision, rather than take over public sector obligations. The boundaries of public sector provision are difficult to pin down at a time of economic depression and spending cuts and changing government. Therefore it becomes complicated to assess which of the multiple contributions of the pilots should count as additional, rather than picking-up on work which was already being done by others. Can we isolate that value-added factor, or is it a case of ‘all of the above’? Is there a requisite component without which the project might be seen to have failed and leave the young adults still “lost in transition”, or without which the newly developed system would be significantly impoverished? Or, which of the nuggets of truth identified by participants is a value-added factor that will significantly affect outcomes? There are some pet theories, and some factors that are held to be of extra importance, but most point to more than one factor.

These add up to a complex package which – especially with reference to continuity in the future – might be summed up as the provision of a local inter-agency system for guiding young adults into better lives. Several metaphors have been used to describe the T2A service – from bridge, glue, hub, signposting and the key worker described variously as mentor, coach, sherpa, lifeline. Each of these metaphors has been used to capture the essence of the what the service is intended to do or be; and how it provides added value to existing provision. Stakeholders and supporter express a lot of passion and conviction about the value of this focused work with young adults. Sometimes they are indicating the whole package but sometimes zooming in on some element of it as paramount or the *sine qua non*. The evaluation has involved many conversations about whether there is an irreducible factor or combination of factors that will make a breakthrough to a more effective system for preventing and reducing offending by young adults.

Theories of what works on the operational/service user level

Our case study data and analytical discussions with participants, and building on the empirical studies of desistance, suggest that, a goal-based, person-centred approach is

at the heart of the apparent success of the cases we have examined. The work is focused on helping the service user to problem solve and take steps towards what they want to achieve, with an emphasis on their strengths, and on approach goals rather than avoidance goals.

Generally, the chief executives of the pilots and frontline practitioners described the service model in similar ways and had great confidence in it:

Our way of working – one-to-one intensive support in the community at times to suit – it works, that’s tried and tested.

The service delivery model and the way of working was never in question, we know how to do that, so give us the money and we’ll make it happen.

However, within that package, there were differences of emphasis regarding what *really* makes the difference, raising questions about whether different elements are more important in particular contexts or more relevant to some types of problems than others; or have more general significance that should be recognised. For example, is it advocating on behalf of young people that most matters or is it the development of a trusting supportive relationship? The fervency with which some aspects of the service model are advanced invites consideration of whether some elements within the package more potent or essential than others.

In probing discussions about why the model of service delivery is believed to be effective or contributing to successful outcomes, several theories were advanced and endorsed by colleagues. The following summarises these into the basic premises, fleshed out by practitioners’ explanations and some examples. The lines of reasoning here could be classified differently or sub-divided into, for instance, theories of how to engage them in the work, and theories of how the work changes behaviour. There is no suggestion here that this is a complete definitive list; rather these are arguments that were echoed in several discussions and which can be supported by examples and by research on reoffending and desistance.

It works because it’s for their benefit and they want to do it.

The T2A service is available for take-up on a voluntary rather than enforced basis, and it is offered as a service aimed at helping the young person. Further, in the initial

approach it is explained that the programme is shaped according to what will make a difference in their life from their own perspective, and it is in line with their goals.

One worker gave the example of someone who had previously failed to comply with statutory orders but who was now keenly engaging:

I'm working with a young lad who I knew when I was working with the Youth Offending Service and he never turned up statutory. I saw him yesterday and I said to him 'Why are you turning up now then, as this is voluntary?' and he goes 'Because I *want* to be here, I'm not told that I have to be here and I have to do what they're telling me.' He said 'It's *my* choice, and it's a two way communication. We can discuss what I want to do and can you help me with that?' [...] That's what it is, I think because ... they're going to get something out of this that they want rather than going to the statutory line of saying 'You have got to do this because of...it's part of your Order'.

It works because we show interest in them.

This simple statement carries, and is a proxy for, much that is of significance in the development of a co-operative relationship. Wanting to know about the well-being and progress of a person is indicative of caring about them, and is the basis for exchanging information, building respect and trust and forming a working relationship. This also ties in with arguments that having a holistic approach that embraces all issues that affect them, rather than a specific agenda, is what makes a difference.

It's not about sort of turning up with a tick box and say, 'Oh right, how are you doing? Blah, blah, blah, See ya.' It's about sort of showing interest in them and doing things for them. Like the power of a text. Just dropping someone a text, 'Hi. How are you?' 'I'm fine. Why?' 'Just wondered.' You know, no agenda. [Yeah]. A YOT worker or a Probation worker simply doesn't have the time [...] actually for some, they don't have a depth of interest. And to them the goal isn't about getting them through, it's about them as a worker and getting to the end of their working day. So for us to drop a text and say, 'Hi, how are you doing?' and have no agenda, you know, on occasions we've talked about meeting up with some of our clients and, you know, you meet up and you don't talk about how crappy their housing situation is and the fact that they're in breach. You meet up, and me, we'll talk about football, we'll talk about cars, we'll talk about stuff that happened in the media recently, we'll have a coffee and I'll say, 'Well then, I'll see you Tuesday.' ... and forging that relationship.

Such a relationship is at the heart of a large body of research on what works in changing behaviour,⁸² and 'It works because we build a relationship' could be a substitute for the heading above.

⁸² Burnett and McNeill, 2005; Norcross, 2002; Ross et al., 2008;

It works because it is practical and problem-focused.

Helping them deal with the practical living is another aspect of the service which practitioners put forward as critical to the effectiveness of the model. This can range from simple items of information like an address or organising an appointment to, sometimes literally, rolling up their sleeves to help in tackling seemingly insurmountable blockages in their life. The practitioners take pride in their versatility adaptability, readiness to turn to whatever problem arises or to contact someone else who does:

Although we can't do everything, we can package the problem up, because for instance, the typical debt problem, you know, the client comes to you with three carrier bags full of unopened letters. As we're not qualified debt managers we can't get on the phone to, you know, whoever's lent them the money and kind of fix up a payment plan. But what we can do is open all those envelopes with the client, we can file them all in name order and we can get them in a state where we can take them to CAB or to a specific debt service. And the same with the immigration stuff, you know, we can get the case all tidy so that somebody else can actually deal with it. I mean solicitors love dealing with us because we do all the leg work. We don't give legal advice either, but, you know, we will get somebody in a position where they can actually accept that advice and keep their appointments. And they will be there because we have dragged them there.

It works because it builds up their confidence and skills.

There is perhaps a fine line between placing faith in someone to take positive steps and being sceptical about their ability to change. The practitioners generally share a positive view of the potential of the young adults in question, no matter the extent of their problems, and by expressing this are able to encourage service users to take positive steps on their own behalf. That attitudes can be used or avoided for their self-fulfilling prophetic effects, and can infuse a professional culture one way or the other, was well argued in this perspicacious comment by one of the T2A workers:

I think with the newly qualified workers and, myself knowing quite a few newly qualified social workers who have worked in social services as part of children's teams and then have gone over to YOTs, their initial view is very optimistic and they are extremely passionate and they are very driven and they can quote from A to Z in theory. Unfortunately, six to nine months within the job, in that environment, surrounded by colleagues who are very negative and 'Oh, it's bloody Tim Brown again, look, oh he's a right sod he is' and then will reel off a whole catalogue of family members and incidents and the time that he didn't show up, and 'I'm sure he's crashed my car in the car park. You want to watch him. Watch where you park.' And that environment, that culture, breeds a sense of desperation and actually 'I don't want to be taken the monkey of, I don't want to be made to look a fool', so I need to adopt the same philosophy as my colleagues because that's what seems to get them through.

Having this kind of faith in the potential of young people involved noticing their good intentions and reinforcing any relevant actions. As one worker put it: “one of the things I’m really big on with my young people is letting them celebrate small successes”. This tactic was part of building up their self-esteem and, importantly, their belief in their self-efficacy to stand on their own feet turn their lives around:

Because [for a young person living on the edge] it’s not easy, that is SO not easy to be able to say ‘Right I’m not gonna commit crime to be able to survive, I’m going to rough it out until I get a job, I’m going to rough it out, I’m going to go to college, keep my head down, I’m not gonna do that...’. It’s so difficult to do, and some people just need to be kept focused. [...] What I’m trying to instil in them is no, this is a very difficult journey you’re taking – there’s no bones about it – don’t think this is going to be easy because it’s not, it takes a lot of determination and a strong person to achieve this. So when ...we sit down and you work out ‘I want to go to college’, that’s a big step for some young people – the fact that they want to go to college and want to learn say bricklaying because ...Ok, that’s great, you’ve made a great decision here, you’ve identified something you’re interested in, not something I’ve given to you so well done! Celebrate those small successes! So when he writes off or he phones up and enquires about this course, they say ‘Ok, we’ll send you an application form’. [...] And then the application form – it’s done! Just like that! And they’d never believe in their heads that ‘I could do that’ but someone gets them – they go to Connexions and they do that or they go here and they do that....and we go ‘let’s fill it out the application form’ and we say to them ‘Right go and post it’ and they come back from posting it and they’re beaming – you can see, it’s a small thing to write an application form and post it off, but to that young person that just took another step it’s quite something....so what you do is get a value built up of all these little steps that they’ve taken because you’ve highlighted all the little successes.

