

Evaluating the Pathway

*An Evaluation of the Pathway Total Reintegration Strategy undertaken by
Pathway Charitable Group*

*Independent Research Solutions
Jarrod Gilbert (PhD)
Ben Elley (BA hon)*

*With quantitative analysis by:
Research and Evaluation Unit
Department of Corrections*

Introduction

This report records the evaluation of the Pathway Total Reintegration Strategy, a programme that works with released prisoners in Canterbury to assist their reintegration into society. The Reintegration Strategy programme is an arm of the Pathway Charitable Group (formerly the Pathway Trust), which works with the disadvantaged in various ways. Pathway has commissioned this report in order to assess the efficacy of their prisoner reintegration programme, which is now in its sixth year.

This report draws on research data that are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The quantitative analysis, undertaken by the Department of Corrections, compares the actual versus the expected recidivism rates of Pathway clients and the overall rates across New Zealand. This is supported by a qualitative analysis based on interviews conducted with people who have gone through the programme, including those who successfully avoided reoffending and those who did not. The methods for each approach are outlined in the body of the report.

Executive Summary

- The Pathway Total Reintegration Strategy is an individualised and multi-faceted programme that works to reduce reoffending by released prisoners.
- This programme evinces early but significant success in reducing both offending rates and severity of the offenses that are committed by those who do reoffend.
- Using a model devised by the Department of Corrections (RoC *RoI scores) and an 'actual versus expected' method of analysis, prisoners who engage with the Pathway programme were found to be 33.3 percent less likely to be reconvicted and 42.8 percent less likely to re-imprisoned within 12 months of release.
- This programme is underpinned by the Good Lives Model and Desistance Theory and is informed in practice by Motivational Interviewing. Drawing on these concepts, Pathway not only seeks to reduce reoffending but fundamentally transform the lives of clients.
- Clients of Pathway overwhelmingly report that these theoretical approaches are being implemented in practice and that the programme helped them in significant ways. These findings were consistent between those who had not reoffended and those who had.
- Due to the individualised nature of the reintegration plans, clients placed value on different elements of the programme, but one universal finding was the importance placed on the social work support provided by Pathway staff.
- While there are a number of caveats on the key findings of this report, not least of which is the fact that many graduates have not been released for long enough to assess long-term success rates, these initial data are undeniably encouraging.

Background

New Zealand's is a heavily imprisoned society. As of 2012, the total number of inmates in our prisons was 8618, of which 6764 were serving a sentence and 1854 were remanded in custody (Statistics New Zealand 2012). On average, New Zealand imprisons 199 inmates for every 100,000 of its population. With the exception perhaps of the United States, this number is significantly higher than most of the countries to which we would normally compare ourselves, including England, which imprisons 152, and Australia, which imprisons only 134 (Department of Corrections, 2011). Each of these prisoners costs an average of \$90,936 to keep imprisoned, and public spending for the 2013/14 year on prison custodial services was projected to total \$753 million, part of a total Corrections budget of \$1.1 billion (New Zealand Treasury, 2013). On average 54 percent of those leaving prison will be reconvicted of another offence within the first year of leaving prison, and 35 percent will return to prison. Within five years, 52 percent will have been re-imprisoned. This indicates that a significant proportion of our prison population is made up of repeat offenders. Concerns relating to the high rates of imprisonment and recidivism led Deputy Prime Minister Bill English in 2010 to describe New Zealand's prisons as a "moral and fiscal failure", and in 2013 the government announced a campaign to reduce reoffending after release by 25% by 2017.

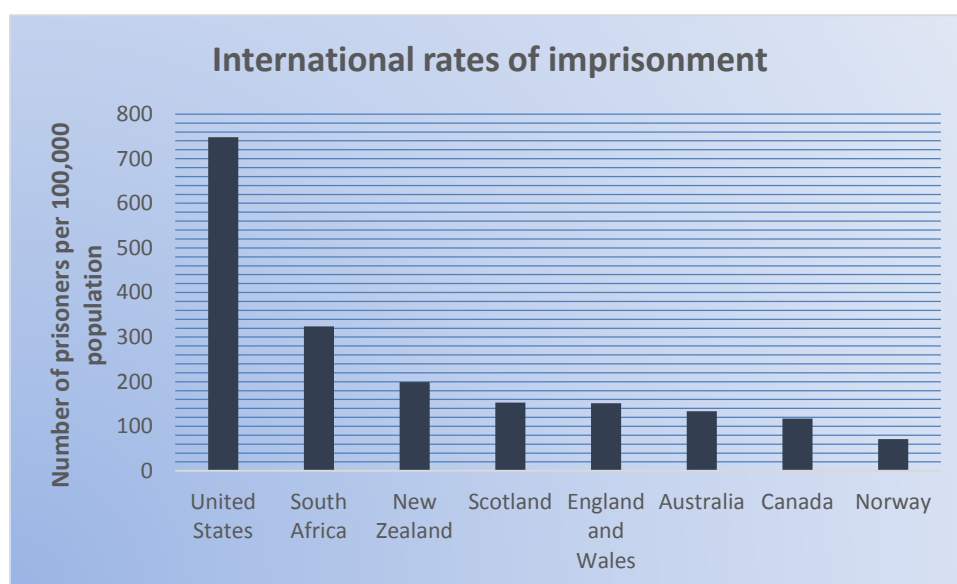


Figure 1: Data from Department of Corrections (Prison facts and statistics - December 2011)

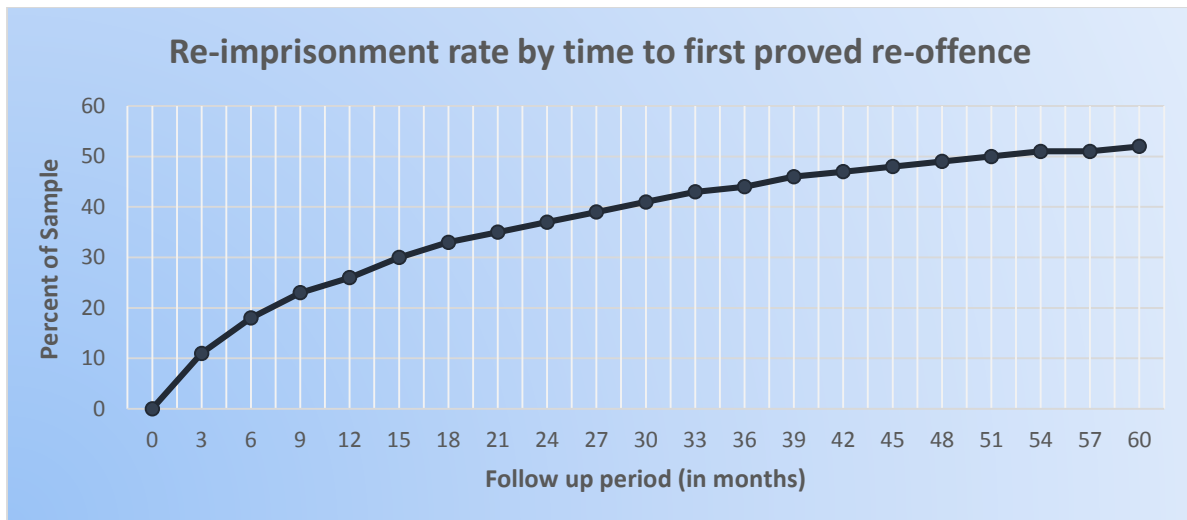


Figure 2: Data from Department of Corrections (Reconviction patterns of released prisoners: A 60-months follow-up analysis, 2009)

History

Pathway Trust was established in 1998 by Trustees Murray Kennedy, Victor Tan and Mike Goatley, three members of the Riccarton Community Church who had a vision to work with poor and disadvantaged people. Pathway’s history is a series of loosely interwoven ventures bound together by a desire to provide aid to the disadvantaged and those who have been neglected and by society. The Pathway reintegration programme as we see it now, the Total Reintegration Strategy, is now entering its sixth year, while the Charitable Group itself is in its fifteenth. The reintegration programme is a product of those fifteen years of effort and experimentation, and it continues to evolve and develop.

