



HOST POLICY RESEARCH

EVALUATION OF EXODUS (Action 2)

Second Interim Report

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The evaluation

In March 2006, the South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA), as lead partner in Exodus, commissioned HOST Policy Research (HOST) to conduct an evaluation of the programme. The focus has been on Action 2 of the ESF-EQUAL funded programme, with the evaluation expected to conduct a summative and independent review of constituent activities across the two participating regions: London and the South East.

This second interim report extends the start-up assessments and early reviews of the pre-interim and first interim reports. It is the first substantive assessment of how much Exodus has achieved across Action within the original anticipated funding period for delivery. It comes at a time when partners are seeking an extension to these activities to cover the rest of 2007, and as such is presented as a near end-of-Action review. The report is presented to the Research and Evaluation Working Group (R and E Working Group),¹ and precedes any wider distribution of these findings to other partners.

1.2 Action 2 and the evaluation

Exodus was conceived as an ambitious, broadly-based and bi-regional programme to help tackle the long-standing crisis of re-offending and recidivism among offenders. Its goal has been to promote social inclusion through reducing recidivism and by facilitating the rehabilitation of short-term as well as 'persistent and priority' offenders (PPOs) through increased individual employability. Its focus and working model has been geared to the funding requirements of ESF-EQUAL² which sets out to help: *'...people who are in difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market that must be open to all'*.

Action 2 followed the early development and implementation of the Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) in Action 1.³ It has operated through a unique and evolving multi-agency central Development Partnership brought together in the (then) Management Group (now Strategy Group) and linking both London and the South East through a series of sub-regional activities delivered through 13 individual Local Development Partnerships (DPs). The cross-project Management Group/Strategy Group⁴ was also anticipated to: *'...manage and match fund projects'* and as such, the central partners were seen as at the heart of managing the DPA, and shaping and focusing Exodus. Action 2 was in turn central to the transfer of learning of these projects through Action 3.⁵

In addition to its early ambitions, Exodus has consequently been a very complex programme, involving various tiers of activity, and complex (and changing) management

¹ The R and E Working Group was appointed by the (then) Management Board as the Steering Group for the evaluation. HOST's reports have been received and reviewed by this group, which in turn reports to the Management Board (Strategy Group).

² Specifically to the requirements of ESF-EQUAL Pillar One (Employability) and Theme A.

³ Action 1 (completed on 30 June 2005) involved finalising the constitution of the Development Partnership (set out in the agreed Development Partnership Agreement), devising a programme of activities at both a national and trans-national level for Actions 2 and 3.

⁴ Initially, some 21 organisations - ranging from government departments to small voluntary sector organisations - are listed as Core Partners within the DP.

⁵ Action 3 funds additional activities from Action 2, designed to support thematic networking and to disseminate and mainstream good practice from Action 2.

processes across these. Central to all these arrangements has been a commitment to tackling re-offending, and at a time of anticipated policy opportunities which would be looking for innovative and effective ways of building employability and employment among offenders. The evaluation was expected to be a central tool for partners to review what had worked well (and what had not) and why, and the transferability of this into mainstream actions.

1.3 The objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation's aims and objectives remain those as set out by SEEDA in the original Invitation to Tender (ITT). This required a multi-level and focused external evaluation which was expected to complement the arrangements put in place for internal evaluation and monitoring actions within the programme. The overall goal of the external evaluation was to provide *an independent and cross-cutting assessment of the extent to which Exodus meets the established goals for the programme*. More specific objectives were to assess:

- i) The quality of innovation and added value of the work of Exodus.
- ii) The potential for mainstreaming the work of Exodus to sustain effective actions.
- iii) The achievement of mainstreaming the work of Exodus.
- iv) The level of empowerment of beneficiaries served by Exodus.
- v) The achievement of equality of opportunity by Exodus.
- vi) The publicity and awareness raising achieved by Exodus.

These were cross-cutting objectives, affecting all tiers of Exodus activity: funded sub-regional development activity within the two participating regions; regional and sub-regional integration; and trans-national review.

The evaluation was also set against the regional and national policy context which has been evolving as Exodus has itself developed. An early expectation was that Exodus would help to inform Custody Plus,⁶ and in particular the thinking and practice of the (then) newly developed National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to support offenders. This was affected by a delay in launching Custody Plus, and subsequent reviews and revisions to policy, as well as important changes to the national and regional infrastructure for implementing any such programmes (and also the funding routes).

The evaluation consequently needed to combine quantitative and qualitative inputs across a diverse range of Exodus activity. At the same time, it needed to adopt methods of evidence gathering and review which would be responsive to the changing national policy context and picture.

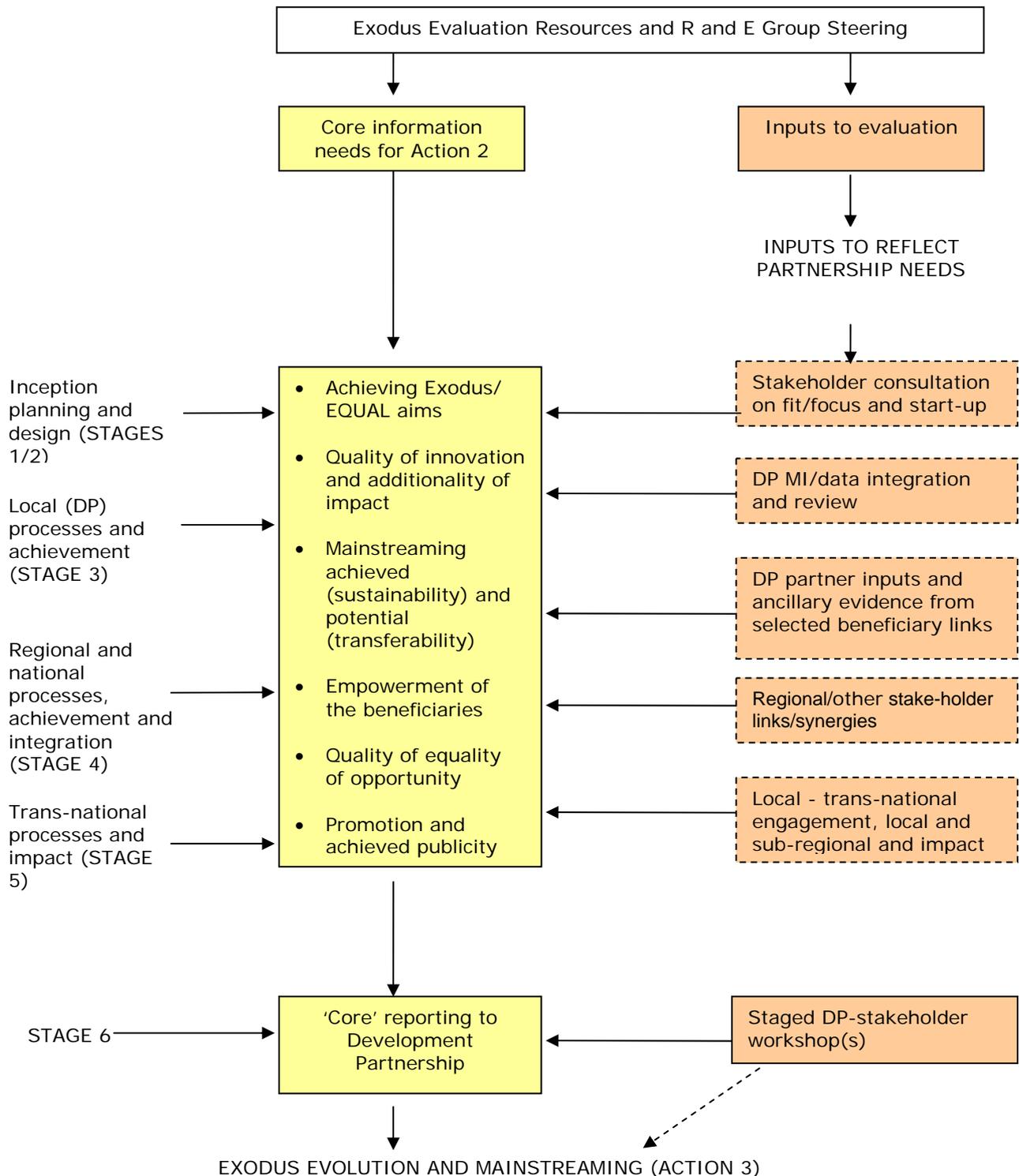
1.4 Approach and focus

The evaluation anticipated a multi-layered series of activities, staged assessment and progressive reporting to partners. Figure 1 summarise how the evaluation model

⁶ The implementation of Custody Plus was initially postponed with a delay in launching and eventual postponement, and this has consequent implications for Exodus mainstreaming activity – see Chapter 4.

planned to integrate evidence gathering across the different facets of Exodus activity. It is anticipated that with the extension funding proposed for Action 2 from July to December 2007, this evaluation will itself need to be extended to reflect the extended inputs, by the R and E Working Groups from this near-end-of-Action 2 assessment.