A consistent finding in empirical, longitudinal research on desistance from crime is that ex-offenders flag up the subjective value of having contact with someone who hold this optimistic attitude about them – someone who believes in them. Linked to this, a strengths-based approach will emphasise their better attributes and encourage them use their abilities constructively. The skilled practitioner will combine this strengths-based encouragement with down to earth pragmatism and modelling of a realistic approach, towards building up the individual’s ability to apply their own judgement and make sensible choices.

That’s where you build your rapport and the respect comes in. you just don’t oversell it And you don’t , it’s the famous saying, ‘We do exactly what’s written on the tin’, and that’s it. You know what I mean. We don’t try ... although if you want to be a rocket engineer, I ain’t gonna shoot down your dream, but I’m going to go away do the research on how to do that and then come and sit down with you and let you read that and sit back and watch the penny drop. Okay, right. Because it’s your dream and it’s not me to shoot that down, it’s for you to start being realistic about what’s going on in your life and I’m here to assist you to get somewhere. [For example this is how I’d talk to a client] If anything was to happen, like the housing benefit phoned you and your wife, ‘Right I’m cutting you off because of you having put in a B7ZZ right you don’t blow up, you don’t swear at him on the phone, what do you do is you get your bits of paper, you check the reference, make sure you’re right and then you go, you book an appointment, you sit with the man, you show him, ‘Like this is what’s happened.’ And do it like that. This is how we do things and that’s what we hope to do. So that when I’m not there he’s capable of meeting those challenges in life without going ballistic or ‘fuck this’ then.

It works because it is a safety net and a life-line.

The service delivery model is not based on a rigid appointment system and the workers invite contact, within reason, in between scheduled meetings should the need arise. Many of them encourage it, and flag up their availability, almost as a life-line, to their clients and outside of office hours if necessary. As one put it “contact is adapted their lifestyle”. A practitioner in another team said: “we’re not quite open all hours, but we certainly stretch it as far as doing work odd times if necessary”. They make home visits and meet in venues that are convenient for the young person if the T2A office does not suit them. After a working alliance has been established – there is trust and respect and shared aims – the young person will be more inclined to contact the worker in times of difficulty when they feel unable to cope, or vulnerable to pressure and temptation, and practitioners talk about the importance of this in preventing reoffending by young people who would otherwise have nobody to whom they could turn. Examples were given of such contacts being made long after the active period of support had been terminated. Doors to renewed contact are left open for this reason.

What we find is that you can set people up really well, you can sort out the housing, get some ETE going, all sorts of things going well, but if you completely pull out, there can be like a 6-month wobble and it can all fall apart and if they don’t think it can come back to you, all that work could have been wasted, so we find that little bit of top-up support really is important.

Interviewer: *And how is that top-up done?*

T2A worker: Phone calls. You know, I hardly ever send texts, it’s mainly phone calls. Just to check in with people. [...] One of the things I encourage them is ‘When you get to that moment of...the point of no return’, because we talk about this in group sessions, ‘of getting angry....you get to that anger point and once you step over the point of no return there’s a consequence to be had, but if you sort of stopped at that point and recognise if I go any further someone’s going to get hit, something’s gonna happen here...phone me, yeah? Phone me before that hopefully, but even at that point phone me and say ‘Look I’m just about to...’ and we’ll have that conversation and hopefully I’ll be able to talk them down, or go to where they are, or bring them out of that situation. And when that happens, because it tends to happen quite a bit, it shows me they have built up a value in what they’ve had to achieve. It may not be big amounts, it may be small amounts but all of a sudden...because normally you get the knock from the police etc....but when you get the young person screaming out...that tells me, all the hype, you’re not quite ready to throw away all that you’ve done...do you know what I mean?because you phoned me. And that to me makes it all more worth it than anything.

It works because we build relationships with families as well.

Whereas public sector criminal justice services now include limited and very circumscribed home visiting, the T2A services build in family contact, home visiting

and seeing the service user in community contexts, as integral to their approach. Engagement with members of the family is one means by which they sustain contact with the young person and an indirect way of promoting positive changes in their lives:

We build relationships with families as well. One of the things that you learn when you work with these young people and you get to know them well, you find out that the parents are frustrated because they've tried and they've not got nowhere. And when someone they see has a little bit of success, then they want to be more involved as well; brothers and sisters as well. You get to meet all the family, you know.

Home visiting, can be enlightening about what is in the interests of the service users, and can effect a reconciliation when relationships have been broken:

Team leader: You know you always have to do that with caution because the family could be the most damaging environment you put someone in; it could be a complete disaster. And you've got to work that one out, but for a lot of young people, if the reason they won't go home is because they think they can't muck about or play their music load. Like the young lad at ZA said to me, he needs his own place because his Mum's sick of having her door broken down (laughs). I thought that was fantastic, yeah, 'There's another way we can approach this' (all laugh). That's fantastic. You know that guy needs to go home probably. That would be the best place for him, that would increase his chances of keeping out of trouble. And, you know, the workers are really good, I always think [worker's name] is particularly good at chatting up Mums.

Worker: Yeah. Definitely. And, you know, that persuading people to give someone a second chance, I mean another one we get is like the spin-off benefits. It's quite often not the clients who get the ETE outcome, it's the client's Mum or partner. And you know, that's having a huge impact down the line in terms of, that now means that that child now has a working parent, which they didn't have before. And the reason that's changed is because we've alleviated the pressure. I mean you've had that woman ring you up and saying, 'I've gone and got a course now because I 'm not worried about so and so all the time.'

Helping relatives is regarded as beneficial for service users in other respects:

At the end of the day, I mean, we are good role models, but the best role model is your parent. You know you work with, you stabilise someone's life and then the parents can go off and go to work and then that person is going to college, they've got another role model, the one they really want to be their role model. It's alright to have me, but they want to have their parent as a role model. And if the parents starts working and getting on with their lives and things like that, you just hope that they do see that and take that on board and move in that direction as well.

Team leader: It's a real, what [worker's name] calls, a positive ripple. You sort of get small things and they build up. And if you can just gradually remove the problems in a situation and replace them with positives, there comes this point where, 'Oh, off it goes', you know, and you don't get involved much anymore.

Much of the argument here could be extended to include engagement with other services in the community. That discussion, with examples, lends itself to the next section in this chapter. A distinction should be made, however, between inter-agency work which is done by practitioners on behalf of individual service users and that which is done on a more general level with a view to supporting groups of service users or all of them.

It works because we connect them with other services and opportunities.

This argument to explain the effectiveness of the service model has recourse to the brokerage aspects of the role, which is now reinforced within in the title of ‘community engagement officer’ used in the Birmingham pilot.⁸³ As well as the obvious value of hooking people up with the services they need to survive and flourish, another reason given for how brokerage works is that it encourages independence and, by implication, self-efficacy.

We’ve got a Community Connections Centre now running...so we are really going out there. So they come in and they talk to the offender about what is in the community...so the difference for us is that the offender knows that we’ve made some major links with the people who have got projects in the areas where they live, so that when we finish with them they can continue to be part of their community. We’re telling them what’s out there because you could be living next door to someone and you don’t know what they’re doing in that building. So we are saying to them ‘You can go in there and you haven’t got to pay...so they’re not dependent on us.

4.2 Is one approach better than another?

In the above analysis it has been appropriate to focus on the commonalities between the three pilots, because therein lie most of the elements that participants identify as of causal importance in bringing about change. Also, the pilots were not set up in a way that would have allowed a systematic comparison of their differences.

Nevertheless there are some clear differences between each of the pilots which deserved to be considered, speculatively, for the impact they might make on outcomes, and which could become the subject of a controlled study with a matched comparison group.

None of the pilots are purist in approach and in so far as there are differences, some of these are shared by two of the pilots. Within these qualifications, the most conspicuous differences are along the following dimensions:

- Employing qualified ex-offenders vs. conventional youth justice or probation staff.
- Public sector practitioners vs voluntary sector practitioners;
- Starting from scratch vs building on similar provision;

⁸³ Similarly, the title of ‘Resettlement Broker’ is used in the recent LYRRP (Daedalus) project, which claims success in reducing youth reoffending (Ipsos Mori 2010).