In 1998 Pathway created Alloyfold, an aluminium folding chair company. Alloyfold provided employment for those in need while also funding Pathway’s social work.

In 1999 Pathway acquired the Retreat, a property near Lake Ellesmere that was once used as a Baptist youth camp. Pathway began by using the Retreat as temporary housing for those enrolled in the Pathway programme. In 2008 the Retreat evolved into a separate division of Pathway which offers affordable mid-term housing for those in need, including some men taking part in the Pathway Reintegration programme.

In the early 2000’s Alloyfold’s aluminium chair production was moved overseas in order to compete successfully in the American market. This enabled Alloyfold to expand its product range and generate more income, but it also meant that Alloyfold could no longer provide employment in New Zealand. From that point, its contribution was solely financial.

In 2002 Pathway set up Oak Tree Labour Hire with the aim of providing jobs to people who may otherwise be considered unemployable, including some graduates of the Pathway Reintegration programme. Oak Tree began with general Labour services and has since come to focus on the specialist area of devanning shipping containers.

With financial support and employment opportunities being provided by Pathway's businesses Oak Tree and Alloyfold, in 2008 the Total Reintegration Strategy was established. The Pathway Total Reintegration Strategy provides restorative justice and social work support to released prisoners and is the focus of this report. Initially this programme was run solely by Carey Ewing, who was joined in 2011 by Francis Fasso.

Currently the Pathway Trust (now called Pathway Charitable Group) consists of four independent arms: Pathway Reintegration, Pathway Retreat, Alloyfold, and Oak Tree Devanning, which work together to achieve Pathway's overall mission of providing '*Tools for Life Change*' to people living on the margins of the community.

The programme

The Pathway Total Reintegration Strategy programme lasts a total of eight months, made up of two months of assessment before the client is released and six months of targeted work of varying intensity after release. Contact after this time continues as necessary, with many clients remaining in contact with the organisation long after they have formally 'graduated'.

Pathway's programme begins before the candidate is released from prison: Pathway staff will work with prisoners for around eight weeks prior to their release in order to determine their needs, their suitability for the programme and their likelihood to fully commit to reintegration. Because the Pathway programme is about reintegration into the community rather than rehabilitation, candidates must demonstrate that they are aware of why they offended in the first place and be committed to making a positive change. This pre-release work includes: determining the level of support via friends and family that the candidate has available on the outside; assessing their access to employment and housing; determining what specific needs the applicant has; and writing a plan for the prisoner's reintegration into society that is presented (where applicable) at the prisoner's parole hearing. Most importantly, however, this work is an opportunity to get to know the candidate personally – to build the rapport with them, which is essential for a functioning social work relationship, and something that lies at the heart of the Pathway approach.

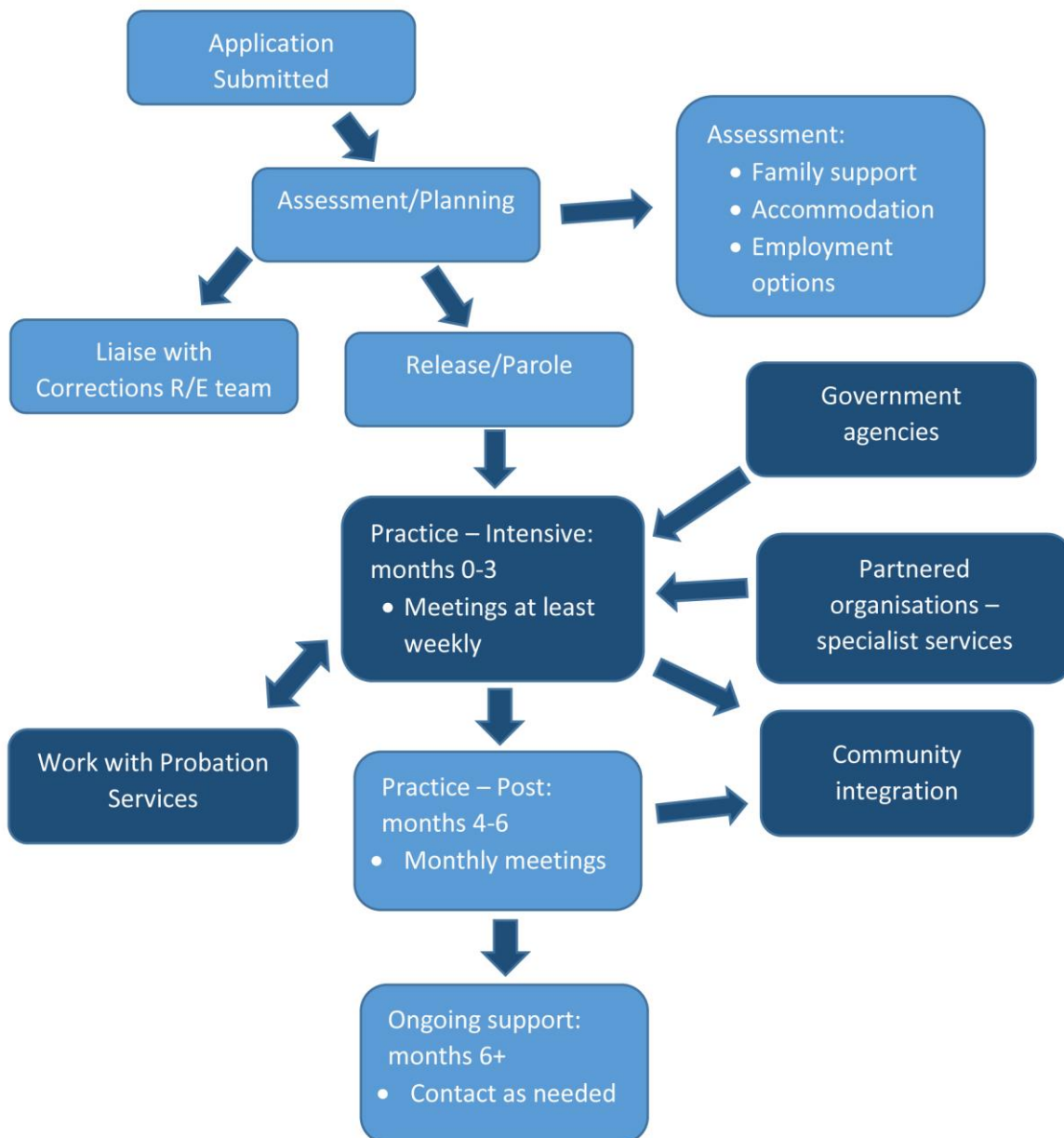
These plans focus on "restorative reintegration", a process that, where possible, involves mending bridges with those who the offender has wronged, including the victim, the offender's family and the community in general. Each plan is individualised and does not follow a set template: every prisoner's needs are different and not all aspects of Pathway's services are relevant to all clients. The one element that is common to all plans is Pathway's regular one-on-one social work support, but the majority of plans also include a community mentor and a commitment to attend approximately two community days. Community days are days of unpaid community work that Pathway organises in conjunction with other community groups. These allow men in the programme to engage with their local community on equal footing and be seen to be committed to taking a positive role in society. Many Pathway clients are also assigned a volunteer mentor: an unpaid friend in the community whose job is simply to "take an interest" in a released prisoner and provide personal support outside of the social work system.