Figure 1: Evaluation framework for Action 2



Six specific, but interrelated, stages of evaluation activity were planned. These involved:

- **Stage 1:** Intensive project planning, inception and secondary research to shape and implement an Evaluation Action Plan(s), combined with staged feedback to take account of changes in Exodus activity over 2006-2007.
- **Stage 2:** Design and development, with an initial phase of developing and refining evaluation tools, taking into account in-project monitoring and internal evaluation, and adjusting these to changing project circumstances.
- **Stage 3:** A progressive and two-tier review of local DP working models, progress, processes and achievements against goals and programme expectations. This combined light-touch engagement with all DPs with in-depth fieldwork on five of these projects (Blue Sky, Portobello Business Centre, St Giles Trust - Holloway, Southampton - City Limits and Project Spring - HMP Springhill) selected from the early evaluation activity and cross-DP review as most relevant to future mainstreaming. This stage of the evaluation has also included one cross-DP review event (with one other planned), organised as stakeholder workshops to disseminate, feed back on, and critically review, evaluation findings.
- **Stage 4:** An initial and near end-of-Action 2 review of the regional and regional-national dimensions of the programme, including partnership working, policy links and integration, and the quality of early mainstreaming.
- **Stage 5:** A small-scale review of the trans-national dimension of the project, and in particular its impact at local level, specifically looking at local and sub-regional level engagement in these processes set against wider EQUAL goals.
- **Stage 6:** Collation and reporting of the Stages 3 to 6 evidence into a series of staged reports.

The evaluation has been guided by an initially agreed Evaluation Action Plan (April 2006), subsequently remodelled to reflect changes to the programme (and evaluation) in summer 2006 (September 2006). Delivery of the evaluation has proceeded very much to the schedule anticipated in the Action Plan and (in addition to this second interim report) it has provided: a pre-interim report (May 2006); two further summaries of progress and emerging findings (November 2006 and March 2007); and a mid-project review of findings and issues emerging for stakeholders, partners and practitioners in DPs (November 2006).

The scope of the methodology within each of these stages has changed during the course of the evaluation. In particular, there was substantial remodelling of the evaluation inputs in summer 2006, and some delay to fieldwork. This was to provide for a more streamlined evaluation within a substantially reduced evaluation budget consequent on the consolidation of the programme in June-July 2006. The changes did not affect the overall objectives and proposed delivery of the evaluation, but did see a shift from a formative evaluation (with a summative output), to a summative evaluation with limited scope for sharing emerging findings directly with partners. Full details of the evaluation approach, changes, and an assessment of its effectiveness are set out at Annex A.

1.5 The report

Exodus has been a highly ambitious programme in nearly all respects, and this has been very much in the ESF-EQUAL spirit of searching for innovative solutions to very real issues of disadvantage. An important focus within the evaluation - crossing the more

specific objectives - has been to provide an independent assessment of how much has been achieved against these stretching goals.

The second interim report provides a highly timely assessment against the background of the agreed extension activity for Action 2. It shows that, so far, Exodus has not been able to succeed in all these respects. While the report is able to identify and celebrate much of what has been achieved, parts of the evaluation nonetheless may make for difficult reading by some of those who have worked hard to see Exodus succeed. HOST hopes this constructively critical approach will help partners to develop a shared understanding of the wider messages to help future practice which can build on these foundations. To do this, the second interim report is set out in six chapters which, following this **introduction** (Chapter 1) look at:

- **Progress and Partnership in Action 2:** looking at the infrastructure of Action 2, its origins, the expected and achieved collaborations, and integration of the trans-national dimension (Chapter 2).
- **Implementation and effectiveness:** reviewing some of the quantitative achievements of the programme, as well as implementation and effectiveness, performance gaps against 'targets' and also empowerment of the client group and the contribution of the trans-national dimension (Chapter 3).
- **Innovation and added value:** assessing for this key feature of Action 2, the extent and quality of innovation and added value, and constraints to innovation (Chapter 4).
- **Mainstreaming and sustainability:** looking at both the potential and achievement of mainstreaming in Action 2, as well as mainstreaming success factors and constraints, and overall sustainability (Chapter 5).
- **Issues and implications:** drawing together the findings and conclusions from HOST's interim analyses with findings from Chapters 2 to 5, to look at the lessons emerging, and the implications for next steps (Chapter 6).

The main text is supported by four annexes which look at: the evaluation methodology, including a critique of approach (Annex A); summary of the local DPs, their partnerships and focus (Annex B); selected statistical tabulations on Exodus delivery and beneficiary distribution (Annex C); and selected statistical tabulations on Exodus outputs and outcomes (Annex D).

The second interim report provides a constructively critical assessment across these dimensions of an ambitious programme, and HOST concludes there is much that can be added to existing achievements from the extension of Action 2. This assessment is timely to provide for a foundation for focusing and prioritising such activity to meet the goals set, and within the context of a policy which has changed substantially since Exodus started. Feedback on this provisional assessment will help to shape and steer that focus.

Chapter 2: Progress and Partnership in Action 2

2.1 Introduction

Collaboration has been expected to be at the heart of all tiers of activity in Exodus. A useful starting point for reporting the evaluation is to look at how these arrangements have evolved, how they worked, and their effectiveness. To do this, the evaluation draws on the baseline review - set out in the pre-interim report - and uses the more recent evidence collected from stakeholders and most of the DPs,⁷ as well as documentary review, to look at:

- The origins of Exodus, the evolution of the cross-regional partnership, and quality of partner engagement.
- The infrastructure put in place for shaping, managing and steering Action 2, the organisation of central roles and responsibilities, and their effectiveness.
- The achieved project-level profile and positioning of Exodus, including publicity and awareness raising.
- The origins of the sub-regional partnerships and how well their formation and collaboration has served Action 2.

This assessment also looks at the scope and integration of the trans-national dimension into Exodus. The review sets the scene for the analysis of specific achievements and working arrangements, innovation, and mainstreaming that follows in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

2.2 Origins and evolution

The transition from Action 1 to Action 2 within Exodus seems to have been effective and timely in establishing necessary foundations, and making required links, across many of the statutory (and other) agencies in both regions. The evaluation has shown that the groundwork in Action 1 also provided for a fast start to selecting projects, and to speedily kick-starting over a half of those. Early in this process, partners were also able to launch a high profile conference to set out the goals and scope of Action 2, and to include some profiles of the early activity then under way.

On this evidence,⁸ by autumn 2005, Action 2 had secured the fast start and breadth of regional embedding for which it had aimed. Yet very shortly after this start-up phase, Exodus direction was in difficulty. Key staff in SEEDA had been suspended following a formal complaint from within the partnership. Six months after this, the first inputs to this evaluation showed that the scope and funding of the whole programme was in 'crisis'.⁹ Later HOST fieldwork shows that this constituted a short-lived, but nonetheless substantial, setback. It also shows it was a major achievement to turn around the

⁷ Four of the 13 funded projects were unable to contribute to the near end-of-Action 2 self-assessment survey. Three of these had contributed mid-project reviews in October 2006, but one was unable to make any input to the structured aspects of the evaluation.

⁸ The evaluation did not commence until some months after this transition stage was concluded, and by then some of the lead players were no longer involved in Exodus. HOST is therefore not able to critically appraise the early phase of development in Action 2, and is only able to reflect the views and opinions of those involved.

⁹ This was the almost universal view of the 18 stakeholders interviewed in April-May 2006, and was set out in detail in HOST's pre-interim report (May 2006).

programme, but these difficulties had ramifications, leaving an imprint on the programme which held back its effectiveness in some areas. These issues will be returned to later in Chapters 3 and 4, but questions remain as to how Exodus arrived in that mid-project position from what seemed a solid start across the partnership.

The evaluation was not tasked to review how Exodus was set up, or the processes involved in Action 1. These were reviewed separately from HOST - and before the commissioning of this evaluation. That assessment concluded overall that these arrangements were 'fit for purpose' and had established sufficient cohesion and collaboration across central partners to develop and appropriately position the DPA.

Some of the 'legacy' issues have been raised independently by stakeholders throughout this evaluation, and were seen by most of those closely involved in Exodus formation as having a substantial bearing on subsequent developments and the mid-project crisis. This evaluation is not best placed to appraise critically some of these issues, but they do need to be touched on here.