- City based with high ethnic minority population vs rural based with low ethnic minority population.
- Time-limited, intensive periods of contact vs. Open-ended, flexibly paced contact.
- Strong identification of project with ‘young adulthood’ vs. Merging it with other similar joined-up inter-agency projects.

The first two of these are the ones which have led to most speculation about their relevance to outcomes, and which merit some discussion in the context of the present analysis. The last two are emerging differences rather than ones which were flagged up at the beginning but which have featured in discussions of how the T2A work can best be embedded in inter-agency structures in the future (see sections 2.4 and 4.3).

Employing qualified ex-offenders vs. conventional youth justice or probation staff

The South London pilot, run by the St Giles Trust, makes no secret of its employment of ex-offenders as trained paid workers and in a voluntary, unsalaried capacity. Indeed it extols this fact as one of its strengths and its record of success in projects which reduce reoffending are some vindication of this. The practitioners associated with the T2A project have extolled the advantages of employing ex-offenders and provided several persuasive examples. We did not inquire but, it may be that the other two pilots included some ex-offenders with spent convictions, or allowed for their employment in principle. However, if so, there was no indication that this would made a visible attribute, and it is this visibility which is, arguably, the critical factor to be considered here.

For the team at the London T2A , this ex-offender status is instrumental in recruiting people to their projects, including T2A. Indeed, it makes a massive difference. Close to 100% uptake is claimed for one of their pre-release projects, and the worker’s declaration of a ‘past’ and straight talking about the difficulties, seem to have a bearing on this:

I get everybody into a room and I am completely objective, [I tell them] there’s things I can do, there’s things I can’t do and there’s things I’m not prepared to do, yeah. [...] I don’t sell it as a housing service, I don’t sell it as a benefits service, what I say to the young people is, ‘Look, I’ve been there and I know exactly, you know, the kind of minefield that’s going to exist. I know what’s going to be on your licence papers, for example, I know these all-inclusive statements that Probation like to use, that you might overlook and ultimately will

lead to you being recalled. I have been rejected, you know, I used to keep a folder, I got rejected by loads of jobs purely because I was an ex-offender, you know. So I know all of these challenges. So basically I'm there explaining to them, I will be there for you, I will be there 100% as long as you will be there 100% for yourself and we've got the support and I've got the team that will back me up 100% and it's up to you. Like I said earlier, I mean in 3 years, I can only recall 3 people turning around to me and saying that they didn't want the service and one of them, with all respect, was a nutcase. [...] Everybody else has signed up. Everybody!

For another member of that team, this high engagement rate needs to be seen in the context of prisoners scepticism about the value to them of the various services offered, based on previous disappointments:

Most people while in prison are thinking of ways to avoid getting into that situation again. You know, a few people are thinking about the big job that can't go wrong (laughs), but the majority of people won't be. So again when something credible comes along, and I think that's the thing, so many offers of support are not credible. One of the shocks I've had when I've been interviewing for posts on SOS, you know everyone who's come to the interview is an ex-offender, everyone's been through that, and one of the questions that I've asked on a few panels is, 'What do you see as the barriers to sort of successfully engaging with young people who are in prison?'. And I was expecting all sort of things, like prison staff will be this, you know all sort of predictable answers. And the answer that came back almost unanimously from everyone is one of the big things you are going to be fighting against is the fact that everyone has been let down before. And I hadn't thought of that. I hadn't thought that well actually lots of promises have been made, lots of projects have tried to engage with people, lots of things have been sort of dangled as carrots and they just haven't worked and they haven't delivered. And people have consistently said that, that it must be true that so much of what is on offer just isn't any good. And that's been a real eye opener for me. So, yeah, actually delivery is critical. And having the credibility to do that.

Other advantages claimed are that the service users are more easily able to relate to them and feel at ease because of their shared past, while the workers are better able to build rapport. However, it was pointed out that someone with a remote criminal past might not be able to 'cut it':

There's some quite poor stuff going on. I mean, to be quite stereotypical, I mean Norman Stanley Fletcher-style old lags were being brought into schools and actually, although they are able to stand up there and say, 'Yes. I am an ex-offender, I've been in prison', they are about so far from the experience of these young people ...

Apart from being better able to empathise with the young adult in the criminal justice system and the difficulties they face, the ex-offender T2A staff have an advantage in when it comes to establishing honesty in communication:

Something I have learnt from my team, ex-offender staff are able to be that much more confrontational, that much more direct and able to challenge people. There's no way that people can come back with, 'You don't know what you're talking about', which is what I've had a few times over the years.

There are further merits claimed in favour of employing ex-offenders to undertake this work, which are seen as making it seem more “credible” and worth engaging in, such the ability to be “straightforward” and “realistic”, and being at one remove from the unpopularity of statutory bodies. In fairness to other practitioners though, these qualities are not exclusive to ex-offender practitioners.

Public sector practitioners vs voluntary sector practitioners

In the early stages of the pilots, and in analysis of the case study data, there was no evidence of significant differences between the practice of the teams led by voluntary sector services, and the probation service team. Perhaps because the latter was a newly formed team and was situated in an office not necessarily associated with the probation service, and because of the image projected by the team, it had the semblance at least of being distanced from the statutory services. The conspicuous use of the T2A brand to label the service and the stress which the T2A practitioners placed on their difference from standard probation practice and their availability to be supportive over an unlimited period, helped to accentuate this once remove from the statutory service. However, the West Midlands T2A moved on from its initial practice to a renamed, remodelled approach in which the brokerage, signposting and community engagement aspects of the role are emphasised in place of the relational aspects of the work, and with an explicit 12-week limit imposed on the period of support. Whether this will influence the effectiveness of the project remains to be seen, but is likely to interact with any eventual differences between the perceptions of the service users for each of the T2A pilots. The differences of ethos and agency goals and mission statements between voluntary and statutory led T2As seem likely to be more significant. Similarly, the sector which provides the practitioners could make a difference to the way that service users respond.

In the context of a helping relationship, unlinked to licence requirements and enforcement regulations, there is more chance of an honest exchange where the service user can discuss their concerns in the confidence that the information will not be used against them. Workers in the voluntary sector T2As mentioned frank discussions about behaviour that might get people sent back to prison if discussed with statutory supervisors:

Remember some of these YOT workers, these are the ones that can put [them] back in prison....so when they come to them and say 'Do you have a drug problem?', they'll say 'No.'. But when we're sitting in the café having a cup of tea and talking over a bag of chips and you know, like 'Every day I have not stopped smoking weed for the last three months, I've smoked every day and it's started to get...'. Because I want them to talk to me about something like that because they've had no break. Because normally with...I mean I've had people who've had a continual binge for three months smoking and they'll say that to me and they'll say 'I don't know how I'm reacting or what it's doing to me' and we talk about that. But when the YOT officer asks they'll say 'No.'. So they don't see no reason to write him a drug rehabilitation programme whereas I'm trying to push for that. So there's a lot of that sort of stuff.

It could be argued though that the joined-up, partnership model of working within public sector services has already begun to blur any such demarcations between the voluntary and public sector. Since the introduction of youth offending teams, and formation of the National Offender Management Service, team members from the voluntary sector and the commissioning of voluntary services for services needed by NOMS have become commonplace. The changes to criminal justice policy indicated by the new government make it likely that there will be much more intermingling of services from all sectors depending. The 'rules of engagement' and practitioners' values and communication skills, are likely to be what matters to service users more than the 'company' which employs them.

4.3 Sustainability for the road ahead

Longer term thinking has always been part of BCT's agenda in respect of the T2A programme: and the pilots were viewed as a means to broader ends. Demonstrating good practice with service users has been a vital aspect of the piloting but, as was emphasised in strategy documents: "It is not just about the operational service – it is about policy change, getting the YA focus recognised, and having commissioning systems for embedding it".⁸⁴ Indeed, with a view to this, the chosen tenders for running the pilots included two voluntary sector services which had already been recognised as successful in engaging young people who are at high risk of reoffending, and as having good connections with the public and community sectors.

⁸⁴ Cerfontyne, 2007.

Likewise, it was recognised that effective practice with young adults requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach across the silos of separate services; for which it is necessary to influence policy makers and think tanks on a national as well as local level. The formation of the T2A Alliance was a critical step in the direction of bringing together voluntary sector bodies with a specialist interest in young people, in sharing knowledge and in developing strategic thinking. It is beyond the limits of the present evaluation to present the ideas and recommendations of the T2A Alliance, as set out in their Manifesto and reports. There is no doubt however that the thinking of the Alliance and the operational and tactical implementation within the pilots have been mutually influential in developing understanding of what will work on an institutional and policy level to embed and sustain the T2A paradigm over the long term.