Pathway provides social work support on a regular basis within the first six months of an offender's release. Within the first month meetings occur between two and three times per week, gradually slowing to one visit weekly by the third month. Between months four and six meetings take place only monthly, or as needed. The programme officially ends after six months, but Pathway maintains an 'open-door' policy for graduates and many remain in contact long after they have exited the programme.

Crisis management is central to Pathway's social work: providing a contact that is available to help in moments of crisis helps to ensure that the risk of re-offending is minimised. Further to this, many plans specify family members or friends who have agreed to provide emotional and practical support.

It is important to note that Pathway's work is highly collaborative. Pathway is strongly reliant upon the relationships with the Department of Corrections and various other NGOs – working both inside and outside of prison – that allow reintegration to progress. This includes referring clients to other organisations where they have needs that Pathway cannot address such as, for example, counselling or medical help.

In keeping with its origins in the Riccarton Community Church, Pathway's methods remain informed by Christianity, but faith does not influence Pathway's selection of applicants for the reintegration programme. Notwithstanding that, through the church, Pathway has access to a prayer team of between fifty and sixty churchgoers who are given the names and situations of people in the pathway programme and who pray for them in times of need. Informed consent is sought from those in the programme before their names are given to the prayer team, and the offer is rarely refused.



Central Theories

The Pathway approach to reintegration support is informed by three complimentary concepts: 'Desistance Theory', the 'Good Lives Model' and 'Motivational Interviewing'.

Desistance Theory

The central premise of Desistance Theory is that segregating criminals from society as a form of punishment often fails to address the issues that caused them to offend, and in turn may leave them

further alienated from society upon their release. Instead of creating a deterrent, this serves only to cement criminality as a viable and necessary way of life.

The aim of Desistance Theory is to find a way to break this cycle: as Anne Opie explains in *From Outlaw to Citizen* (2012), "the desistance objective is to encourage and support the person to persist in taking a new, pro-social direction; the question informing desistance is how best to support the desister to move on towards a more pro-social life" (p.29). This movement is often uncertain, and Desistance Theory allows for the inevitable failures and slip-ups by desisters to be understood in terms of an overall narrative of desistance and life change. This narrative approach is essential to desistance because it puts small mistakes into context and allows change to progress at a more natural pace.

According to this model, desistance is complicated by the tendency for society to reject ex-prisoners upon their release: not only are prisoners ill-equipped to deal with life in the real world but the world in turn insists on labelling them as untrustworthy 'others'. Desistance Theory works to find ways of linking ex-prisoners to society through methods such as the appointment of mentors and working to reaffirm offenders' sense of their own value to society. Mentors give desisters a strong compassionate link to the community and provide a role model and advisor whose significance "lies in the work of helping the Homecomer manage the shock of the familiar-become-unfamiliar, discriminate between relevant and irrelevant stocks of knowledge and assist in their beginning the process of re-learning the no-longer familiar" (p.19). These mentors may be desisters themselves – a successful desistance narrative often results in a desire to share life lessons and help others to avoid making the same mistakes (Maruna, 2001).

Desistance also aims to find ways to change how the community sees and engages with offenders; "collectively all need to participate in enabling a space to be created to allow 'newness to enter' and difference to be introduced" (Opie, p.27). Therefore, dialogue is created between offenders and the wider community through volunteer work (p.33), which helps to show that desisters are not only committed to being a part of the community but also that they are a useful addition to it. This helps to provide an environment in which a return to pro-social functionality can take place organically, because "individuals spend only a tiny fraction of their daily lives undergoing formal treatment or counselling, so most of the hard work involved in changing one's sense of self takes places outside therapy or other formal professional interventions" (Maruna, Immarigeon, & LeBel, 2004, p. 12).

The Good Lives Model

The Good Lives Model was developed by Professor Tony Ward of Victoria University and is often used for the treatment of sex offenders. It is founded in the same intrinsic logic as Desistance Theory – that by forcing the exclusion of those that are deemed to be dangerous and offensive, society is effectively condemning these individuals to a life of recidivism and ultimately exacerbating their danger to the community as a whole. The Good Lives Model was devised in part as a response to the prevalent Risk-Need model, which "is concerned with *risk management*, where the primary aim of treating offenders is to avoid harm to the community rather than to improve their quality of life" (Ward & Stewart, 2003, p. 353). In contrast, "the Good Lives Model assumes that offenders typically share the human needs and aspirations of the rest of the community and that their offending occurs as a consequence of the way they seek the primary human goods emerging from these needs" (p.354). What this means is that by providing offenders with the "necessary conditions (e.g., skills,

values, opportunities, social supports, etc.) for meeting their human needs in more adaptive ways, the assumption is that they will be less likely to harm others or themselves” (p.356). This approach leads to a method of treatment that is much more personal and tailored than those informed by the Risk-Need model, which tends towards a “one-size-fits all approach to treatment and does not really deal with the critical role of contextual factors in the process of both offending and rehabilitation” (Ward, Mann, & Gannon, 2006, p. 89).

Motivational Interviewing

Desistance Theory and the Good Lives Model are realised in practice through the use of Motivational Interviewing. As the name suggests, Motivational Interviewing aims to drive the interviewee to turn their lives in a positive direction – by both identifying their motivations and working to create new ones where necessary. This is achieved by setting goals and attempting to build competency and mastery in areas like work and social engagement – methods that, when effective, establish a motivation in the offender to see meaningful change in their own life, rather than simply attempting to reform their errant behaviour. Motivational Interviewing is used consistently throughout the process of reintegration and provides a method that can be used both formally to conduct structured interviews and informally as a part of developing and maintaining a relationship with a client.

The Pathway approach

These three theories form the theoretical foundation of Pathway’s work, but in practice, building a strong relationship with the client is the most essential component of the Pathway programme. As Pathway social worker Carey Ewing explains:

Relationship is core. Being able to build a trusting relationship between us and the men we work with is the most important thing that we do – it needs to be a relationship which can live through the good days and bad, and this means that at times we live with people letting us down, mucking us around. It means looking past the present behaviour and seeking to understand why is this person acting in this manner and what can we do to make it safe enough for this person to take a risk of trusting me.

This relationship means that the Pathway programme does not necessarily end if the client reoffends, allowing for a kind of engagement that would not be possible with, for example, probation staff. For Carey, this is an important matter of trust:

The knowledge that [Pathway staff] will not reject me after the first bad day, that they will go through the hard times with me, and they will tell me directly when I am out of line - whether I want to hear or not. It is knowing that if I take a risk to live a new kind of life and leave everything else behind which I have known, that your relationship will remain consistent.

Tools like Desistance Theory allow Pathway staff to interpret these re-offenses in a way that is practical rather than punitive:

Desistance Theory gives us a way of understanding what we are seeing in the guys’ behaviour; they won't be perfect and will have bad days and at times this will include re-offending. What we are looking for is what direction are they heading in – is offending slowing down or speeding

up, is it more serious or less serious than last time, and how did they seek to respond to the situation, i.e. did they take the hard choice and front up to it or did they seek to hide or misinform others of their actions. We accept that people will make mistakes, what's more important is the response to that mistake.

The goal of the Pathway programme, for the offenders themselves, is to build towards what Pathway social worker Francis Fasso calls a “happy and harm-free lifestyle” – the client’s ideal life that can exist without offending. As such, Pathway’s system aims not simply to stop offending but instead to create a positive lifestyle for the client that has no place for crime. As Carey explains, the Good Lives Model is central to this:

The Good Lives Model helps us to work with the client to learn about why their past offending actions looked like a good idea at the moment in which they occurred and to learn what they were trying achieve. It gives us a pathway to be able to work, rather than just floundering around to help this guy, it helps us to identify the gaps in this person's life, and gives us the tools to fill in those gaps and build a more pro-social life.