Whatever the mid-project difficulties in Action 2, the origins of the partnership, and the mix of partners, has proven durable. The Management/Strategy Group has seen changes of representation for just over a third of the early members, but these have come mainly from re-organisation issues within several of the constituent statutory and other agencies. All central DP member agencies have remained engaged (in principle) in the programme.

Among those interviewed in April-May 2006, and again just over a year later, there remained considerable commitment to its success, and for most a willingness to continue to work together. Nonetheless, attendance at the Management/Strategy Group, and Working Groups, in the last 12 months of Action 2 has been falling. If this is a reliable guide to the quality of engagement, it would seem that in some of these partners this seems to have eroded in the last six months of the programme, and since the restructuring was put in place. This does not seem to have affected the smaller membership of the Executive Group. In the wider partnership, there now seems to be a smaller core of Exodus partners who are driving much of the decision-making, with others less engaged by default. One of those who has attended just one Strategy Group meeting, and no working group meetings in the last nine months, commented that:

'...the seat of decision-making now seems to be the Executive (Group)...the rest is just rubber stamping and general discussion on issues...and perhaps that's as it needs to be to get things done'.

Others have also commented on a smaller core of partner agencies now being seen to *'...be at the heart of moving Exodus on'*. This core is very similar in composition to those agencies who took an early lead in the ESF bidding processes, and in shaping the early stages of Action 1.

This is not to suggest there has been a failure in wider collaboration in the period covered by this evaluation. Indeed, the ability of the partners to forge and agree a restructuring of the programme midway to accommodate the funding and associated challenges is a testament to a continued commitment to the vision of Exodus, and the potential for linking outcomes with practice. The evaluation suggests that while much of this enthusiasm remains, there has been drop-off in active engagement from some partners at a time when other pressures have been particularly demanding, and there has been seen (by some) to be less scope for influencing the final stages of Action 2.

An important part of the Exodus vision has been its bi-regional focus. Most stakeholders have welcomed this focus as a way of testing more models of practice. In particular, it has been seen as an imaginative response to exploring the South East-London links

likely to be inherent in any roll-out of delivery lessons and models. However, the baseline interviews suggested that at the midway point of Action 2, there were some residual tensions between the two regions. Later interviews in the evaluation suggest a perception at least among some partners outside the respective RDAs that these remain.

Well-placed stakeholders in the south east indicated that, at the outset, Exodus was envisaged as a smaller-scale, and by implication, more easily managed programme. With the move from one to two regions, and the involvement of a wider range of agencies, the project grew substantially in size, complexity and scope, with one interviewee observing: *'...it just grew like Topsy and in the process doubled its available budget'*. Some felt that this expansion was opportunistic and funding-led, and did not take sufficient account of the proportionately greater demands on the central management of a bi-regional programme:

'Two regions who were not natural collaborators was always going to be a tough nut to crack in holding down the brief and purse strings,...but the bigger it got, the more we expected the finding to go to the front-end (and not to central management). The surprise is that it took us as long as it did to find this out.'

Not all shared this view. Changes of representation also meant that nearly a half of the stakeholders interviewed in April-May 2006 and since were unable to reflect on such issues. Nonetheless, the consensus view was that by the end of Action 1, Exodus had become a highly ambitious project, with an extensive range of activities envisaged in Action 2, and with a substantial central management challenge which some felt it was not well placed to address.

Put together, the evidence suggests that the movement from what had seemed a secure and fast start to Action 2 to mid-project crisis stemmed from an over-ambitious approach to collaboration at the top of the partnership, and a flawed model for executive management. Many of these issues were rooted in early decisions about the central support and infrastructure needed across a very wide partnership - issues reviewed below.

2.3 The infrastructure of Action 2

Like many other aspects of the programme, the infrastructure for managing and delivering Action 2 in Exodus has changed over the last two years. Recognising the need for appropriately diverse and devolved arrangements which were consistent with the considerable breadth of the cross-region partnership, a tiered approach to project organisation was set up. For the first half of Action 2, and until summer 2006, this involved:

- SEEDA as lead partner, working with EISS on monitoring, claims administration and ESF technical advice.
- The cross-region Management Board bringing together the lead partner, statutory agency and other partners, and EISS as the in-project monitoring and co-ordinating team. This had terms of reference which provided for the Board to operate in an oversight and executive role in reviewing and shaping the programme.
- A series of formally constituted technical Working Groups with specific terms of reference, reporting to the Management Board, and operating effectively as development and advisory groups to the Board.

- A cross-(local) DP network set up for the London projects, and including a separate practitioner group to bring together those involved at the front end of Exodus delivery. No parallel group was (then) set up for the south east projects.

Since summer 2006, the arrangements have been modified to establish an Executive Group taking over a part of the oversight role of the Management Board, and particularly on financial review. The Management Board was effectively reconstituted as the Strategy Group, and with its membership subsequently extended to include two representatives from DPs, and local authority expertise. Later, an embryonic network was also set up for the south east DPs.

SEEDA as lead partner: The issue of SEEDA's roots as lead partner has been touched on earlier. In mid project, there was widespread concern among partners about SEEDA's track record in undertaking this role.¹⁰ The origins of the decision for SEEDA to take this lead are obscure, with different stakeholders engaged at the bidding stage not always reflecting consistent views. With all of the key personalities in SEEDA and the LDA having moved on, there was no basis for the evaluation to test out these views.

Where there was some consistency was in the view among founding partners that SEEDA leadership came about: *'...effectively by default'* and largely because other potential, and possibly better placed, agencies were unable or unwilling to take it up. Each of HMPS, NOMS and NPS were said to have considered taking on this role, but felt they were unable to do so. In particular, NOMS was said (then) to be: *'...at too early a stage of development to take it (Exodus) forward'*. This has not led to tensions between these agencies, and as Action 2 approached its conclusion, at least one was acknowledging its gratitude to SEEDA for taking on the central role.

There is no suggestion that SEEDA took up the central role reluctantly, or with anything less than a strong commitment to the project. Indeed, at least one stakeholder concerned with the formation of the partnership felt key staff then with SEEDA were very keen to take the opportunity presented by others not feeling well placed to take on the role. However, some of the same stakeholders felt that this was not accompanied by a realistic assessment of SEEDA's expertise, and in particular their lack of familiarity with the criminal justice system in general and correctional services in particular. One key partner commented:

'It was clear from the outset that SEEDA did not understand how commissioning the project was going to impact on correctional services.'

Others felt that either SEEDA, or the staff then engaged, had a lack of knowledge of managing large-scale, multi-agency, ESF-funded development projects, and had little appreciation of the level and nature of the demands likely to be placed on project direction and oversight. In mid-project, a majority of those who were central stakeholders to shaping the programme reported they had early doubts about SEEDA's capacity and capability to take on the lead partner's tasks. One well-placed stakeholder noted in May 2006 that at the outset they had felt SEEDA was under-estimating the knowledge and experience required to keep the DP *'united and on task'*. Others felt SEEDA: *'...had not taken account of the 'big hitters around the table' and '...definitely did not have the knowledge or experience to cope with the situation faced'*.

What is less clear is whether these were issues of SEEDA capacity or capability. In the first year of Action 2, the lead partner had encountered a range of capacity challenges and seen considerable change in personnel. By late summer 2006, there had been three Exodus directors or interim directors, two project managers, and three senior managers with reporting responsibilities to the SEEDA Board for Exodus activities. By November

¹⁰ This was reported extensively in the pre-interim report (May 2006) and these details are summarised here.

2006, none of the SEEDA team supporting the lead partner role had been with the project for more than four months. In addition, posts for development staff, for Equal Opportunities and Employer Liaison, had not been filled – at least partly due to early decision-making delays in the (then) Management Board.

Some issues of capability were also raised at the mid-project review stage by stakeholders, with many centring on some of the staff who later left SEEDA. In addition, there were concerns about their ability to manage the critical relationship between SEEDA-EISS on Exodus monitoring, DP support and review. In May 2006, a third of stakeholders interviewed observed difficulties in this relationship, summarised by one as: *'critical and chronic'*. Others referred to: *'...significant tensions'* and to: *'...knock-on consequences of (earlier difficulties)...(which) have left a legacy of tangible distrust which no one seems to be airing'*. Another observed that SEEDA and EISS had a similar collaboration on another ESF project, which was running smoothly, and posed the question: *'...so what is it about EXODUS that seems to have gone sour?'*

By mid project, SEEDA's role as lead partner was itself in crisis. Key partners were concerned about capacity and capability in the central team then involved, and had limited faith in their ability to turn around communication problems in the partnership and other difficulties then emerging (not all of their own making). There was also (then) a concern that, following some early staff changes, SEEDA had not provided consistent leadership to the programme. Some partners then saw little prospect that this would change.