Explanatory theories of what is needed on an institutional level to improve services for young adults are necessarily future oriented. The over-riding questions here concern how to ensure that there is an appropriate focus on young adults in transition, and how to achieve a more unified criminal justice system, and how to integrate this work with young adults into that unified system. More specific policy questions are whether there should continue to be distinct young adult teams or dedicated practitioners, and whether the service delivery should be led by the public or the voluntary sector. (The latter was also discussed from a practitioner perspective in the previous section).

Achieving a unified system

The chief executives of the T2As have extended ideas about unifying the youth and adult justice systems to strategic thinking about addressing other gaps and other transition points. As noted in section 2.4, the Head of Community Services, looking after the London T2A, made a case for using voluntary sector services as bridging services.

I think it's that thing of having someone there to see people from A to B, rather than a bit more A or a bit more B. [...] The T2A has actually given us a language that we didn't have a few years ago. It allows us to describe more clearly why it's important to have people at the gate, because just describing that as one transition of many that people have throughout their lives is quite useful. We didn't describe it in that way before. And we think there's been massive buy in from lots of funders and agencies, the idea that that's an important thing to do and I

think it's that recognition that...what was often the response to these issues, you know, we've got someone leaving prison, or leaving Care or whatever, is: We'll get the people that are working in Care or in the community to work more closely, to get referrals and we'll write a protocol and do this and that. And I think what's come out of this is a bit of an understanding that actually it's probably just better to commission somebody to carry them across the gap. [...] Working on the project has made us much more aware of the transition point stuff, and I think that's been very helpful.

This observation addresses a question which is at the crux of how young adults in transition can best be 'found' so to speak, or rescued. It resonates with the direction of travel in which T2A thinking has evolved: that it is not merely the transition between the youth and adult criminal justice services which should be the focus but transitions more generally, and whereas a focus on young adults is critical, this is not the only message which will 'speak to' policy planners and those with responsibility for commissioning frameworks. Supporting transitions between services, between life stages and life challenges, more generally invites the most cost effective and efficient ways to provide joined up services.

Exit strategies and future funding

<note: some of this exit strategy section was formerly in section 2.4 and should probably go back there>

The pilots were always viewed as temporary with a view to developing and demonstrating the process and value of a young adult focus with a view to this paradigm becoming a permanent feature of mainstream services – though it was left open as to whether this would be in the form of distinct T2A teams (and possibly retention of the existing teams) or some other whether elements would be absorbed into other aspects of provision. Political developments during this period, including a change of government and the economic crisis and spending cuts, have called the tune but have also been a stimulus for radical rethinking and could prove opportune for integrated attention to the twin concerns of the T2A movement - the focus on young adults and support across gaps between services and for, another concern of BCT, greater involvement of the voluntary sector. The cutbacks in probation and youth offending services' budgets and the coalition government's interest in involving the voluntary and community sector much more in criminal justice work and in opening up more aspects of the work to competition should make a greater role for the VCS a more inevitable progression. On the other hands the spending review combined with delayed 'payment by results' policies could prove catastrophic, especially for smaller voluntary bodies.

There are some early indications from the pilot of how services can work together, and tactical models of the various roles that different agencies might play, but getting this embedded into mainstream provision is dependent on future central and local government policies for criminal justice and other services, all of which are currently under discussion and in flux.

With still another year to run, each of the pilots is still developing its exit strategy for after the funded pilot period. The following outlines plans and related things in respect of each pilot.

London T2A. The St Giles Trust has integrated the T2A work into its SOS project and work with young people in gangs. Although there is a dedicated worker and the T2A label is applied to some extent, the work merges together and in could continue to be covered in the same way without being a distinct service. Whether it matters that it hasn't had that distinct focus is a question that may be worth exploring systematically. There is an excellent fulltime worker on the T2A project who works with volunteers. The project could be easily absorbed with or without using T2A as an operational label, though the post of the excellent fulltime worker would need to be funded by another source. The exit strategy is to keep on offering this bridging service providing funding can be secured.

The T2A worker at St Giles Trust, as described in section 2.4, has been able to make remarkable progress, from 'bottom up' developments, by initiating meetings to share information, avoid duplication of effort and work collaboratively, and by impressing colleagues with the progress achieved through his casework.

The Head of Community Services has explained that their work on this pilot and with BCT has been valuable in facilitating discussions with other services. The issue of 'transitions' is meaningful and recognised as an aspect that needs to be addressed; and is a useful angle to flag up when pursuing funding. A focus on supporting people at critical moments of transition, especially leaving prison, or leaving a gang is characteristic of their T2A approach and one which they would want to continue.

Worcester T2A. YSS is aiming to include their T2A work within a new project, the Pathways project. One of the target groups will be young adults in the criminal justice system. Clearly future plans have to be tailored according to what might be feasible from a funding perspective. Even if it was decided that a dedicated T2A team should be the preferred model for the future – and that is debateable (see sections 4.1) – plans for sustaining the service delivery to young adults beyond the pilot period have to be tailored according to what might be feasible from a funding perspective. YSS, the service which runs the Worcester T2A, has been particularly resourceful in its ‘exit strategy’ plans. It is aiming for a new service, the Pathways Project, doing preventative work across the seven pathways,⁸⁵ and for which young adults will be one of the target groups though not the only one. The commissioning bodies to be approached include Supporting People, DATS and new commissioning streams coming into being. For YSS, the T2A pilot means they have “got young adults on the map” and can make the case for them to be targeted as a key group. The case will be made for a more holistic approach, even where funding is intended for specific outcomes:

Funding in the past for criminal justice might have been linked to accommodation or families but actually what we say is you can’t be working in isolation in that silo, if you’re working with an offender, if they’ve got accommodation issues they’re going to have other issues as well, whether it’s around family, finance and debt... So you can focus on areas but it doesn’t mean you work solely on that area, you’ve got to work across all of those pathways.

A strength of a well established voluntary sector service is that it has good links with local communities and therefore can be a useful resource for Probation Trusts in facilitating referrals to and communication from those local communities so that their concerns can inform local commissioning strategy.

IOM [Integrated Offender Management] should be driven by local communities and not just Probation, and not just risk information – it’s about what’s causing those local communities most concern and actually should inform local commissioning strategy services.

Birmingham T2A. The Birmingham pilot has now become – like the London T2A – “more literally a bridging service”, though with an emphasis on connecting the service users to the resources and other services they need and keeping the period of one-to-one contact deliberately short. The intention is to retain this unit as the hub between transitions and to provide a wrap around service.

⁸⁵ Home Office, 2004.

Different models for service delivery

A broader question for the future concerns the form that T2A services might take: whether a distinct team or specialists; how they work in relation to other services; whether they should be explicitly concerned with young adults, and continue to function under the T2A 'brand'. Stakeholders have mooted the following forms that the T2A focus might take in an ongoing multi-agency context, and the advantages or disadvantages of these:

(ii) Permanent Young Adult Teams

The obvious comparison here is with Youth Offending Teams, which bring together practitioners from different services into a multi-agency service, including probation, youth justice, education, health and drug/alcohol specialists often from the voluntary sector. However, as is the case with the present pilot teams, a dedicated Young Adult Team could be drawn entirely from a voluntary sector agency or one of the public sector criminal justice services. Such dedicated team can then continue to work in partnership with relevant services acting as a hub and a wraparound support service. There are strong arguments however against categorising such a team as one specifically for young adults. It would probably be seen and experienced as an additional tier between the youth and adult services thereby running the risk of further separating rather than uniting them. The concerns here were well articulated by BCT's Criminal Justice Programme Officer:

[W]hat I think we would want to avoid is a third system that's squashed in between the youth and adult that just created another interface [...] my personal view would be I don't think silo teams are the right approach. Now a lot of different kinds of teams have been recommended by various reviews in criminal justice. Bradley's review recommended criminal justice mental health team; Baroness Corston's review recommended a dedicated women's team; we've had the Drug and Alcohol teams in place for a few years; we've had YOTs; and so on, the list goes on. And I think the danger of creating specialist teams particularly in a time of financial constraint is that the silo walls get built up even higher.

(iii) Dedicated 'young adult' specialists within existing services or teams

This is now a favoured way of ensuring a focus on young adults in the criminal justice system but in a way which is interlinked with other work. The London pilot has, from the start, integrated the T2A specialism within other projects, especially their SOS

project which focuses on young people at risk of involvement in gangs, but which also branches out in other innovative directions. Although there is a dedicated T2A practitioner the association of the work the ‘young adulthood’ identity of the work has not been the writ large, and the boundaries between work in this and other projects, such as drug use rehabilitation, housing support and resettlement service, is deliberately fluid. Nevertheless, the case work with individual service users is highly attuned to the transitional needs of young adults.