It is also important to note that where clients have needs that cannot be addressed internally, for example medical, counselling, or help with debt issues, Pathway regularly collaborates with a range of partnered organisations. For Carey, these partnerships are vital:

A key factor which has enabled us to provide a service that is responsive to individuals’ different needs has been the ability to build productive collaborations with other effective and likeminded NGOs. This has meant that we haven’t had to try to be all things to all people. [...] Building these strategic relationships means that we are able to make commitments to the men we are working with and have faith that we are able to provide them.

Those partners that appear regularly in Pathway’s plans are listed in the Pathway Services section below.

Pathway Services

The following services make up the core tools used in the Pathway Programme. Some of these are under the direct charge of the reintegration team, while others are under the wider Pathway Charitable Group, and the remainder are facilitated through ‘partner’ organisations.

	Core Pathway Reintegration services	Services provided by partnered organisations	Services provided by other arms of Pathway Charitable Group
Accommodation	✓	✓	✓
Employment	✓	✓	✓
Financial		✓	
Social Work support	✓	✓	
Medical		✓	
Community	✓		
Restorative Justice	✓	✓	

Alcohol and Drug		✓	
Spiritual		✓	

Accommodation

- *The Pathway Retreat* – A property near Lake Ellesmere that provides out-of-town accommodation for those in need, with a bed permanently available for someone in the Pathway programme. Entry into the reintegration programme does not guarantee a stay in the Retreat – because the Retreat is an independent arm of the group, clients must apply to the Retreat separately.
- *Pathway Flats* – Flats are available to those in the Pathway programme for limited periods of time. Pathway owns three flats and sublets a fourth.
- *The Salvation Army* – The Salvation Army offers a full reintegration programme that includes housing options and addiction services.
- *Salisbury Street Foundation* – A residential facility that provides aid to released prisoners including accommodation, supervision and support.

Employment

- *Oak Tree Devanning* – Oak Tree provides casual employment emptying shipping containers for those in need, including but not limited to those in the Pathway programme. As with the Retreat, Oak Tree is a separate arm of the Pathway Group and as such is not guaranteed to those in the reintegration programme.
- *CV writing and job application help*
- *Pathway Employment Programme* – A new programme run in partnership with Corrections that has been running for the last year, wherein employer partners are found that agree to take on one Pathway client. Pathway works to ensure that suitable matches are found for each employer. This programme is funded by the Department of Corrections.
- *Restorative Meetings with previous employers*
- *Pathway to Employment Programme* – A scheme run at the Pathway Retreat that seeks to help those with significant barriers to employment develop the basic skills needed to find gainful employment. The course runs for six months and provides work completing various community projects for eight hours a day, four days a week during that time.

Financial

- *Budgeting Help*
- *Kingdom Resources* – Kingdom resources is an external organisation that provides budgeting advice, employment skills courses and interest free loans for people on low incomes or with debt issues.
- *WINZ Applications*
- *Bike Programme* – a programme set up by Pathway that receives donations of old pushbikes. These are repaired and provided to clients.

Spiritual Services

- *Prayer Team* – A 50 to 60 member prayer team that prays for those in need.
- *Connection with spiritual services* (e.g. church, pastor contact etc.)

Social Work Support

- *Weekly/Monthly meetings*

- *Crisis support*
- *Counselling provided by partnered organisations* – Counselling services are offered from a range of sources depending on the clients' needs, including private counsellors and the Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Trust.
- *Help dealing with government agencies* – Pathway helps navigate clients' ongoing commitments various government agencies, including Probation, WINZ, CYF, ACC and others.

Medical

- *Settlers Health Centre* – an external organisation that provides health assessment and care for free or at a discount price.

Community

- *Community Days* – Community days are run in partnership with other community groups to undertake various volunteer projects alongside members of the community.
- *Designated friends and/or family members who agree to provide practical and emotional support*
- *Mentor* – A local volunteer who agrees to 'take an interest' and provide general support. These volunteers are sourced from throughout the community.

Restorative Justice

- *Restorative family meetings* – Meetings facilitated between Pathway clients and their whanau in order to repair and rebuild relationships.
- *Whakaora programme* – A collaboration between Pathway, Victim Support, Community Law and the Edmund Rice Foundation that facilitates restorative justice meetings between offenders and their victims.

Drug and Alcohol Support

- *Drug ARM* – An external non-denominational Christian drug and alcohol support group.
- *PCG alcohol and drug support group*

Results – Quantitative

Since establishing the programme in 2008, Pathway have created 69 individual plans for a total of 59 clients, seven of whom have been through the programme more than once. Of the 69 people who have started (including the repeats), 86.95 percent (n=60) have successfully completed the six months that the programme formally entails post-release.

The offences for which clients were serving their most recent sentences tended to be serious, and included aggravated robbery (16), murder (5) and various kinds of assault (6). Of these crimes 52.1 percent were of a violent nature, compared with the prison average of 40.3 percent (Department of Corrections 2011). These represent only the last convictions prior to each client entering the Pathway programme. According to Pathway's internal records 39 of these were preceded by a large number of prior convictions, and in conducting this research we interviewed clients who were life-long offenders.

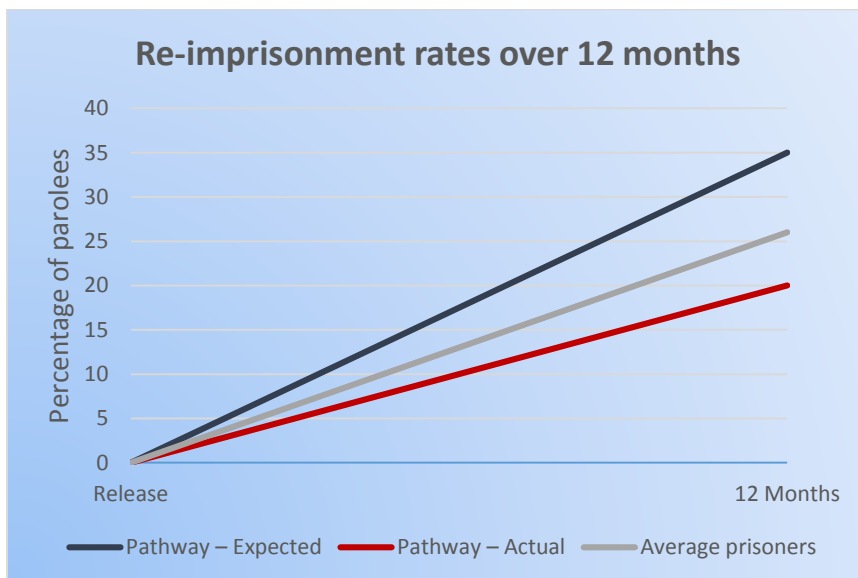
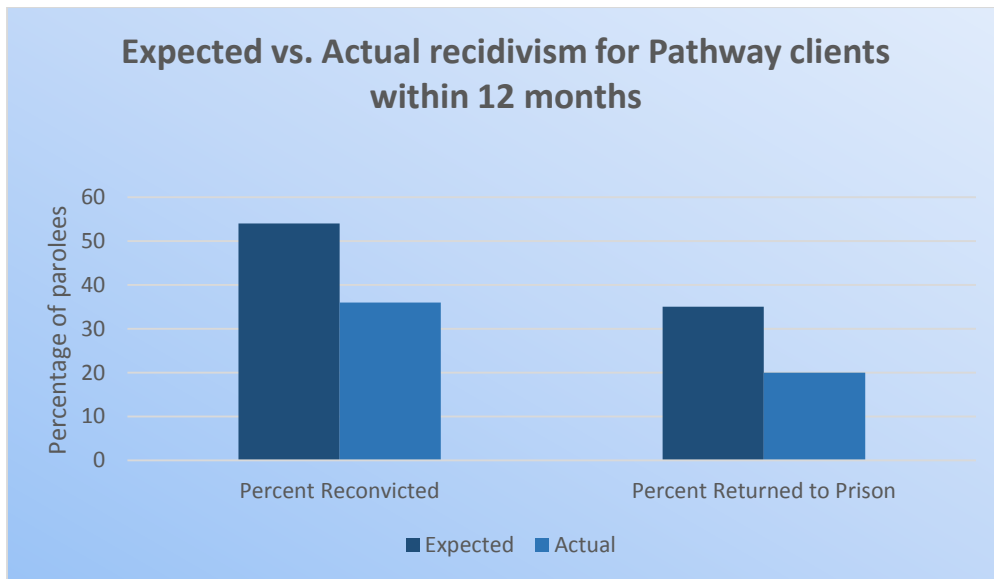
Of a possible sample of 59, 50 made up the cohort to be analysed. This reduction was due to the fact that certain clients could not be accurately traced, and because those who had not been free from prison for more than 12 months after release were necessarily excluded. A 12 month period was the maximum timeframe over which the cohort's reoffending could be analysed (after that point, the sample shrinks too significantly because too few traceable clients had finished the programme by 24 months or more at the time of analysis).