In fact, much has changed in the last 12 months. Under the stimulus of a (late) recognition of financial difficulties within the programme, SEEDA have introduced developments which have seen staff changes in the central team, and more robust engagement of senior managers in the agency. With the benefit of hindsight, early summer 2006 was the high point of SEEDA's difficulties as lead partner. Since then:

- SEEDA-EISS roles and relationships have become clearer and more robust. EISS played an active and supporting role in SEEDA's successful efforts to restructure the project, and hosted the 2006-2007 ESU monitoring meeting for Exodus. By spring 2007, both partners were describing their working relationship as solid, and in particular praised the engagement and efforts of their respective project managers and financial controllers in helping to ensure the programme remained on course.
- None of the stakeholders interviewed in May-June 2007 raised concerns about SEEDA's continuing role as lead partner, or about the quality of SEEDA leadership. Indeed, most praised the efforts and efficacy of the SEEDA-led re-organisation, and the new staffing arrangements. One very well placed stakeholder observed of SEEDA: *'...we have been very fortunate in the (senior) staff (now) involved'*.
- Earlier communications difficulties which had been widely reported a year before were not apparent among any comments by stakeholders in May-June 2007, with one observing that SEEDA had: *'...worked hard to put that all behind them'*.

As Action 2 approached its conclusions, stakeholders were consequently acknowledging the considerable achievement by SEEDA in: *'...taking the programme by the throat and turning around the finance'*. One note of caution was, however, sounded by a founding partner that while key staff in SEEDA had worked hard to re-engineer the programme and their own support to it, it was: *'... a great shame we came late to this...and why could we not have had this earlier'*. The evaluation (which commenced in March 2006) is not well placed to answer this question, but the roots would seem in part at least to be

with the governance processes and oversight arrangements put in place across the partnership, and notably with the Management Board.

Management Board/Strategy Group: The group has met quarterly since its inception, the frequency of these meetings remaining the same when it was reconstituted as the Strategy Group. This frequency was described by SEEDA as: *'...reflecting the best that could be expected of busy people...to keep their involvement and commitment'*. With 23 agencies involved, this has been a very large group, and staff changes have seen volatile membership. As noted above, attendance has dropped after it became the Strategy Group. The impression of some volatility is reinforced by the fact that its chairmanship has changed four times in the first 14 months of Action 2.

By mid-project, members were almost universally unhappy with the way the (then) Management Board operated. Interviewed in April-May 2006, virtually all stakeholders saw the Board as substantially ineffective, with discussion and decision-making constrained by a combination of its size and organisation. One stakeholder summarised the issue as:

'...the dynamic of the Board has been lost due to its scale - and this has not helped bring the programme (Exodus) to life for these partners'.

The terms of reference for the Board made it clear it was expected to act as an executive steering group. However, by spring 2006, most of those interviewed felt it had failed to demonstrate this role, weakening the expectations for effective governance of those forging the project. In mid-project, this executive group for Exodus was commonly seen as: *'...incapable of providing clear necessary direction to the project'*. These difficulties had been recognised by SEEDA as lead partner, with attempts to bring the Board together as a working unit through 'briefing days'.

These measures, while valued by members, seem to have had limited success. HOST's pre-interim report concluded that the Board was too large to be able to drive forward a complex project, and post-inception additions to that membership had made it even more unwieldy. There was also (then) some evidence of a lack of cohesion among members, and one founding member commented: *'(There are)...only a few people who seem to be able to think about the project as a whole'*. While there was a shared and demonstrated common interest in achieving success in Exodus, there was little sense of a common understanding and vision about how the Board would help to support this. Members commented at the time: *'...(the Management Board) does still not convey a sense of a shared endeavour...rather a gathering of personal interests'*.

The early assessment of the evaluation was that information support to the Board on project finance and activity (from DP monitoring) had not supported members well. This had impaired the quality of discussion and review, and with some reported lack of discipline in agenda management. One stakeholder summarised views expressed by others as:

'...it seems to have had a circular agenda - coming back to things already decided ...and this is really disempowering for members. It is also not strategic and not very good at engaging others in the project'.

The pre-interim report set out a number of specific concerns about discipline within, and the dynamics of, the Board, and these are not repeated here. It also concluded that this had frequently resulted in key issues of project steer deferred for further advice, or with decisions held over to the subsequent meetings. With meetings held at three-monthly intervals, this has seen significant effects for some issues such as an agreed statement of direction for DPs on Equal Opportunities, and specifications for the central employer liaison and brokerage posts later.

Not all mid-project opinion among members had been adverse. However, it was notable that some felt the Board had become:

'...a useful talking shop bringing together people who don't get a chance to meet in this way'.

Whatever the value of such a discussion forum, such a role fell some way short of what was needed for the governance of Exodus. Others endorsed this assessment with, at least one commenting that this discussion focus had sapped energy and enthusiasm:

'The time spent on fruitless, endless debates about structure that have dogged the project since the formation of Exodus, (and) ...would have been far better spent in ensuring the effective management of the projects'.

By mid-project, Exodus consequently had an executive partnership arrangement which was dysfunctional. Critically, it had failed to operate in an oversight role to the programme, and its apparent emphasis on discussion over decision-making had seen some important issues of focus, support and steer to front-line delivery substantially delayed. While some key members individually were clearly aware of the shortcomings of the process, the unwieldy nature of the Board meant that it seemed powerless to act itself on these. The critical change seems to have come only when senior staff in SEEDA not engaged directly in Exodus became aware of the critical mid-project funding situation.

Subsequently, and as a part of a package of reforms aimed at tightening oversight and the governance of the programme, the Management Board became the Strategy Group, accompanied by the creation of the Executive Group. This division of tasks has much better supported the second half of Action 2. A review of documentation and the stakeholder interviews of May-June 2007 showed:

- The Executive Group had met more frequently, and with a clear focus on financial and associated oversight. Initial efforts to embed the new arrangements for overall direction of Action 2 had proceeded to the proposed timetable. By early autumn 2006, the new arrangements were in place, and with the smaller membership of the Executive Group building on earlier working relationships and the foundation established during the reshaping process for Exodus.
- By autumn 2006, key decisions necessary for the new arrangements had been agreed by the wider partnership. This included the new division of roles, financial oversight, and revised reporting requirements for monitoring information completed to schedule. Doubts expressed by partners as late as May 2006, that SEEDA would be unable to secure a consensus across the wider partnership for this division of tasks, proved unfounded.
- Financial review, and associated risk assessment, became an important focus for the new Executive Group. This seems to have operated effectively, with status summaries and associated issues being raised with the Strategy Group. While some stakeholders have come to see the Executive Group as: *'...the de facto core of Exodus and the decision-makers'*, there seems to have been a clear division between oversight (Executive Group) and decision-making issues being referred to the Strategy Group. The decisions to seek a six-month extension to Action 2, and to establish clearer guidelines on eligibility regarding short-term offenders, are illustrations of the referral arrangements.
- The (new) monthly frequency of Executive Group meetings has also proven effective, although at times the alignment between the timing of Executive

meetings and the next Strategy Group does seem to have seen some protracted decision-making, notably for the Action extension.

In general, partners have welcomed the role and effectiveness of the Executive Group, although there remains some evidence of a lack of transparency in its review arrangements among some stakeholders. What is less clear is if these developments and the reduced role have benefited the Strategy Group. The stakeholder review process in May and June 2007 did not provide clear messages, not the least because some of the members involved had attended only one Group meeting, and in two cases, no Group meetings.

Among the more regular attendees (three of which were also Executive Group members), it was observed that:

- The Strategy Group had adapted to the need for joint communications between itself and the Executive Group, with the common members supporting the working arrangements well.
- The introduction of representation from two of the local DPs and from local government was also welcomed. The DPs in particular were thought to have added a new dynamic to discussion and also provided valuable feedback on local-level activity and arrangements.¹¹
- There was also felt to be more tightly controlled agendas and more discipline from the contributions among members, with what one called: *'... a more structured approach to working and decision-making'*. This was felt to be evidenced by the inputs made to decision-making on the proposed extension arrangements for Action 2 which another felt to have been the major focus of post-January work.
- Two of those interviewed also felt that there was a sustained enthusiasm for continued partnership working which could be built on. Another reflected this view, but felt this was true only for what were seen as 'core members'.