One variant within this more integrated approach is for the specialism to be, not only ‘young adulthood’, but ‘transitions’ more generally between services. Developments affecting the West Midlands T2A are of interest here. Birmingham City Council has employed a Head of Transitions. This role lends itself to a strategic multi-agency focus on transitions between services including the several which are age-related. The Criminal Justice Programme Officer envisaged this transitions focus within the context of a Total Place approach:

[As well as] oiling the wheels between services and age groups, [it could foster] an appreciation between services that they are in a lot of cases all working with the same individual. I mean they all think of an individual differently, there might be a drug addict or a homeless person, or an offender, it’s still the same person and if a more pooled, or Total Place approach, a multi-agency approach could be taken to that individual and if the T2A concept can facilitate that then I think that would again be a very positive approach – more so I think than T2A teams.

(iv) Interagency systems which are cognizant of young adult and transitions issues

Less discussed, a third form for ongoing integration the T2A philosophy and service model would be similar to the above but perhaps without the need for specialist practitioners. If the T2A movement accomplishes its mission of raising awareness of young adults’ additional needs, and if this becomes incorporated into practitioner training and influences policy in service provision for young adults, then there will be less need for dedicated specialists. It is likely that the two distinct justice systems will continue but if the sharp divide by chronological age becomes a more gentle melding with ease of passage between the two then the BCT and T2A Alliance will have in effect have largely achieved its goal of unification.

Funding and commissioning frameworks

Ultimately the future prospects for continuing the T2A concepts and programme will depend on whether they are seen as a priority for funding and how they fit into commissioning frameworks. All concerned are keenly aware of this. Criminal justice public sector services are increasingly being opened up to competition from the private and voluntary sector, especially since the formation of NOMS and subsequent legislation for delivering offender management. The coalition government's recent green paper⁸⁶ on criminal justice and its introduction of the 'Big Society' indicate that this trend will intensify but, in a regime of fiscal austerity, the outcome are likely to be mixed. However, what seems clear, as noted by BCT's Criminal Justice Programme Officer, is that:

... There's going to be a much more blurred boundary between voluntary, private and public sector agencies in the next few years. [and...] the public sector's going to shrink which will inevitably mean they'll have to be commissioners rather than providers.

In the same meeting, he also gave this succinct account of envisaged local commissioning opportunities of relevance to the pilots and their exit strategies:

Once the comprehensive spending review is out of the way funding streams are going to become much more local and in terms of exit strategies we're now very acutely aware that it's unlikely that T2A in the future would be funded through a central government funding stream. In fact it's much more likely that it would come from local authorities or from a devolved down funding stream – particularly if the Prison and Probation Trusts replace NOMS. Then [in the report] *Prison with a Purpose*, which was the Conservatives' Green Paper before the General Election, said they would replace NOMS and replace Probation Trusts with a new network of Prison and Rehabilitation Trusts which would be responsible for offending behaviour, both pre, during and post release from sentence and the funding streams would therefore be commissioned. [...] So commissioning will be a local responsibility. My feeling is in terms of exit strategies and legacies we need to ensure that T2A pilots develop in a way that lends themselves to a local commissioning opportunity and other areas of the country could replicate, if not actual versions of the pilots, could replicate the approach that was taken and the reasons that those services were set up.

In this context, it is interesting to consider the recent achievement of YSS in Worcestershire in becoming the preferred partner of the Probation Trust. This will of course facilitate further appropriate opportunities for their own organisation, but they will also work with the probation service in commissioning services for other local

⁸⁶ Ministry of Justice, 2010.

third sector organisations. This will help the Probation Trust to select the most appropriate and innovative solutions for working with offenders”.⁸⁷

[The Probation Trust] have got a restricting budget, but whenever they do want to commission something, they reserve the right to come to us, and either ask us to design a bespoke service that meets their needs or to ask us to commission it to the voluntary sector. So we are developing our skills at commissioning to be able to give grants on SLAs [Service Level Agreements] to voluntary sector organisations on behalf of Probation, and we know much more about those organisations and how they work and the difficulties they face – we’re a community organisation ourselves so in that way we can support and develop the capacity of the local voluntary sector based around the needs of offenders that we’ve identified with Probation.

The finer details provide a clearer picture of how this might work to ease the way for bids that would otherwise be out of reach. The YSS and Probation together are in a much better position to bid for larger contracts:

[Probation] want us to be the champion for the service user voice, for offenders in the criminal justice system, and then we work together on business development activities to draw funding down to the area. So we can now bid for contracts that maybe we might consider in isolation would be too large for us to bid for, but in partnership the cash flow and size of their organisation is much larger so we can choose whether they lead on it or they do according to who we think is best at that particular moment in time. They will encourage us to lead wherever possible because they recognise our ability, not only to project manage but also to have those closer links with the community.

It also becomes possible for much smaller providers to contribute on a collaborative basis:

And the third aspect of it is...the partnership work, the infrastructure, the service user voice. And also, the delivering of bespoke services – so there are four elements. I will send you four slides [...] So the T2A work...so their budgets are going to be reducing over the next three years but what we’ll hopefully be able to do is working in partnership with a lot of activity, will be to expand the ability of the voluntary community sector to deliver services to offenders that they can refer into. So it’s not about all everything coming through YSS. It’s [also] about YSS helping other organisations through this partnership to develop capacity. It’s us actually going out [to them] and saying we’re putting a bid in, do you want to work on our side as...we’ll show you how we’re putting the bid in and you can learn from this, and next time you might put the bid in and we’ll support you to do that.

In explaining all this, the Chief Executive emphasised the value of their T2A pilot in demonstrating and testing out the preliminary stages of this model. It demonstrated to the Probation Trust how their public sector services might become “leaner” yet “bigger” by “having a web of networked and linked organisations”. Having a preferred partner avoids the need to work directly with a large number of voluntary sector organisations. The Probation Trust also knows from prior experience with the preferred partner of the strengths of their service, their credibility and their networks in the local landscape.

⁸⁷ Press Release: Accessed 26 Dec 2010.

<http://www.westmerciaprobation.org.uk/media/releases/2010/july/Preferred%20Partner%20Agreement%20signed.pdf>

5 Not There Yet But So Far So Good

As expressed in the title of the report by the BCT Commission and in its central message, young adult offenders have been *Lost in Transition*. Where young adult offenders were concerned there had long been a policy vacuum, and while there have been some encouraging examples of constructive practice to meet the needs of young people in criminal justice, these have often been led by the voluntary sector, such as the resettlement project RESET,⁸⁸ and have been piecemeal and not followed through or not yet mainstreamed. Whether recent political changes could prove favourable, or what damage to prospects might be caused by the present of fiscal austerity, is as yet unknown but the present time is one of more openness to doing things differently.

The Transition to Adulthood movement is in tune with various issues of the moment. It has caught the zeitgeist of joined-up provision across ‘silo’ services, and of voluntary and community sector involvement and the ‘Big Society’. A related concept which features increasingly in policy and academic discourse is that of ‘transitions’. There is now widespread recognition of the transitional, evolving nature of modern living, particularly as it applies in 21st century society for young people with their lives ahead, from one life stage to another and from one institutional context to another. The importance of transitions has been recognised by central government,⁸⁹ and by local authorities which are developing various transitions service protocols for young people with addition needs.⁹⁰ ‘Transitions’ is also a burgeoning area of research in psychology, and is gaining greater attention in criminology and other disciplines.⁹¹ It is a concept which is at the heart of this Barrow Cadbury Trust initiative. The wider implications of this programme of work have always been recognised by those involved in the T2A Alliance and there is a sense of momentum for influencing the national agenda, as articulated by the BCT Criminal Justice Programme Officer:

⁸⁸ A major experimental resettlement project from 2005-2007, funded by European Equal, and led by Catch 22 (previously the Rainer Foundation). See Hazel et al. 2008.

⁸⁹ For example, NOMS (2007); Social Exclusion Unit (2005)

⁹⁰ See for example, Newcastle City Council: <http://www.newcastlejsna.org.uk/book/export/html/98> and Plymouth City Council (2008).

⁹¹ A network for scholars interested in Transitions to Adulthood has been established: Network on Transitions to Adulthood, <http://transitions2adulthood.com/about/>

The next year is going to be critical. I think it's a real opportunity for it to step up as a campaign, and from being evidence gathering and a coalition of organisations all in agreement meeting from time to time, to one where it really starts to embed itself into the discourse that's taking place in government on lots of different issues. I could see that the whole concept of transitions is really taking off across lots of different departments and lots of different sectors, and that we could contribute to that.

A positive approach to work with those young adults, including those at risk of becoming among the most prolific of offenders, is emerging from the inroads made by these T2A pilots that could usefully be rolled out into national policy, to achieve a more effective less expensive criminal justice system and to improve lives.