In measuring the success of Pathway's programme, an 'actual versus expected' method of analysis has been used, comparing the rate of reconviction and re-imprisonment that would statistically be expected from this cohort versus their actual rates of reconviction and re-imprisonment. Offences that were of an administrative nature, such as breaches of community sentences/orders or breaches of bail, were excluded.

The analysis for this report is done using RoC*RoI scores. RoC*RoI is the 'Risk of re-Conviction X Risk of re-Imprisonment model' developed by the New Zealand Department of Corrections that is designed to generate a numerical score that predicts an offender's chance of reoffending after release (Bakker, O'Malley, & Riley, 1998). The model was developed using the criminal records of more than 133,000 offenders, and is now used to calculate the recidivism risk of every offender in New Zealand. Scoring is calculated with the input of a wide range of data, including personal characteristics, time spent at large and in prison, a running total of court appearances and convictions, and the severity and classification of each individual offence. This score ranges from 0.0 to 1.0, representing a range from 0 to 100% of the projected likelihood of re-offending after five years.

Data from the Department of Corrections (2009, p.6) shows that 52 percent of all people released from New Zealand prisons are re-imprisoned within the five-year time frame (which would be represented by a RoC*RoI of 0.520). Given that the Pathway cohort has an average RoC*RoI of 0.599, it would tend to indicate that their clients are of higher than average risk of reoffending.

Department of Corrections research shows that from a sample of released prisoners with an average RoC* RoI of 0.599 one would expect to see 54 percent reconvicted of new offences and 35 percent return to prison after 12 months. Of the Pathway sample, the actual rates were 36 percent reconvicted and 20 percent re-imprisoned. In other words, those people involved with the Pathway programme are 33.3 percent less likely to be reconvicted and 42.9 percent less likely to be re-imprisoned than what we would expect if they were not involved with Pathway. Furthermore, the offences of the Pathway cohort who were reconvicted were largely less serious than their earlier offences – many were non-violent crimes such as theft, driving offences and drug use.



These data suggest that the programme is evincing significant efficacy.

Notwithstanding that, however, we need to outline a number of caveats. These include the facts that we are unable to allow for selection bias, nor can we accurately assess the impact of other rehabilitation and reintegration efforts beyond those delivered or facilitated by Pathway (e.g. pre-release programmes undertaken in prison). Most significantly the total number of clients is currently small, meaning that these results should be seen as indicative rather than conclusive. Confirmation therefore awaits analysis of a larger cohort measured over a longer timeframe. These factors, however, do not diminish the fact that these initial findings are extremely encouraging.

If we extrapolate these results into monetary terms, the cost savings appear significant. For every fourteen people who go through the programme (the average annual intake in the programme's first five years), three will return to prison as opposed to five who would be expected to return to prison had it not been for Pathway. Given that it costs on average \$90,936 per annum to keep a person in prison (Corrections 2011) the annual savings are considerable. Decreasing severity of

offending also bares financial benefit. Those offences typical of Pathway clients before entering the programme tend to be have a high cost, ranging between \$72,130 (sexual offences) and \$23,100 (robbery), whereas those less serious offences undertaken by Pathways clients post-programme tend to be less costly, ranging between \$5,780 (drug offences) and \$1,300 (theft) (New Zealand Treasury, 2003). To evaluate the actual cost savings of the Pathway programme would require a detailed analysis of individual criminal histories, something privacy provisions do not allow. Needless to say, however, the initial savings on paper are hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, which compounds annually.

These financial considerations, however, are a rather blunt tool in indicating overall success of any programme as they fail to take into account the positive social impacts of fewer victims of crime and other social damage related to criminal offending. Furthermore, Pathway's approach seeks to ensure not only decreased offending by its clients but also increased healthy participation in their community by helping them to gain the skills needed to find work and to engage positively with society as a whole – a goal untested by recidivism data. This is best assessed by a qualitative framework, to which we now turn.

Results – Qualitative

The qualitative component of this research was gathered via interviews with Pathway clients. The information from these interviews allows us to gauge the delivery and the impact of Pathway's work on a personal level, and also to assess how the component parts of the programme contribute (or otherwise) to successful reintegration.

A total of 14 people were interviewed: 12 were Pathway clients and two were family members who had been involved in restorative family conferences. The family members (two mothers of prisoners) were chosen for their specific experiences, but the other participants were chosen randomly. A chronological list of all Pathway clients was created and every fourth person selected as a participant, ensuring that all five years of Pathway's operation were properly represented. If a person on the list could not be contacted, the next person on the list was used as a replacement. Of those who had gone through the programme ten were in the community and two had returned to prison. Of the ten in the community, five had reoffended but not returned to prison and one had returned to prison but had since been released. The interviews used semi-standardised questions, with variations for those who had been reconvicted and those who had not. Where participants were questioned about a particular facet of the programme they were asked to rate the importance of it by way of a 1-5 Likert scale. While the samples were often too small to make these the Likert data statistically meaningful, they nevertheless provided an indication of how participants felt about various parts of the programme.

Did it help?

Without exception, all of those who were interviewed spoke highly of the reintegration programme. Every participant reported that Pathway had helped them and that this help was extremely significant.

For sure [it has kept me out of prison]. And I'm not just saying that. Sometimes when I was feeling like reoffending I would ring up Carey and he would talk me down. (1)

Yeah for sure. Hard out! (7)

The whole programme helped me! (11)

Of those participants who were in the community, all but one directly credited Pathway with assisting in keeping them out of prison. Many were unequivocal.

If I didn't have their support, I would be in jail. (10)

I would still be going back to jail if they hadn't have been there. (12)

Notwithstanding this, there was a strong feeling among participants that they themselves had to make a conscious and real effort to change, but when it came to putting this change into practice it was the base provided by Pathway that allowed it to occur.

It's up to the person themselves, but without the foundation to build on you've got no real chance. (10)

Change was already happening – but it made it a lot easier. (5)

Pre-release Assessment

Assessing and nurturing a desire to change begins in the period that Pathway works with clients before their release. For Pathway staff this is an opportunity to assess each individual's needs and their suitability for the programme. Participants reported that this was an important phase during which they learned what they can expect from the programme and what will be expected of them. This form of 'phasing in' was reported by participants as being important to ensuring they were prepared for release and to decrease the stresses associated with the transition from prison to community.