However, the May-June 2007 interviews also showed some continuing concerns with specific aspects of the working of the group, and in particular:

- The 'Strategy' Group was not seen by some of those contributing as very strategic. One well-placed observer commented of its discussions: *'...this has not been very strategic stuff...and I sense a lot of the members seem to be more confident talking about what are really tactical matters and not the bigger picture'*. Another felt that it was only very recently that the group had started to look at wider development issues and implications, and was concerned this was: *'...too little, too late'*. One cautioned: *'Where does the bigger thinking get done and discussed ... not here (Strategy Group) and I fear opportunities are getting lost as people get busier'*.
- Although discussions at group meetings had been more disciplined and structured, it was felt by several of those interviewed that some inputs had been *'...rather off road, and wayward'*. It was suggested that some members did not understand well either the wider goals of the activity, or the nature of the ESF-funding and/or what was expected of it.

¹¹ One of the DPs concerned reported that the case for their involvement had to be strongly put. Indeed, it was inferred that it was accepted on the basis that one or more of the DPs would withdraw if they were not granted representation.

- Two of the interviewees who had been closely involved with the formation of the programme suggested that there remained too little cohesion in the group. One added: *'Two years on, some partners are still not very clear about what they want from Exodus...for a few, there does not seem to be much commitment to owning the situation.'*
- There was some concern that the coherence of the group was affected by lower attendance, and that for some key partners this raised questions about the future viability of a bi-regional approach. Several drew attention specifically to the lower profile from LDA, with one concerned that *'...(the LDA) seemed to have just drifted away'*.¹²

Inputs from some members were also felt by others to lack realism. Three of those interviewed drew attention to the fact that:

'...SEEDA still comes in for a lot of direct or indirect criticism ... and it's usually the same faces. Too many of the partners just do not understand how the RDA's agenda fits into all this, and have unrealistic expectations.'

One regular attendee summarised the situation for the Strategy Group as saying that:

'The whole partnership has not really moved on - it's no longer obstructing the process, but I can't see its adding very much either.'

The same interviewee felt that opportunities might have been taken to help build greater cohesion and a more strategic contribution through whole partnership development days, but although these had been raised as a possibility, they had not taken place.

Put together, the evidence suggests that although membership of the group has been usefully widened, and its role more concentrated, the restructuring has come late in the process, and with Action 2 moving to a conclusion, there have been fewer opportunities for members to shape future direction. This, rather than any concerns with a diminished role, may underpin the weaker attendance evident since the group was formed.

Working Groups: An important part of the Exodus infrastructure was the establishment of Working Groups with formal terms of reference, and each centred on a specific themed activity for partnership working. HOST is not able to reflect on the early operation of these groups, although the April-May 2006 interviews suggested these were characterised by early effectiveness and a clear contribution of Working Groups to developments in Action 2. In particular, the pre-interim report suggested clear ownership from those who had engaged with specific groups, and for most Working Group members interviewed, an awareness that they had operated usefully in an advisory role to the (then) Management Board.

This was not a universal perspective, with some differences between stakeholders, largely reflecting their contrasting experience of different Working Groups. Early concerns, where these emerged, related to:

- Diminishing attendance for some groups was felt by some to impair the continuity of their work. Others commented on the demands that groups placed on their time, in particular where they were members of more than one Working Group and the Management Board.

¹² The LDA was among three of the previously interviewed stakeholders unable to make an input to the May-June stakeholder interviews. HOST confirmed contact details (telephone and e-mail) and later raised the non-response issue with SEEDA in mid June.

- A sense of a *'loss of momentum'* reported from members of some of those groups. At least two of the groups were felt to have been struggling with an uncertain role, and less than robust leadership from some of the group chairpersons.
- In one group at least, there was concern that the breadth of membership was too narrow to reflect the scope of the subject matter. This group, and one other, were thought likely to benefit from more external members being appointed to extend the range of expertise.
- Concern that the development role of the groups was too heavily dependent on members' willingness to put in added effort. Development/liasion officers had been expected to be appointed to some groups to provide a 'staff' input and *'...the external eyes and ears of the group'*, but were not put in place. Interviewees in those groups felt this had limited groups' capacity and inter-action with local DPs. This was seen to have particularly affected the Diversity and Employability Working Groups.

Later interviews suggested that for most groups, their contribution had been early in Action 2, and although most had in effect become what one called 'standing committees', there was a continued loss of momentum. Two groups in particular - Diversity and Research and Evaluation - had been especially affected by falling attendance, although for one of these, changes to meeting dates had: *'...made it more difficult for members to attend'*. One stakeholder observed that the practice in some groups of setting, or re-setting, next meeting dates at preceding meetings set off a downward spiral of attendance: *'...if you miss one meeting, you miss the chance to affect the timing of the next'*. From the available evidence, the inputs most recognised from the working groups in the second half of Action 2 were:

- The Employability Assessment Tool, which was seen as a practical and valuable tool to support employment assessment and brokerage.
- The November stakeholder workshop held by the Research and Evaluation Working Group, which was valued by those group members attending: *'...it was really the first time the DPs came to life for me'*. Interviewed DPs also valued this event as a: *'...way of cutting across what was being done by co-projects ... sharing some of the good ideas that were evolving'*.

Development Partnerships: The 13 local DPs have been centre stage in the innovation and delivery of Action 2. These projects were commissioned through an open tendering process, and achieved a fast start to commissioning. The start-up arrangements also provided for a very rapid commencement to delivery among most of the commissioned projects.¹³

These were important achievements, again building on Action 1 developments. However, not all selected projects were subsequently commissioned. Some 15 projects were selected following the selection process, but two of these had still not commenced delivery a year into Action 2, and were subsequently dropped from the programme: the very large 'Foundation Project' from the south east Prison Service, and the smaller-scale project proposed from HMP Woodhill. The failure to commission these projects, and notably the Foundation Project, has had a significant bearing on the subsequent development of Exodus, and is returned to below.

¹³ There were start-up delays to two subsequently commissioned projects arising from some clarifications on matched funding, and delays locally in putting together the necessary capacity and working arrangements.

Chapter 3 (and Annex B) looks at the focus and working arrangements for each of the DPs, and their achievements. The focus here is on DPs within the wider Exodus infrastructure, and in particular commissioning, engagement, and intra-project networking. Much of the discussion that follows centres on the first of these.

Commissioning and procurement: The evaluation is not able to look at the quality of the commissioning process, but has reviewed the impressions from some of those involved in selection. While this was generally felt to be fit for purpose and leading to: *'...a good mix of imaginative and well placed projects'*, concerns were raised about the bidding process, and in particular:

- A lack of appropriate direction about project processes and working models. One stakeholder felt this process lacked necessary guidance to bidders, and reflected:

'They were told to come up with ideas and to innovate. It doesn't work like that. You've got to give people more of a framework to operate in.'

This was accompanied by what some felt to be inadequate briefing of bidders, and in particular concern about the south east briefing event¹⁴ which was seen to have generated: *'...a lot of confusion about bidding processes'*. One illustration was that the workshop (and written guidance) established a ceiling of £200k per project, but some bids were later accepted at much higher amounts.

- A rushed bid assessment and selection process, and in particular the time available to consider projects. At least one of those directly involved reflected that they were now: *'...not sure that the process was robust'*.
- There were also some concerns about the distribution of bids, and in particular that there were an inadequate number of bids from 'smaller organisations'. It was said by one interviewee that: *'...smaller organisations didn't get to know about Exodus and so didn't apply'*. Some also felt that the timescales did not encourage bids from smaller organisations that: *'...do great work, but do not have teams of bid writers'*.
- Uncertain quality and robustness in bid-level planning and preparation, and especially partnership building. In particular, there was concern about HMPS involvement in projects where, although there was approval at an area level and agreement in principle at a local level, some felt there was not the required level of local 'buy in' to ensure that necessary operational issues were addressed or resolved. It may be that the bidding timescales did not provide adequately for such development at local level, or favoured those bidders who already had such arrangements in place.

In short, some stakeholders felt that the procurement process, although compliant with ESF requirements, was rushed and not well matched to the need to generate well positioned and innovative proposals from diverse bidders well versed in the expectations of Exodus, and well placed to ensure effective starts in the limited timescale. Evidence also emerged that informal guidance to some bidders discouraged early attention to the disciplines needed to ensure that matched funding would be delivered in line with expectations. One successful bidder well versed in securing competitively bid funds, although inexperienced in ESF, commented:

'...we were told to get things up and running and spend the money as quickly as possible, and not to worry about match funding as this was going to be no problem'.

¹⁴ As held at held at the Holiday Inn in Guildford.

Others seem to have had similar guidance, or otherwise made little preparation for ensuring that the basis of evidence required to show in-project matched funding against ESF requirements could be demonstrated. If this was a failure at the bidding stage, there is little evidence that any post-selection or pre-contracting discussions moved these uncertainties forward. Several stakeholders commented that those that were approved with a reduced budget were not asked to re-submit fully revised project plans or matched funding schedules. Others added that post-tendering, pre-contract, processes were ill-developed - an impression reinforced by some of the DPs later interviewed.