5.1 Considering the onward journey

The promising results so far give rise to optimism but there is much further to travel. The early indications are that this programme could make a radical difference in reducing the offending of those in that period of life at which offending behaviour is more prevalent and frequent. Becoming an adult, as well as desistance from crime, are processes rather than 'overnight' shifts. Similarly, assessing the impact on offending behaviour should allow for the passage of time rather than been measured and judged after a short finite period, and the best outcomes of this initiative may be longer term. The effects on reoffending, and related indicators of improvement, may be more impressive, or less, after greater 'exposure time' to the package of support being put in place (including both mentoring and pathways to other services and resources).

Sustaining the good work with service users

The processes and mechanisms involved in achieving lasting positive outcomes or ultimate success, are likely to be somewhat different from those involved at the start of a programme. Transition to adulthood and desistance from crime are not smooth, linear processes and allowing for that involves different considerations in delivering practice. The remainder of the pilot period will provide further opportunity for learning from three T2A teams in relation to such longer term issues and the outcomes for present service users. The changing backdrop will be one of spending cuts, alterations to the benefits service, decreased availability of jobs and accommodation, and new policies in criminal justice.

With particular regard to this and the continuing journey being made by the pilots and their service users, and again drawing on empirical research as well as the insights shared by T2A participants and stakeholders, the following observations are worth noting. These include practice strengths that may have greater importance than has been fully appreciated; and possible perils that may be foreseen and perhaps circumvented. They are presented as observations and thinking points rather than recommendations, because in a formative evaluation they do not have the status of empirical findings.

➤ As well as pathways to resources and opportunities, the problem-focused relational work remains paramount. The importance of this may be getting overshadowed by the attention being given to referral and involving other services. Helping to turn lives around may be brief in many cases, but will need to be prolonged and recurrent in others. Setbacks and barriers to better lives can be demotivating for the young adults, and sustaining a working alliance will help to keep them on track. There should be clarity regarding who will take on the lead professional role of working directly with the young person. It will be important to ensure that it is not neglected and that there is continuity and, if the intense support is prescribed as time limited, there should be a way back for more if needed or to dip back now and again for ‘top up’ support and crisis intervention.

➤ The T2A worker’s interpersonal skills and stance towards the service user seem more important than whether they are qualified professionals or volunteer mentors. What seem to matter more than previous training and professional experience are their genuineness in forming a helping relationship, and their ability to respond constructively to vicissitudes in the young person’s circumstances and state of mind.

➤ That the person can choose or refuse to take up and continue with a T2A intervention, rather than it being a sentence or licence requirement, is understood to be critical to their engagement and co-operation with it. Therefore T2A intervention should continue to be offered as voluntary support rather than imposed as a mandatory requirement.

- Given the voluntary basis of engaging the young person in T2A interventions, third sector services are better suited to providing the lead professionals for the relational work with young adults, because they are free from the punitive, offender management baggage which the public sector criminal justice services now carry.

- However, a continuing ‘young adult’ focus should be safeguarded by making its provision a statutory obligation of public sector services. The present commissioning frameworks for inter-agency work and buying in services from the community provide the means for contracting this work to the voluntary sector whilst also being one area in which these two sectors can develop better systems for working together. As well as contracting out the service delivery role, statutory provision might include the appointment of a lead manager and responsibility for running a T2A steering group.

- The ‘T2A’ brand may be worth retaining once the work being done becomes mainstream. The image of a service may link to a hidden mechanism in engaging otherwise reluctant service users. A good name and other image factors, such as the youth, status, or background of the workers, can make for a service that is more attractive to young adults; that is, which makes it ‘cool’, comfortable or less embarrassing for them to engage with, and makes the service proffered seem more plausible.

- The ‘young adulthood’ concept affects identity – the person’s self perception and others’ perceptions of who they are and what might be expected of them. The danger is that it will hold young people back from perceiving themselves as grown up and, moreover, give them an excuse for unwelcome behaviour. Similarly, people who are routinely perceived as immature and fallible because of the age group to which they belong are less likely to be offered jobs requiring adults, or in other respects to be regarded as reliable and trustworthy. Publicity should therefore avoid too rigid an association between young adulthood and immaturity and associated incompetencies.

➤ Care should be taken to avoid a ‘pass the parcel’ approach⁹² when referring young adults to other services. While a virtue of the service model is the emphasis on connecting young people to the services and resources they may need in the community, a danger of this is that referral without continuity of care can be perceived as rejection or indifference. That is, someone who is referred from one service to another may get some practical help but insufficient one-to-one mentoring. This ‘pass the parcel’ pattern of referral may get performance indicator boxes ticked but be experienced by the individual as yet more evidence that no-one is interested, that she is being fobbed off to another service rather than being taken seriously, and that promises of help amount to nothing. The importance of continuity was a resounding finding in a recent service user review by the Revolving Doors Agency: “In the light of these multiple transitions, our participants were unequivocal - continuity is an essential principle of work with young adults in transition”.⁹³

Assessing outcomes and impact

In the midst of social change and intense competition for financial resources, organisations promoting new initiatives are in a hurry to produce ‘hard evidence’ of their effectiveness, and therefore have an understandable preference for quantitative studies which allow unequivocal announcement of positive results.⁹⁴ This assumes though that the outcomes of interest can be reliably attributed to the programme or intervention, as opposed to some coexisting factors; and that would necessitate clearly specified variables of interest and controlled, stabilised conditions. In the evolving, adaptive, environment of the pilot programmes, with their multiple active components, an outcome evaluation was not feasible. Given the early, emergent stage of their development, as well as the complex and complicated⁹⁵ organizational and community environments in which the T2A pilots were introduced, a formative evaluation was initially appropriate.

This obviously does not rule out the possibility of an outcome evaluation when the conditions are appropriate, and indeed combined approaches are increasingly

⁹² Robinson, 2005.

⁹³ Revolving Doors Agency (2010, page 3).

⁹⁴ Hedley et al., 2010.

⁹⁵ Rogers, 2008.

recommended for evaluations in social settings. Accordingly, this evaluation of the pilots was set up to be a two-phase approach, beginning with a theory-oriented, formative phase leading to a more focused outcome evaluation of agreed components. During this formative period, the evaluators have followed closely the activities and strategies of the pilots in order to understand the challenges of implementing them and to learn about how the practitioners are delivering the intended services and how the services users are responding. We have done this within an action-research and participatory framework, to facilitate a learning culture and, through dialogue with and feedback to the participants, to tease apart the various elements in the programme and explore their underlying logic and how they play out in practice. From this analysis, and building on the knowledge base of rehabilitation and desistance research, theories of what contributes to effectiveness can be articulated (see previous section). While this is of value in its own right, bringing underlying assumptions to light, it can be the first stage in a combined methodology in which the insights about the main drivers of effectiveness, drawn from the formative evaluation, are tested in controlled conditions (following experimental or quasi-experimental design) to achieve a more focused and reliable outcome evaluation (what led to what and why).

The formative period for the pilots is not yet over. However, the procedures and work of the teams may be sufficiently stabilised for an outcome evaluation of the impact on reoffending by service users. Given that the pilots are part of a complicated and complex programme in which there are many strands that play their part, before an outcome evaluation is carried out it will be appropriate to narrow and refine the focus (that is, decide on what outcome is to be assessed, and what input: the impact of what on what?), and decide on whether the pilots are to be compared against each other, or a shared element is to be compared against non-T2A practice. The evaluation so far has been useful in identifying elements considered to be critical and these could be formulated into specific ideas and questions to be addressed in further investigation. For example: Does employing ex-offenders increase the likelihood that prisoners accept mentoring support following their release? Do pre-sentence reports written by practitioners who are young adult specialists have an impact on magistrates' sentencing severity? The more specific and measurable the variables, and given controlled comparative conditions to rule out the counterfactual, the more feasible it will be to set up a comparative evaluation that will yield reliable data.

The pilots have another year to run, after which it is as yet unknown whether the present T2A services, or some development from them, will become an enduring feature of mainstream provision. The different organizational models that could be adopted, including those already in play, will require further testing out and evaluation to establish which is the most economic as well as effective in contributing to positive outcomes. The most cost effective economic systems will be those which make the best contribution to reducing reoffending.

Some differences between the pilots have been noted. It is possible that such differences are relevant to the desired, first order, effects (on service user behaviour and their lives) and the desired second order effects (at the institutional level). An empirical assessment of their differences would require a controlled study, with matched samples of service users, in order to evaluate the impact of those differences. Based on elements identified as of critical relevance to the improvements being made, one or more of the following might be the basis for such a systematic comparative evaluation:

- Employing qualified ex-offenders vs. Traditional youth justice or probation staff.
- Time-limited, intensive periods of contact vs. Open-ended, flexibly paced contact.
- Public sector lead practitioners vs. Voluntary sector lead practitioners.
- Strong identification of the project with ‘young adulthood’ vs. Merging it with other similar joined-up inter-agency projects.