It meant I had to take action, I liked that they "weren't rescuers". They say that they really want you to take the initiative, I didn't think much about it at the time but then I had a think about it and I thought I'd give it a go. (4)

The best thing for me was, being real. At the start Francis said to me, 'we're only going to do this if you're really serious about making a change'. And I took that seriously. (10)

The paperwork set me up for the challenges I was going to face – things I wouldn't have been aware of. (13)

The initiation before getting out is important – you need to know what you’re getting in to. You don’t get out and go, ‘hey man this isn’t for me’. Pathway laid it out at the beginning. (4)

Even those who reoffended reported Pathway’s work to be beneficial, and as with those who did not reoffend, a strong sense of individual responsibility was reported among those who reoffended after graduating from the programme.

The programme did as much as they could. The thing that got me was, I had, when you been in jail as long as I have – half my life, really, that’s all I knew. Pathway couldn’t – they were there, I can’t say they weren’t – but... the reason I came back to prison is because of my prison mask. Sometimes your pride gets in your way. I wasn’t willing to back down from a situation. I didn’t stop and think. Pathway did the best they could for me. (11)

No, they couldn’t have done more. It was me. (12)

It was my own... I was given all of the prompts to help myself. It was my fault. They say they will work with you for 6 months, I was out for 13 months. (15)

Staff/Social Work Support

As might be expected given the individualised approach of the programme, participants noted a range of factors that they found to be important depending on their needs. The major aspect identified by *all* participants, however, was the support provided by the reintegration staff. Given that social work support is fundamental to the Pathway approach, the findings here are particularly important, and they clearly speak to the vital role performed by staff.

Their support. Gee, they were just real hands on. I got the feeling that they understood the challenges I was going to face when I got out. (13)

I found the staff really incredible. What more can I say? (12)

In all cases participants spoke extremely highly of Carey Ewing, and more recent clients, reflecting his more recent addition to the programme, spoke equally highly of Francis Fasso. It appears quite clear that much of the satisfaction with the programme stems from the people filling these two social work roles.

Carey has a really good rapport. I can be open with him. He’s not hyper critical of me, he’s very open minded and supportive. He’ll tell me what I need to hear! He doesn’t just tick the boxes, but he’s supportive while doing that. (6)

Francis is a champion. So’s Carey. (7)

Carey...I mean they’re all the same really helpful and supportive – the whole outfit. (15)

Participants also spoke highly of the support from the staff at the Retreat and the staff of Drug ARM, as well as the staff of some partnered organisations and community groups.

Working with a high-needs population in a programme that offers individualised support plans, staff clearly require certain skills in order to connect meaningfully with clients, and many participants found the communication skills of Pathway staff to be a key strength.

[Staff] answers will be simple. I like that. I called it 'life for dummies' at one point. They put everything out there in the most basic format. You can't have it too complex, [or] add bullshit into it. (4)

If someone says something is dumb to do, I want to know why. He told me why. (4)

He's real good. He'd call past my work. He'd come past my work and just see if I needed anything but he wasn't overbearing. He's great with communication. (13)

One consistent finding was the importance of Pathway staff's availability. To many participants it was often a safety net that was not available to them elsewhere. Almost universally this was found to be fundamental to those in the programme.

He [Carey] was on a good level. He was supportive. I always had his phone number. And if I text him, BANG, he'd text right back. He never had excuses. He was real supportive. (13)

If I needed any of them – even today – if I need to talk with them they will be there. If I text Francis today, even though it was a year and a half ago, he'd text me back. He was great for support. (10)

Related to this was the fact that participants reported that staff stood by them, even when it appeared difficult to do so.

Their support. They're consistent with you. They stick by you. Even if you stuff up they are there. I find them really reliable, really loyal. Didn't give up. (12)

I had a bit of trouble early on – mental health wise – and they helped me through that. (15)

If you needed anything or anyone all you had to do is ring up. Even if you made a mistake, they would help you fix it. (11)

This commitment to clients during times of crisis and after they 'fail' is key to Desistance Theory, and it appears to produce a reciprocity of commitment with those who they worked with.

They haven't given up on me, and I'm not gonna give up on them. (11)

Pathway's support, however, was not seen as being unconditional. When a line needed to be taken or boundaries drawn, staff reportedly did so. As can be expected, at times this was not without occasional conflict, but the firm approach was something that was appreciated by participants.

We had our moments. I can be a pretty difficult customer, and we would argue, but he would always handle it well. He wasn't forceful and in your face. He'd say 'I've said my piece and I'll leave it and come back in a couple of days'... – he had to take a tough line with me. He said I had two choices: the life I had and the life I wanted. He showed me how to get the one I wanted. (2)

They were really good toward me – just helped me along and [helped me to] stay on track. Even though it was annoying. (9)

Accommodation

While some participants had access to private accommodation on release, many relied on Pathway for housing either directly via the Pathway Flats, semi-directly by way of the Pathway Retreat, or used accommodation facilitated through partner organisations like the Salvation Army or the Salisbury Street Foundation. A total of 40.5 percent (n= 28) of plans included one of these forms of accommodation of assistance. For those who were given accommodation, it was seen as an invaluable service.

That [accommodation] was paramount – you usually wake up on a couch with no money. (1)

It [the Retreat] was the foundation for me, really I had to start from scratch and I couldn't have done it without the Retreat and the support. I went to jail when I was 17 and didn't get out until I was 21, I hadn't even been flatting or anything. (10)

The flats –accommodation– the phone, and they gave you two weeks' worth of food. That covered all the bases. It gave me a good solid base. It's really important having a place to come back to that you're okay with. It was big for me to only invite people around who were going to be helpful or beneficial. (4)

Accommodation allows you to settle back in [to society] without a major stress. (6)

For some people, this accommodation was seen as the only option that they would be able to obtain.

They got me accommodation, without that I'd still be inside. I'm heavily tattooed and the chances of me getting one, well... and then after the earthquake there wasn't much around. When landlords see tattoos, particularly of the face, they are reluctant. (7)

Because I wouldn't get parole. It would have been difficult for me, because of my type of offending – I wouldn't be allowed to be paroled into my community. (So there was nobody to help me). It was difficult for me to find a place to live. I wrote to Salvation Army and PARS, but there wasn't much accommodation down here. (9)

For some participants, accommodation was more than just finding somewhere to live, but also a change in geography that allowed them to make a break from negative elements of their past and start afresh.

It's not in a scummy part of town so you're not likely to bump in to people who were involved in your past. (13)

It was really beneficial for me to have my own space – and getting out and doing things – social things – with Pathway people and others like the Christian people at Addington. (6)

You go back to the same geography and that often means you go back to the same habits – to crime. (4)

Employment

Perhaps unsurprisingly, employment was seen as key to transitioning clients toward a life no longer dependent on crime. But further to this, work was often reported as creating a sense of pride and self-worth.

Carey hooked me up with work too; it keeps me occupied and I'm earning money. (6)

It gives you hope when you use your skills. It's about self-esteem. (4)

Moving into permanent work was often assisted by employment with Oak Tree, which was included in 35 percent (n=19) of plans. Another avenue was the Pathway to Employment scheme conducted at the Retreat, which was included in a small number (n=4) of plans. During these periods participants said that they developed vital skills and confidence.