It is very difficult for the evaluation to review these issues. Evaluators were not in place when this process was under way, and little documentation was available to track the bidding arrangements and pre-contracting discussions. The evaluation is consequently dependent on retrospective stakeholder (and DP) impressions.

It is nonetheless difficult to escape the conclusion that there seems to have been either a lack of oversight of the whole procurement process, and/or some lack of confidence among those directly involved. There is some evidence that the quality of pre-selection guidance (and perhaps post-selection support) also had a substantial influence on the start-up of the two projects which were selected but not commissioned.

A number of stakeholders were in a position to comment on what subsequently became the non-procurement of the two projects to be led within the SE Prison Service. Not all were close to the process, and not all observations were consistent. However, it seems that the procurement of the HMP Woodhill project was initially delayed by changes of key staff, and some internal HMP tensions regarding the bidding process and project leadership. There also a suggestion that changes among key staff in the HMP 'region' may also have brought a more cautious perspective to establishing this project after it had been successfully selected. Whatever the case, the foundations of the project seem to have been insecure.

The viability of the Woodhill project later became caught up with the fortunes of the much larger SE Region Foundation Project. Here, there was no evidence of rushed thinking on the positioning of the proposed project, but doubt that it had not secured the internal endorsements needed, and in particular regarding publicly matched funding. This seems to have been an issue of internal sign-off within the HMP procurement team for the region. In the event, this led first to procedural delays, later to revisiting the viability of the project (and risk to HMPS SE), then to securing agreements on the evidence necessary to establish in-project matched funding. The process proved protracted, and although there was a high degree of confidence (in SEEDA) as late as May 2006 that the necessary assurances were in place, these proved insufficient. In late April 2006 - and nearly a year after the selection process - those marshalling the project within HMPS SE were cautiously starting to put in place secondments to support the project. In the event, the project failed to start because the re-organisation of Exodus in summer 2006 could not risk any further delay.

It seems notable that of the 15 projects selected, the two that were dependent on direct management (and procurement) from within HMPS SE failed to get off the ground. The evaluation is not in a position to unpick these issues. However, drawing on feedback from others better placed, it seems a combination of inexperienced bidding, lack of ESF knowledge, and rigid and risk adverse procurement processes (within HMPS SE) meant that these projects were unlikely to get off the ground, and were inappropriately selected. One stakeholder commented:

'...the (prison) service does not speak with a single voice, especially in the South East. There are some burnt fingers...and sensitivities. They are much more risk averse...if the bid (Foundation Project) was from the North West it would be running now.'

Both of the HMPS projects selected were also vulnerable to the uncertainty apparent midway through Action 2 on matched funding. One stakeholder close to the proposed project commented that there: *'...was an over-estimate of the ease of gathering match-funding evidence'*, with too little timely attention being given to this issue. This emerged as a particular issue where projects were to harness significant inputs from HMPS staff, and where the required level of staff co-operation on evidencing matched funding (eg completion of SPARS time sheets and similar systems) was not articulated at an early enough stage.

The seriousness of this issue for the viability of Exodus in general, and these two projects in particular, became apparent long after selection and late in the process. The substantial delay to a situation that mid-project risked the continuation of the programme remains inexplicable. Certainly partners were aware of this situation only shortly before the April-May 2006 stakeholder interviews were conducted. It is not clear from documentation when SEEDA as lead partner was itself aware, although EISS reports that it had been raising these concerns about evidencing matched funding and overall assumptions since some months before. Certainly, stakeholders in April-May 2006 were perplexed about how such a business-critical issue for the whole programme should have taken so long to be identified. Even then, there was continuing confusion on how to address it. Interviewees anticipated then that the viability of some projects was at risk, and with at least one predicting: *'...we might end up losing some of the projects we can least afford to lose'*.

Engagement of DPs: It was clear from the mid-project stakeholder interviews that few were aware of the relative progress and early achievements of DPs. The exceptions were with the two stakeholders with a significant engagement in the cross-DP Consortium set up in London.

A year on, the situation had changed, but not much. A key development seems to have been the inclusion of two DPs on the Strategy Group which, as has already been observed, was widely welcomed by those interviewed, with one adding: *'It's just a shame that we could not have got them on board earlier.'* Outside of these DPs, most stakeholders felt they remained ill-aware of progress in individual projects.

Reporting of project inputs and outcomes to the Strategy Group is not seen to have done very much to address this. The summer 2006 re-organisation set down a specific requirement for quarterly reporting by EISS from monitoring data. However, the requirements for this were vague, and EISS opted to provide a summary report against the Annex 5 statistical breakdown of the DPA. This was thought to offer continuity with earlier documentation and an ability to compare targets (where established) against progressive achievements. The Annex 5 data had very limited project-level evidence but focused on aggregated data across all 13 DPs.

In the event, stakeholders felt this was insufficient. EISS has sought feedback on how this might be enhanced, but the issue does not seem to have been resolved, and no specific feedback has been provided on stakeholders' requirements, or on alternative reporting formats. Discussions among these stakeholders suggests that the limitation is probably not the data, or the breadth of the information, but the lack of a quarterly commentary on the situation, gaps and recent trends across DPs.

DPs had also been involved in three of the Working Groups, although it was not always clear if this was on a standing membership or advisory basis. Where DPs were formal

members of Working Groups, attendance has been patchy - notably for the Research and Evaluation Group.

Intra-project networking: By autumn 2005, arrangements were put in place to set up an exchange process between the seven funded London projects. This was thought to be best focused on a network mechanism through a fixed programme of meetings to supplement any bi-lateral contact between individual projects. The network has met regularly since, predominantly at project manager level and under the auspices of HMPS London. A separate practitioner Working Group has also been established. The focus of the group has been information exchange and a review of good practice, and it has operated largely on a needs basis to, for example:

- Conduct a cross analysis (with EISS) of DP achievements, beneficiary characteristics and progress against targets.
- Establish a cross-London beneficiary review event with Exodus recruits sharing experiences and needs.
- Assess employer demands and perspectives on recruiting ex-offenders, and the scope for employer brokerage.

The events are seen by DPs as accessible, timely and helpful in identifying common ground and issues for development. The networking may well have also increased referral processes between these projects. Referral arrangements have certainly been put in place, including with one SE project, although it is impractical to assess if these might have developed without the network being in place.

In contrast, there was no such network for the SE projects until early in 2007. The need for such a network had previously been identified but had not commenced. This was an illustration of unrealistic expectations among stakeholders of the lead partner, with two partners commenting in April 2006 that they felt it reflected inertia on SEEDA's part for not organising such a network. The issue was raised again from the November stakeholder workshop within the evaluation, and was proposed in the interim report from HOST. Subsequently, GOSE undertook to provide pump-priming support for initial meetings of an SE network. At the time of writing, there has been limited time (and feedback from stakeholders or interviewed DPs) to establish the usefulness of the network, which is understood to have met twice.

2.4 The profile and positioning of Exodus

Although this preceded the evaluation, it was clear that substantially early efforts were made to establish the profile of the partnership and Action 2 in the regions. This has been seen:

- Significant embedding of key agencies in the formal partnership, predominantly through membership of the Management Board/Strategy Group. This has ensured that a diverse range of statutory and prospective funding agencies have had the opportunity to engage with the running of Exodus, and to be regularly briefed on progress and development issues arising. Embedding has gone beyond regional agencies, and through EISS's role in the NEON partnership there has been a presence on the co-ordinating group for similar EQUAL-funded development activities across England.
- External marketing to raise the profile of the whole partnership and DP-level activity. This arguably commenced with what was widely seen by stakeholders mid project as a successful launch event (October 2005) in London, to profile

Action 2. Other marketing inputs seem to have focused mainly on the project website. This has not been regarded favourably. Stakeholder feedback in April-May 2006 suggested the site had been established late and was often slow to provide new and updated material. The same stakeholders in May-June 2007 suggested the site had become moribund, with SEEDA concerned that they lacked the capacity to make much of this as a marketing opportunity. In this, the visibility of Exodus has not been assisted by a lack of focus on the provision of adequate publicity materials and the failure to refresh and update the project website which now carries historic information about DPs,¹⁵ although there has been some dissemination of innovative and effective practice through the National Equal Offender Network (NEON).¹⁶

There have also been issues of profile raising (and collaboration) at European level and through the trans-national collaborations, reviewed separately below.