5.2 Summary of achievements and insights

The broad purpose of the T2A movement has been to put ‘young adulthood’ on the map used by criminal justice and community services so that it is more conspicuous as a distinct area of need, and to achieve a more joined-up approach across the age divide separating services, and across the different sectors. Categories of young adults with different needs or additional challenges – ethnic minority, female, disabled, mentally ill, substance addicted – are particularly within the ambit of the initiative, because of their combined vulnerabilities.

The pilots have made great progress in putting into practice the purposes set for them by BCT's Commission for Transition to Adulthood and the subsequent T2A Alliance. The inroads they have made are on two main fronts: their present work with service users (that is, at the beneficiary level) and their more future oriented strategic planning with other agencies (that is, at the institutional level). The work on these two fronts includes many strands. They add up to a complex package which – especially with reference to continuity in the future – might be summed up as the **development of local inter-agency systems for guiding young adults into better lives.**

There are some differences between the three pilots. Building on existing services they are not all at the same stage of development, and they have evolved along slightly different lines. The London pilot employs ex-offenders as both paid and unpaid workers. At Birmingham the probation-led T2A service has, in contrast to when it started, become somewhat less about the direct work with young people and more about becoming a hub that can link them to relevant services; while in the Worcestershire model the qualified youth justice worker has the holding role for a more sustained period and provides a wraparound service by drawing on its network of interagency connections. It is possible to exaggerate such differences between the pilots, however, at the expense of what they have in common.

The alternative backgrounds and contexts of the pilots, however, have led to some distinctions in their journeys and landmark achievements which are worthy of note. The London pilot has integrated the T2A work with other projects with a relevant but different remit, so that the 'young adult' focus has been somewhat blurred. What it has been able to do remarkably well is engage people who would otherwise have been sceptical about and shunned offers of supportive contact, and with its programme of involving ex-offenders it has been able to turn the helped into helpers. The Birmingham pilot learned and thereby demonstrated that young adult work should not be in a vacuum but needs to engage young people with community services and to integrate public and voluntary sector contributions. The Worcestershire pilot has been equally strong in its present service delivery dimension and in its forward looking institutional dimension. YSS, the voluntary sector organisation leading it, has been

selected by the Probation Trust to be its primary partner, partly as a consequence of the valuable work demonstrated by the T2A pilot.

Despite these differences and stand out features, the findings of the formative evaluation suggest that it is elements and processes that they share that are more important in explaining the achieved and anticipated positive effects.

On the policy front, they have made progress within their areas in stimulating thinking and planning towards durable interagency systems, and in establishing the principle that distinct provision should be made for supporting young adults as a matter of standard practice. The teams are zealous and imaginative in developing links with other services, and raising awareness of the needs of vulnerable young adults and creating an interface between services. Activities in this respect include forming multi-agency T2A steering groups; holding local conferences to publicise and discuss the work; development of protocols for transition arrangements between youth and adult services; and 'bottom up' developments when working collaboratively on particular cases. Much of this institutional level work is future oriented and the outcome will depend on unforeseeable developments, such as the commissioning framework by public sector criminal justice services and whether a young adult focus becomes mandatory in some services.

Perhaps their main achievement on the policy front, is in publicising on a local level the compelling argument that crime could be reduced, money could be saved and lives improved simply by a more concerted and joined-up approach to helping young adults through the transitions of young adulthood. Through their work they have helped raised awareness that becoming mature is a process and does not happen at the stroke of an eighteenth birthday, and that becoming independent in the modern era involves climbing mountains in a rugged and slippery social landscape.

In their operational work with service users, the practice ethos is one of offering help; the important work to reduce reoffending is integral but contextualised in that supportive framework. The pilots have employed staff to work intensively with the young people, with support from volunteers/ voluntary mentors, and the role combines mentoring and brokerage (connecting them to services and resources).

While reducing (re)offending by these service users – demographically within the most prolific category of offenders and therefore the most expensive to the public purse – is a core concern and prime objective, this is woven into the broader purpose of enabling them to ‘get on’ in their lives and to navigate the transitions they have to make (from post-adolescence to maturity; from the youth justice system to the adult system; from custody to resettlement) and helping them towards better lives (both in a moral, law-abiding sense and in the sense of being more satisfying and fulfilling). It is therefore, in effect, welfare-based (in the interests of the service user) and, as such, considerably removed from standard risk-based, offender management practice in the criminal justice system.

So far, the pilots are largely successful in engaging young adults in taking up the offered service. The help given is a combination of mentoring and connecting them to services, training and the practical steps they need to take to make progress. All of the pilots are using a person-led, task-focused (or solution focused) model for working with the service users. Through the expression of genuine concern, interest and respect for the individual, the practitioners are able to form a working alliance in which they engage the young person in formulating and following an action plan to help them resolve difficulties, often linked to offending, and to reach their goals.

The early outcome measures obtained in a sample of 29 case studies are promising. Distance-travelled measures and qualitative interview data from the service users and their T2A workers, show improvements associated with reduced reoffending. According to their self-reports, half of the young people had not reoffended during the six to twelve month period following T2A support. The other half reported that their reoffending was less frequent and less serious, and they are more optimistic about their ability to desist in the future. Compared against the dramatically high reconviction rate for young adults in the criminal justice system, these are encouraging results. The participants mostly attributed these improvements to the support and referrals provided by the pilots. In a service that is an interface to other services, it is difficult to say where T2A ends and another service begins, and therefore improvements cannot simply be attributed to the added value provided by the pilot, but the carefully drawn out perspectives of those most closely involved are should be taken very seriously.

Explaining what 'works' and how

The early results from the case studies, and the beliefs of the key players, suggest that the pilots are helping young people to avoid involvement in offending and to make improvements in their lives.

The formative evaluation has aimed to access implicit theories or reasoned arguments in order to begin to identify social, behavioural and institutional mechanisms that explain why T2A interventions 'work', or are expected to work. From an action-research and participatory framework, and building on the knowledge base of rehabilitation and desistance research, the following theories of what causes or contributes to effectiveness can be articulated.

^ The formation of a working alliance (based on mutual respect or acceptance, agreed goals and tasks) increases the young adult's sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, which motivates continuing engagement with the programme and readiness to respond to its requirements (that is, take steps towards change).

^ Similarly, the use of strengths-based principles (emphasising what the person can do and their strengths rather than their mistakes and weakness) also supports this mechanism for engagement and effort (that is, increases the young adult's sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, which in turn, motivates or bolsters their readiness to take steps towards change).

^ The adoption of an action plan which is largely determined by the individual according to what they most want to resolve and achieve (solution focused and goal driven) ensures that the effort is synchronised with their own approach goals. The required application and effort from them coincides with their pursued direction rather than going against the grain of their wishes. They cooperate because what is being required of them turns out to be what they want anyway, providing it does not involve offending. The programme thus respects and promotes their own agency in making changes.

^ The development of a respectful, empathetic, and amicable working relationship results in a positive attitude to the practitioner or volunteer so that there is a readiness to work together with that person. This makes the process easier and more pleasant and, having accepted the support, increases optimism about obtaining what they need and doing things differently.

^ It is a model of work that gives the service user the lead role in making things happen, gives them a taste of being in control and rewards them for achieving small steps thereby building up self-efficacy.

^ Sustained desistance from crime also requires cognitive transformation, and that the individual has access to the material resources and opportunities to lead a law-abiding future. Therefore other social and institutional factors have to be brought into play – and this may take a little longer. In brief, the programme connects them to material resources and opportunities, and promotes changes in self-concept and identity.

^ By referring and connecting the young person to the material resources and social opportunities that they need to ‘get on’ in life, their sense of self efficacy and agency is sustained.

During the early part of the programme, engaging young adults (including those who are initially disinterested, mistrustful, unwilling) in the intervention and getting them started on an action plan are significant achievements. To summarise some of the steps that are involved, the following have been identified as making a critical difference to engaging the young person and working towards change:

- The contact with the T2A intervention is voluntary on the part of the service user (and, in keeping with that, is not rule-bound).
- A friendly, helping relationship is established (a working alliance).
- The meetings are focused on an action plan, suggested or agreed by the service user, to desist from offending and improve their situation and behaviour.
- The purpose and objectives are person-centred and problem focused (for the person’s benefit and led by their concerns).

- The person-led action plan respects and nurtures the individual's personal agency and efforts to make changes.
- The worker extends a 'life-line' (rescue service or support and advice) to the young adult; that is, can be contacted by phone or text, during the period of active contact, and subsequently in times of crisis.

The formative evaluation has provided many examples of how these features affect the service users and influence their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, in steps towards desistance from crime and better lives.