The work [at Oak Tree] was really hard; I got fit really fast. But it encouraged me to do other things. I got another job because the [new] employer liked the way that I worked – so he offered me employment. (4)

Work experience I did [at the Retreat] on a variety of things... chainsaw license and everything... Getting yourself into that work routine. The variety of jobs we did. The ordinary person wouldn't know how to cut down a tree. It was all good skills. And when it was time to look for another job, they helped out with writing CVs out, knocking on doors, ringing people... Where I'm at today, I've got a good job and that. I owe that to them. (10)

It used to be hard for me to make appointments because I'd been out of society for so long. They were teaching me to walk again in a way. (13)

Restorative Justice

Facilitating restorative justice conferences between participants and their victims is often a crucial component of the Pathway programme. Second only to social work support, restorative justice was reported as being a key tool used by the programme and one that fundamentally impacted on clients. Half of Pathway's plans (n=35) include the intention to provide restorative justice meetings with the participant's victims. In a number of cases this proved to be untenable, but for those who participated in it, restorative justice appears to have been transformative. Participants reported that it was instrumental in facilitating meaningful life change by gaining an empathy with victims that was previously absent, which in turn sparked or confirmed a desire to change.

What changed me was the restorative justice programme. The hopelessness they [the victims] felt. I understood where they were coming from. It wakes you up. (4)

[Had you considered victims in the past?] No, not really. (9)

I was just thinking of myself. To see the victims cry in front of you in wakes you up. You walk in their shoes. As an offender you didn't see the victims, you just read about it in the paper. But to

see it come out of their mouth. And the fact I could talk, I think it helped heaps. It wasn't easy. (10)

One restorative justice service provided by Pathway was the Sycamore Tree programme, which was previously run in Rolleston prison. For a number of participants, Sycamore Tree worked both as a tool of reform and often as an introduction to the Pathway reintegration programme.

What set me up was the Sycamore programme. It opens your eyes to things you hadn't really thought of before. I started to think about other people, how my actions affect other people and that set me on the pathway to where I am now. (13).

Sycamore tree. It was pretty good. Interacting with people that had been hurt by crime: that was my turning point, where I thought I should change. Face to face with them. You know, it helped me feel like, remorseful about people I might have hurt in the past. (9)

A further restorative service are family conferences. Many offenders, due either to their offending or their subsequent incarceration, lose touch or have strained relations with their families. Reflecting this, 56.5 percent (n=39) of plans seek to repair family relationships, either through informal measures or through formal restorative family meetings. These initiatives were reported as being important in healing old wounds and assisting movement away from criminality by restoring important support networks.

I had lost contact with my family. Pathway united me back with them, and it helped them to understand what I needed. And you see how you've hurt them – you don't want to do that again. (11)

There was something missing in my life. I thought they didn't care about me. That's where a lot of my offending came from, because I didn't think I was loved. We're a big part of each other's lives now. (7)

These findings were also reflected in the views of family members.

I found that really important. We had a good talk and got a few things out. His father got a few things out – his guilt at why he thought [son's name] had been in trouble, and I said how angry I was at some things [son's name] had done. It wasn't brewed up. I had told him those things but only ever in anger. But this was calm and over a cup of tea and [son's name] really heard it. (Mother A)

The communication between the 3 of us – [son's name] got closer – he was brought back to his family. He was given the option to work alongside us. That was great. He had moved away from his family because he knew what he was doing was wrong. (Mother B)

Christian Faith

Demonstrably, Christianity and faith play a central role in the Pathway Charitable Group. While it appears clear that this motivates those running the reintegration programme, we are not in a position to judge its efficacy as a reformation tool, via, for example, the prayer team. What is clear, however, is that religion is not seen as an obstacle to joining the programme, or any block to success for those who do not share the Christian faith.

I'm not a Christian myself, but I believe in God. They knew that. It was interesting to see...they were obviously into that, but they didn't force it at all. If you were an ordinary person, you wouldn't even know. (10)

There is a strong religious attitude, but they don't push it on anybody. It's free will. They work with people who don't believe in God. It may be strong in what they do but they don't force that upon others. That's the great thing about them. (12)

They haven't forced any religion on me or anything like that. I'm into Buddhism. It's not full on Christian stuff. (6)

I'm not religious. They didn't push it, he didn't push it all. I was never asked to go to Church or pray or anything like that. (13)

Alcohol and Drug support

Around 89% of all prisoners have a lifetime prevalence of substance abuse (Ministry of Health, 2005). While the high rate of drug and alcohol abuse among prisoners can be objectively stated, the link between drugs and alcohol and criminal offending was universally acknowledged by participants, as was the fact that addressing the abuse of alcohol and drugs was paramount to providing positive change. A full two thirds (n=46) of all of Pathway's plans included alcohol or drug support of some kind. This included a number of different programmes, but the most commonly identified by participants was Drug ARM, a partnered organisation. Those participants who used Drug ARM found it to be of tremendous value.

The drug and alcohol support was absolutely crucial. I owe a lot to Drug ARM (2)

The guy they got running it – Geoff – is a great facilitator. They got some good stuff going there. They don't push the religion – they don't just take in Christians – all sorts of guys. It's not preaching a whole lot of god stuff – just teaching drugs and alcohol and what they do to you. (12)

While some reported that they were still 'using' while attending the programme, and that it took some time for them to stop, others had already made the commitment to a sober life. One such participant noted that they still found the alcohol and drug support important:

I found it good, but I knew I was not going to do drugs and alcohol. I was telling the guys there they don't need it, and that helped me; by telling others it really drummed it in to me. (13)

Community Days

Participation in volunteer work days in the local community is included in 75 percent (n=52) of plans. This underpins the Pathway approach, which seeks to link participants with their local communities and engage them meaningfully in pro-social activities. For many participants these community days were an introduction to completely new elements of society and life.

Just to go out and do things. I really enjoyed it. Went out to Little River to plant trees. It was sunny and we had a BBQ. It was all about meeting people. Get out of the city. It was full on but great. (6)

They were intense. Hard work. I was sweating. They were positive, definitely useful. I got to see a different side of the community. I saw people working to help others – I'd never seen that before. (10)

I watched a 70 year old man [another volunteer] chopping wood in 30 degree heat and it was refreshing to see. (11)

The psychological changes that stemmed from interacting with people in the community in a positive way were well evinced.

We do community work and communicate with people who I wouldn't usually come across – and get that prison mentality out of my system. It was really helpful, I thought everybody was looking down at me because of where I was, but they weren't. (9)

The thing about social responsibility is you have to do it for yourself you can't do it just because you have to... I learned a lot about communication. I made myself say hi to people. It fed my brain – rejigged it. (4)

One clear outcome expressed by participants was a feeling of giving something back to society, a form of social debt repayment. In these ways, then, the community activities serve to alleviate the alienation and sense of guilt that might otherwise have kept them from engaging meaningfully with the community.

Once you've offended in the community and you give something back, it shows you are prepared to change. Instead of saying 'poor me, poor me' you got a chance to get out there and show you have changed. That's why they are so important. (2)

It was a chance to do something for the community – put things right. (5)

When you find out why you do it – give back to the community. You feel like you've contributed – given something back. I really benefited from it. (13)

Mentors

Mentors were assigned to participants in 59 percent (n=41) of plans. Given the importance proscribed to social work support, it might have been expected that mentors would play a much more significant role than what was discovered. While in the majority of cases mentors were seen, in various ways, as significant, for a number of participants this was not the case. It is important to note, however, that no participants reported negative experiences with mentors.

For those whose experiences with their mentors were constructive, the relationship provided a useful extension to the social support provided by Pathway staff and generally proved to be of value.

Incredibly important. I can be really open with him. He's really supportive (6)

A fairly relaxed relationship, mainly texting and phone calls. But he was good, we were well matched. He was supportive. I was quite in awe that somebody would go out of their way for me. It was a gracious thing to do. It's the type of person I aspire to be. (15)

He was quite supportive. Gave me work at his house – laid drains – and paid me for it. Had a couple of meals with him. Used to meet him a bit – quite regularly (1)

For some participants and mentors, finding time appears to have been a hurdle to building and maintaining a relationship.