The evidence suggests some early successes in meeting the Exodus goals to establish a profile for the project which would help to support sharing of practice and later mainstreaming. By mid project, it seems the direct marketing efforts were seen as having taken a back seat in Exodus organisation. Efforts at the time to start to develop a communications strategy were stalled, and have since progressed little further. The issue was raised again with the Strategy Group in autumn 2006, and a pre-strategy *communications framework* has been agreed among members, but has not developed further. In June 2006, SEEDA was suggesting that this might become a focus for extension activity in July-December 2007. Two of the stakeholders interviewed at the time felt that the communications strategy had: *'...fallen into a black hole'*. One saw this as a significant gap in what the Strategy Group had been able to achieve, although with the difficulties pre-dating this Group:

'...we do not have a communications strategy to drive forward the profile (of Exodus) or wider links. This did not get put together right...and it has not been picked up since.'

The effects of this are not clear, and do not seem to be noticed by most other stakeholders. However, one of the founding partners saw the lack of this as a constraint on driving forward partnership efforts to share learning and help embed emerging better practice in policy thinking nationally, regionally and sub-regionally, and cautioned:

'Times are changing and opportunities are going missed. Are all the right people engaged (in Exodus awareness) in national policy teams? I see some key people who are avoiding some of the messages and we lack a strategy to engage them.'

Stakeholders (and DPs¹⁷) also raised one specific concern about the positioning and profile of Exodus. This seemed to centre on the issue of employer engagement. Two of the 'core' partners, and at least three of the other agencies felt that this had been presented as a critical part of the Exodus vision at the October 2005 launch, but that this had since been neglected. This proposed focus on active measures to raise awareness and facilitate change in employer perspectives (and employee selection processes) was seen then to have been widely welcomed. As early as May 2006, these stakeholders were suggesting such action in Action 2 was a cornerstone in sub-regional effectiveness (by DPs) in achieving successful outcomes for beneficiaries. There was then concern

¹⁵ This issue is being addressed by some DPs individually. For example, recently (April 2007) the City Limits SEO organised an event at HMP Winchester on reducing offending with presentations on how Southampton Exodus and Winchester CLIC were working on this issue. This was attended by 40 key staff, including prison service and police personnel and the lord lieutenant who is the patron for CLIC.

¹⁶ See, for example, NEON E-Zine: http://www.equal.ecotec.co.uk/ezoneassets/ezone3/neon_issue1.pdf

¹⁷ At the 7 November stakeholder workshop, Guildford.

that with measures to support employer motivation, and cross-project brokerage not then being addressed, any effects with employers might be: *'...too little and far too late'*.

In the event, key measures to support this feature of Exodus delivery seem to have been casualties of the summer 2006 restructuring. In November 2006, lead partners of DPs almost universally raised concerns at the stakeholder workshop run as part of the evaluation, that the lack of a central resource to raise employer awareness and to propose contacts would: *'...put the emphasis on us to fill the gap...with everyone reinventing the wheel'*. Some then doubted that they had the expertise or capacity to fill this gap locally.

2.5 Integration of the trans-national dimension

Exodus planned to work with nine trans-national partners in a framework of issues-based working groups helping to share experiences and develop: *'...models of interventions with prisoners and ex-offenders to enhance their employability'*. A subsidiary goal was to develop ways of working with employers to engage them more directly in the resettlement planning process, and exploring ways of supporting ex-offenders in the labour market.

There were also arrangements to work with trans-national partners in the NEON collaboration - which has also hosted an EQUAL exchange event, bringing together 18 national partnership projects. There was also a UK co-ordinated NEON seminar hosted by HMPS in London. Exodus partners have been engaged in these activities at lead partner or related level, but these events remain outside the scope of this evaluation.

This trans-national dimension centred on two parallel networks - HIDAK and CARVEL - with some overlap in membership, and different focuses for development and review. Both were important features of the ESF-EQUAL funding, and in particular aimed to build on domestic arrangements for sharing situational and front-line practice by harnessing established and evolving national networks elsewhere. Specific goals were to extend the knowledge base to support national dissemination, to provide a comparative dimension to support policy evolution, and to provide a wider audience for mainstreaming effective practice.

The evaluation has sought only to review how engagement with these networks has integrated with the Exodus partnership,¹⁸ and also any local level effects arising from that engagement (see Chapter 3) and contributions to mainstreaming (Chapter 5). At central level, nearly all of the interviewed stakeholders felt they had opportunities to engage directly in the trans-national dimension, and just over a half had done so. Participation was strengthened by the role EISS has played in trans-national co-ordination, and also helped greatly by the trans-national event co-ordinated by EISS at Leeds Castle (September 2006). Direct engagement by DPs was much more limited, although there is evidence of some direct sharing of some delivery models (eg Blue Sky) with trans-national partners. Partners to DPs have also in a few cases had opportunities to engage in these activities, notably for two of the selected DPs interviewed in the Leeds Castle event (see Chapters 3 and 5).

There have also been some bi-lateral links, including the October 2006 visit of Hungarian trans-national partners co-ordinated to include a meeting with one DP, and also to three

¹⁸ A wider review of engagement and some direct observation proposed in March 2006 was subsequently omitted from the evaluation in favour of further fieldwork in the UK. In September a further reduction in the trans-national review within the evaluation was agreed consequent on the budget reductions and restructuring.

partner prisons in London and the South East. There was particular interest in the St Giles Trust *Through the Gate* programme.

The quality of this engagement is less easy to determine. Chapters 3 and 5 look at this for DPs. Among central partners, most of those interviewed in spring 2006 felt adequately briefed of the scope and nature of these activities, with fewer feeling they were sufficiently well aware of DP activities in the south east and London. For some, their own engagement with trans-national events was highly valued, with one stakeholder reflecting on her travel to an early meeting:

'I admit to low expectation of these sorts of cross-EU events...(but) this one really ticked. There was a lot of inter-change and I am taking some of the feedback I got from France and to my next working group on resettlement.'

Another felt that direct involvement had: *'...been time well spent - you get to rethink things you have taken for granted'*. One partner also added:

'I don't know that I brought much away...but I guess it helps with confidence - you realise that others are a lot worse off than the UK.'

2.6 Overview

Exodus has had a difficult and at times fraught process in much of the first half of Action 2, but has since been able to restructure many of its working arrangements. It has progressed from what amounted to a mid-project crisis in the partnership arrangements centrally, to a situation near the end of Action 2 of restored confidence in the project leadership and executive direction. Although in mid project there were widespread concerns about SEEDA's capacity and capability, and its critical relationships with EISS, it was these two partners who proved central to what one stakeholder called: *'...turning the project around'*. In summer 2007, many of these partners seem keen to build on the collaborations - a situation that would have been difficult to foresee mid project.

The fact that there were early difficulties may not be surprising, given the ambition of its activities (in innovation, scale and geographical breadth). However, it is difficult to unpick the origins and determinants of these difficulties, particularly against a background of staff/partner changes and contrasts in stakeholders' understanding and awareness. It is all the more difficult to understand when, for many facets of Exodus activity, Action 2 had seemed to get off to a good and fast start.

The conclusions that can be drawn are that the roots of these difficulties were mainly in the transition between Action 1 and 2, and in early relationship building. Founding partners seem to have been ambitious but unrealistic in their assumptions about how an ESF project of this scale and complexity could be managed at partnership level, and at lead partner level. Curiously, some of these partners seem to have had serious doubts about the arrangements even before they were put in place, but seem to have preferred not to raise these concerns at that stage for fear of disturbing the process. The early partnership arrangements (and expectations) may well have become driven by ambitions over scale and funding. In this respect, the difficulties apparent with the dysfunctionality of the Management Board by mid project were rooted in early decisions about infrastructure, and were not well-conditioned by stakeholders more experienced in ESF or large-scale project management.

The difficulties that emerged with executive steering of the partnership seem to have been compounded by staff changes at SEEDA, and initially volatile leadership in the lead partner. *At the strategic level, concerns were raised about the lack of 'true partnership working'*. Not all stakeholders reported this issue, but among those that did there were

recent examples of key decisions about the extension of the project, and on issues such as when the recruitment of beneficiaries might cease. Similarly there was some evidence that alterations had been made to agreements about how much matched funding DPs would provide without appropriate consultation. These issues seem to have reflected largely unresolved tensions between SEEDA's accountability for funding of the whole programme, and whole partnership responsibility for the DPA.

The rising early tensions between SEEDA and EISS added to many of these problems, and came at a critical time for the partnership. Along with other apparent concerns about partnership working, there was not then an effective focus for raising and resolving emerging issues of working relationships, roles and collaboration before they became serious problems. The evaluation also concludes that the pre-summer working arrangements lacked effective oversight arrangements at whole partnership level, and were consequently not well placed to identify the funding and associated difficulties which EISS had been aware of for some time.