The philosophy of practitioners and their mode of working with young adults is attuned to recent thinking in rehabilitation research and desistance theory. It also has much resonance with traditional practice⁹⁶ in probation and youth justice before they shifted from a social work ethos to becoming linked to punitive law enforcement services. However, some of that older model was unhelpfully associated with psychoanalysis and over-individualised without reference to structural factors; whereas a desistance paradigm for working with offenders links strengths based, positive psychology with practical help and environmental factors. Recent application of desistance theory to rehabilitation practice are bringing the Good Lives Model of rehabilitation into prominence, and the T2A model of practice has a some resemblance to this.

The pilots are demonstrating a practice model which is successful in engaging young people in actions which will help them towards better lives (reduced reoffending and more fulfilling lives) and they have in different ways facilitated inter-agency working and an interest in developing ongoing systems for including young adults in the services that they offer. Both the mentoring and brokerage elements of the service seem vital. The motivation to become self-supporting and to settle into responsible adulthood must be complemented by the practical means to do so. There should be continuity of a helping relationship from someone who knows the individual and is respected by him or her. But neither will work without the young adult being motivated to make improvement, desist from crime and put effort into the process.

⁹⁶ Burnett and McNeill, 2005.

Concluding points

Ultimately, if a programme works it is because of what the respondents do. As observed by experts in realist approaches to evaluation, it is not the interventions nor the policies per se which are the mechanism of change, but rather the participants' responses to them. The change process belongs to the individual: giving up crime, becoming independent and self-supporting, settling down with a partner and maybe having children, getting a job and stable way of life, are not done to an individual. They themselves are the engine of their desistance, while opportunities are the necessary fuel. Interventions, courses, treatment, material aid and so forth, support and provide the resources but the person's own will and agency are what drives it. The person-led, problem focused, goal directed approach of the pilots is therefore highly suited to supporting this process, with some navigation by a mentor to steer clear of pitfalls and find legitimate, prosocial routes for achieving those goals.

If local T2A interventions work to change behaviour and improve lives, they do so by helping (as opposed to treating, punishing, restricting, threatening and other variants that are imposed on those who offend). Where social behaviour is concerned, it is at the level of the individual's response that interventions work. The person agrees to engage and, importantly, applies their efforts because what is offered is in their interests, and is helping them deal with their situation and move towards their, legitimate, goals. The process of maturing and leading a better life cannot be done for the person or to the person; they do that themselves and no intervention can do that for them but it can support and help propel their own agency in making changes. Thus the T2A package is a force driving in the same direction as the person, though with a current towards law-abiding pathways.

The frequency with which transition to adulthood now features in policy and political discourse indicates that the present campaign has struck a chord in public consciousness. There is a growing consensus that in twenty-first century, austerity Britain (and in other parts of the world), it is much harder to get securely set-up as an independent, self-supporting adult. Those with disadvantaged backgrounds and in the criminal justice system have a much tougher climb. This ties in with an increased

awareness of the numerous transitions that young people make between agencies and between life situations, each of which may be critical moments for slipping or progressing in life. The work of the pilots is providing very good examples and insights into how concentrating resources on young adults in transition is a good investment.

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Table 1: Some differences between the pilots

	LONDON	WORCESTERSHIRE	BIRMINGHAM
Launch Date	Jan 12, 2009	April 2, 2009	July 7, 2009
Services	Voluntary sector Ex-offender led	Voluntary sector	Statutory – Probation
Name	SOS / T2A	T2A	T2A
Target group	15 to 25 year olds Involved in or at risk of being involved in CJS	17 to 19 year olds (16 to 25 for women and BME young people) At key stages of transition (within CJS)	17 to 24 year-olds Low to medium risk of re-offending
Client location	Urban	Rural & semi-urban	Urban
Case load	15 to 20 (+ 45 to 50 non-active cases)	8 to 12	15 to 25 (depending on level of need)
Length of support	Support is open-ended, dependant on client needs – typically 12 months	Ongoing during their order/licence and beyond, typically 8 to 12 months	12 weeks, with possibility of extension if needs have not been met
Assessment	Sometimes see Asset, OASys and Police assessments, though do not have formal access Use an assessment tool developed in-house	Access to Asset & OASys assessments if appropriate and linked to risk No formal assessment tools	Access to Asset and OASys assessments No formal assessment tools
Support Pathway	<p>Referral</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Initial engagement</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Assessment & Action Plan</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Developing skills, meeting welfare needs & empowering</p> <p>↓</p> <p>NVQ 3 IAG training for some to become peer mentors</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Ongoing support (less intensive, no formal case closure)</p>	<p>Referral</p> <p>↓</p> <p>3-way meeting</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Initial engagement</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Developing skills, meeting welfare needs & empowering</p> <p>↓</p> <p>4-weekly reviews towards Action Plan completion</p> <p>↓</p> <p>4 month case review</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Case closed or extension of support for further 4 months</p>	<p>Referral</p> <p>↓</p> <p>3-way meeting</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Initial engagement</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Developing skills, meeting welfare needs & empowering</p> <p>↓</p> <p>4-weekly reviews towards Action Plan completion</p> <p>↓</p> <p>12-week case review</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Case closed or extension of support</p>
Management structure	Part-time T2A manager (50%) Reporting to Head of Community Services	Part-time T2A manager (33%) Reporting to Operations Director	1 Full-time T2A manager (100%) Line managed through the Probation Service
Administrative Support	No project-specific administrator	No project-specific administrator	1 Full-time administrator
T2A workers	1 Full-time Ex-offender 1 Trainer (80%) (Delivers NVQ 3 in IAG in YOI and in the community)	3 Full-time Not ex-offenders	3 Full-time Not ex-offenders
Volunteer mentors	1 full-time volunteer mentor and several part-time mentors (all ex-offenders)	Existing pool of 80 volunteer mentors, and up to 10 volunteer mentors active at any one time.	In process of recruiting volunteers, with future plans to have peer mentors.

Table 5: Challenges mentioned by practitioners doing T2A work

ISSUE	CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN ACCESSING SERVICES
Accessing Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differential rates of Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) for those under 25: single people aged under 25 receive £51.85 a week, whereas single people over 25 receive £65.45. • For those who are single and aged under 25, Housing Benefit is available only for bed-sit accommodation or one room in shared accommodation, not for your own flat.
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges keeping accommodation when in prison and accessing it on departure: When someone gets sent to prison their housing benefit stops and so they can build up rent arrears while in prison and lose their accommodation. The Council will only re-house them if their arrears are cleared. If the person had secured Council housing before going to prison, they would lose it and then would have to go back on the waiting list once they have cleared their arrears. • Lack of supported housing services that are available to young adults. • Long waiting list for council housing. • Because of the lack of housing, young adults often have to go the private rental route, some without having the necessary independent living skills and so the T2A worker has to act as a housing worker too, supporting the young adult in all accommodation issues , e.g. disputes, bills, independent living skills training, etc. • Because private rented can be more expensive, then young adults often have to pay the shortfall between their housing benefit and the rent, when on a lower rate of JSA. • Challenges of gaining access to private rented accommodation with a criminal record. • Unable to access Council accommodation if the Council class them as “intentionally homeless” (e.g. if wants to move out of the area because of gang issues). • Some young adults face challenges in keeping hostel accommodation because they need “the skills to be able to keep that” (i.e. respecting the rules).
Drugs and Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long waiting list to access some drug treatment services. • Many young drug users do not want to access drugs counselling because they feel that they are going to be lectured on harmful effects and “they know it all already”. • Rules against being accompanied to drugs counselling unhelpful for someone without the skills and confidence to attend alone.
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low provision of mental health floating support. • Long waiting list in some areas to access a mental health service. • If a person misses an appointment, then they need to be re-referred onto the waiting list; another appointment cannot simply be arranged • Lack of dovetailing child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to adult mental health services; the thresholds about qualifying for a service are inconsistent across the two.
Leaving Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some regions there is an inconsistency in the level of support provided by the Leaving Care team and some are not proactive in contacting those who are leaving care, therefore some care leavers often do not know they have entitlements. • There is a lack of knowledge amongst other practitioners about what the Leaving Care team are supposed to be doing; therefore they are not made accountable for providing the services they should. • The eligibility criteria for accessing the Leaving Care team excludes those who do not meet the time-in-care requirements but who still need the added support.
Education, Training and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot access full-time education if on JSA or ESA (only part-time for less than 16 hours a week). • Many courses that are part-time in practice are classed as full-time and so those on JSA and ESA are ineligible.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If qualify for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), then equivalent to losing approx. £7.50 a week in benefits, therefore many young adults prefer not to go on to Further Education.• There are a lack of places in colleges and some colleges have refused entry to ex-offenders.• There are a lack of employment opportunities and because these young adults have criminal records they are unlikely to be chosen over other candidates.• Many young adults in the CJS “haven’t got the confidence to step into the job market”.
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