I seen him when I could because I worked quite long hours and he did too. We text each other. (9)

It's basically a stranger at the start and it was good to get to know him and that, but for me personally it was finding time. I was working 60 hours week and I didn't have the time. If I had more time, I would have liked it. (10)

For others the relationship, while not negative, was not seen as overly meaningful.

A little bit of conflict; I didn't really get on with him, and I'd text him and he was a bit busy. But luckily I had other support people through the church. (2)

While the above evinces the need for appropriate matching, in cases where the mentor fell down, Pathway staff picked up the slack.

[Name of mentor] – nah not really. He turned up to pick me up for church but that's about it. Francis did much more for me than my mentor ever did. Definitely would have been better to have a mentor that was more involved. (7)

Medical Support

Prisoners are greatly overrepresented in morbidity data (National Health Committee, 2010). Given this, access to healthcare is clearly important for many leaving prison. Through a relationship with Settlers Health Clinic, Pathway facilitates healthcare for many participants. Settlers' manner in dealing with participants as well their flexible payment options were highly valued.

I didn't have a doctor or anything and they set me up with a Doctor. I just rang Carey and I was crook and said, "can you help me out?". He made the appointment and everything for me. (13)

They spoke to you like a human being. The expectations were realistic. They didn't want all of the money right there and then. You didn't need to be stressed about certain things. They give you doctors – it was just a matter of working it out – time payments and that. With them you could talk in a manner where they were there for you. A lot of Doctors you wouldn't be able to relate to. (11)

Financial Support

Some form of financial assistance was included in 37.6 percent (n=26) of plans and many participants emphasised the importance of this. Financial assistance was reported in two forms: direct initiatives and long-term education. For example, participants reported receiving food parcels from Pathway, while one mentioned being given a bicycle that he was paying off. Several participants mentioned the importance of help with getting WINZ support. These direct interventions were reported to have alleviated a seemingly disproportionate amount of stress.

Gee, they [Pathway] were just real hands on. I got the feeling that they understood the challenges I was going to face when I got out way more than I did, and they helped me get [...] cutlery [and] everything I need for a house. They are awesome. (13)

More structured and long-term support was facilitated through Kingdom Resources. This included assistance with loans for debts, and providing budgeting advice and training.

They helped me get out of a lot of debt. And taught me budgeting, that helped a lot. (2)

Transformation to 'Good Lives'

As detailed earlier, Pathway does not simply seek to reduce offending by participants, but to fundamentally and positively change their lives. Numerous participants reported significant – literally life changing – turnarounds that they credited to the Pathway programme.

Reflecting Pathway's client base generally, the majority of participants reported histories of extremely negative, unhappy, and crime-dominated lifestyles, and many had undertaken long stretches in prison. Two interviewees had life sentences and another had done nine stints in jail from 18 years of age before entering the programme at 35. Participants reported that both their life histories and long jail terms had created a mentality that inhibited reform. They also shared a perception that society was unable or unwilling to give them a chance.

I came out and I had prison mentality. I swore a lot and didn't really fit in. I felt I didn't. (11)

I used to keep things inside – bottle things up – instead of talking to people. (9)

A lot of people out there think if you've been to prison you ain't going to change. (11)

Pathway was credited with changing the thinking of participants and allowing them access to options that they were previously unaware of or were seemingly out of reach.

I trusted Carey if he said something, I would do it because he had more experience doing things in normal life. So I would change my plan, and do something else. (4)

Yeah, definitely. I've got a bit more gentler. Francis gave me the tools to deal with conflict issues, and that sort of thing. (7)

The support, and someone to talk to. Because I had no support in Christchurch, and they helped me deal with anything that came up – any red flags. (9)

Change was already happening – but it made it a lot easier. I was in for 14 years it was pretty stressful, and that was exactly what I needed. Takes so much stress off it. And I think stress is a big thing for people getting out of prison. Stress leads to other things – getting on the piss heaps and that leads to other things... (13)

In many instances, this was reported as being transformative.

I was always quite resentful... I accept that. I just found smiling [at people difficult]. Now I say hello to people if they looked depressed. I would never do that. If somebody talked to me, I'd tell them to fuck off or beat them up. I just started saying hello to people – some light conversation. It was really hard, it felt creepy at the start. But now it's normal. (4)

But while a number of examples appear undeniably promising, many of these people are only beginning their new journey. Keeping this in mind, it is impossible to predict how meaningful and lasting these changes may prove to be in the long term.

While it was those who had, in the words of one participant, been 'dragged up' rather than 'brought up' who reported the most profound, or at least most promising transformations, an interesting example stemmed from a less likely source. One participant, a white-collar offender, stated quite adamantly that he was never going to reoffend when released, but nevertheless found the transition from prison life to normal life to be a difficult one.

I had good family support, good friends support, but it was still a shock coming out. (5)

Even though reoffending was not an issue for him, he was surprised to find the value that he began to gain from the reintegration programme. One immediate impact came from a restorative family meeting, which he credited with helping to rebuild the relationship between him and his wife.

It assisted my family, it meant everybody talked about it in a family conference, [name], my wife, may have said things she wouldn't already have said – how it affected her.

He also credited how Pathway staff operated, the plight of his fellow clients, and the community days with a transformation in his outlook toward those less fortunate than himself.

[I'm now involved] in charitable work. I'm more supportive of people in trouble. I believe we have to help people who aren't fortunate enough or in a position to help themselves.

He credited the transformation toward a more generous outlook and fulfilling life as stemming directly from Pathway and of it he says, "I'll value that forever".

If one accepts the idea, general to the Pathway approach, that for many prisoners change will take time and that reoffending for some is an inevitability, then judging success becomes more relative. One example highlights this point well: despite returning to jail, one participant gained two significant legacies from his time with Pathway: the first is that he was reunited with his estranged family, a relationship that he values and maintains, and the second is that he no longer uses drugs following alcohol and drug support facilitated by Pathway.

I was IDU 40 [identified drug user: 40 incidents] in jail before Pathway. Five years later I'm IDU nil.... I chose to change. (11)

While this participant is back in prison, the fact that he has kicked his drug habit is a source of pride, and it would appear to be a self-evident, and certainly he is of the view, that when he again returns to society he will be better placed to live a constructive crime-free lifestyle. While statistically he is a failure, it might be more accurate to see him as potential deferred.

Conclusion

Overall, the interview data indicate that Pathway's theoretical framework is being put in to practice. Pathway's clients are aware of what is expected of them before leaving prison, and at time of release they are equally aware of what is ahead of them. The social work support that lies at the heart of Pathway's theoretical approach is seen as the vital component to the programme and underpins all other services. Indeed, one could perhaps conclude that the two staff members, rather than the roles themselves, are vital to the functioning of the programme and therefore recruitment of appropriate staff appears crucial for any future expansion. This is particularly important because the number of graduates maintaining contact with Pathway is likely to grow as more people move through the programme, which does raise issues around service capacity. Reflecting the individualised nature of the client plans, participants reported finding value in different service elements, and it is therefore obvious that recognising client needs is fundamental to maximising success.

'Success', being a relative notion within Pathway's approach, means that reoffending does not necessarily equate to failure and staff stand by reoffending clients in the belief that the transition to a crime free lifestyle is a process and not an event. Demonstrably, participants who had reoffended found this loyalty to be of value, and available evidence appears to offer hope to these 'failure' situations when little might ordinarily be expected.

Finally, whether or not long term success from the Pathway approach will be evinced is yet to become clear, but the encouragement offered by the initial recidivism data was supported by the information provided by participants, who were all of the mind that they were on a path to a crime-free and better life. The only remaining question, then, is whether or not this optimism is sustained and realised in the longer term.

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