By early summer 2006, Exodus was on the brink of failure - of finance and its central partnership infrastructure. Yet the funding crisis of summer 2006 seems in some ways to have been the saving of Action 2. This provided an immediate focus for re-engineering the project, not only in funding, but for revisiting some of the governance expectations and processes involved. It provided for changed and more robust leadership, an effective oversight arrangement, more streamlined processes for decision-making, and for consolidating activity in the 13 projects then running. The modified executive arrangements have since worked well, have helped to sustain the partnership, and have drawn in other contributors to the (new) Strategy Group.

Where they have worked less well is in supporting strategic developments by the partnership, and in the evident quality of engagement of some stakeholders. A particular consequence has been the failure of the Strategy Group to provide a focus for building on early foundations for raising the profile among key decision-makers, particularly at national level. The Strategy Group, and most Working Groups, have also seen some loss of momentum from diminishing participation. Given the earlier difficulties in a 'discussion-centred' Management Board, and a lack of cross-partnership oversight, it is difficult to see where the whole-partnership working arrangements, before or after summer 2006, have added much value to Exodus development. Developments since summer 2006 have been marshalled very largely from within a core partnership, working often by default from falling attendance at partnership meetings, and surprisingly similar in composition to the founding partners.

Chapter 3: Implementation and Effectiveness

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has looked in some detail at the nature and operation of the partnership arrangements and collaborations established for Action 2 - the working framework for Exodus. In this chapter, we look at what has been emerged from that framework and in particular:

- The implementation of Exodus delivery arrangements on a cross-regional and sub-regional basis.
- The overall profile and numbers of beneficiaries recruited across all DPs within Action 2.
- The outputs and performance of the Exodus DPs against the overall programme targets and wider project objectives.
- Evidence of the project's impact on equality of opportunity.

The evidence for much of this is drawn from the staged stakeholder and (selected) DP interviews, but it also draws heavily on data collated from the monitoring and financial control arrangements for the programme (from EISS). A more focused review is also provided of beneficiary empowerment - an important principle underpinning the working practices of Exodus, but where the source evidence is drawn wholly from the DP-level reviews.

3.2 Implementation of the development projects

The 13 funded DPs have been centre-stage in Exodus in developing the local delivery partnerships, and in implementing the proposed activities. Exodus has adopted an emphasis on innovation being driven by the local partnership arrangements and, as such, it has seen these activities conducted with different focuses, and different emphases for recruitment within the 'core' beneficiary groups targeted by Exodus – short-term offenders and PPOs. The starting point for understanding beneficiary recruitment is consequently a brief review of the different DP emphases.

Project scope and focus: As indicated in Chapter 2, it was anticipated that there would be 15 Development Partnerships (DPs) within Exodus. In the event, due to operational difficulties, only 13 projects moved beyond the initial planning stages, and details of these are set out at Annex B.

A review of the approved projects that did progress shows both common themes and diversity in their scope and focus. In terms of commonality, all projects were seeking to provide more intensive forms of support for prisoners, with an emphasis on initial assessment¹⁹ of needs and the delivery of additional services to complement existing provision and post-release ('through the gate') support.

¹⁹ The Home Office's (2004) *Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan* highlights that the assessment of needs (where undertaken) of short-term offenders ('who form the majority of those released from prison each year') is carried out, using 'interim assessment tools to capture and address urgent welfare needs for those on remand or serving under 12 months'. As a consequence, the wider needs of the group are not systematically assessed or known.

In addition, most had a range of public sector (eg HM Prison and National Probation Services) and voluntary and community sector (VCS) delivery partners and stakeholders. Other partners noted in original delivery plans/proposals included, within the public sector, Jobcentre Plus, the Legal Service Commission, Local Authorities and (less extensively) the Police, and within VCS, Groundwork, In Biz, PACT, Shelter, St Mungo's, St Giles Trust and Tomorrow's People. There is some evidence of the active involvement of employers as partners (particularly Clancy Docwra with Blue Sky) and job brokerage and intermediate labour market (ILM) services (eg Action Acton, Southampton City Council and Project Spring).

In terms of offender/ex offender target groups, the support to be provided was both to short-term offenders, and to a lesser extent PPOs. However, one DP (the London Probation PPOs) was set up to work exclusively with this group. Some talked in terms of seeking to provide an 'end-to-end' and holistic service (eg Kent Probation/Citizens Advice Bureau, Westgate/HMP Hants/HMP Winchester), and others (eg the St Giles Trust Projects) adopted a personal caseworker approach. One project (Portobello Business Centre) aimed to deliver business support²⁰ and training advice to Exodus clients referred by DPs.

Although most of the projects worked in the secure estate, and/or in the community, two of the projects (Project Spring and Southwark Returns) worked with offenders in Category D prisons which built on their experience of the re-settlement of offenders in open conditions.

In some cases (as with HMP Holloway, Southwark Returns), little work had been undertaken with the proposed client group prior to the start of the project. In others (eg work with PPOs) the work was building on and extending existing provision delivered by a delivery partner (in that case the National Probation Service) and/or on predecessor projects (as in the case of Action Acton and Southampton City Council).

In terms of post-release support, most of the DPs (10 out of the 13) focused on providing links back into a specific geographic area, often one or more of the London Boroughs, or, as in the case of the Southampton DP, back into a large conurbation.

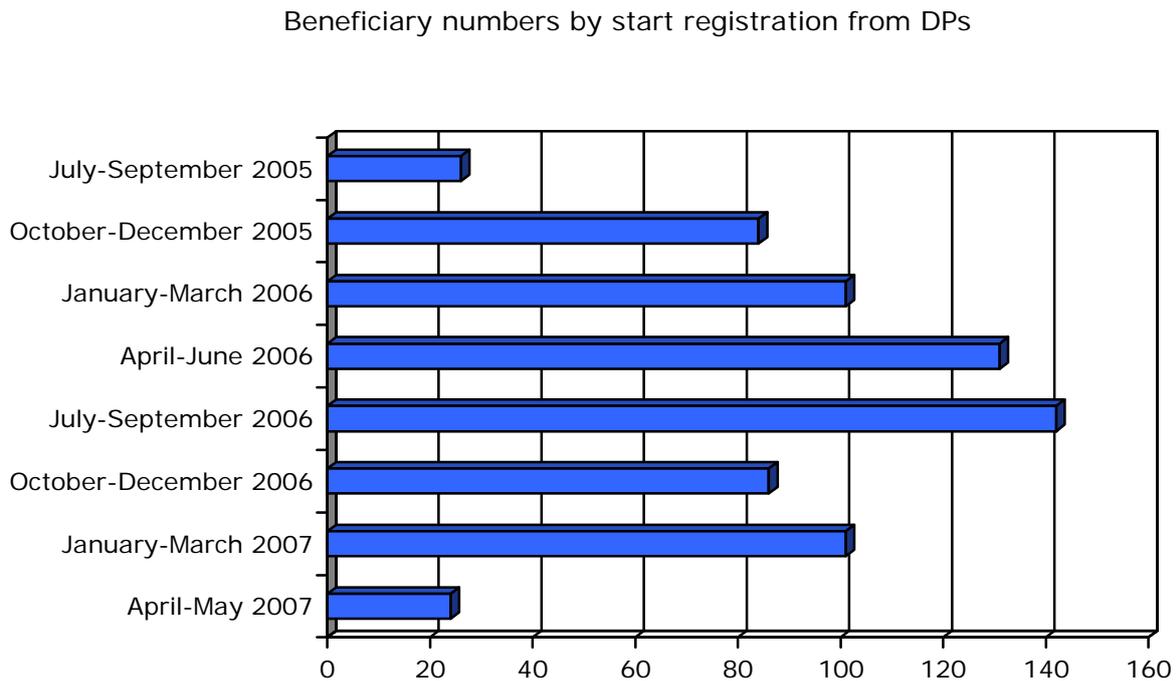
In the case of some local prisons (eg the Croydon Returns project) the support was provided to offenders (in this case HMP Highdown) who lived relatively close to the prison. However, in a number of cases, by necessity the projects involved cross-regional working (eg the Southwark Returns project), and other projects have become increasingly cross-regional as they have developed (eg Blue Sky).

Beneficiary recruitment: Across this diversity between the individual DPs, the evaluation shows substantial activity with beneficiaries. By late May 2007, the DPs had collectively recruited nearly 700 beneficiaries²¹ in scope of the programme. This diversity in DPs has seen contrasting levels of activity with beneficiaries across Exodus, and in the intensity of that activity (Figure 3.1). Allowing for lags in the provision of monitoring data, it is likely that by the end of June 2007 (the originally planned funding period for DPs) an estimated 720-730 beneficiaries will have been recruited.

²⁰ The potential of self-employment as a source of employment for offenders was highlighted in the Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Reducing Re-Offending by Ex-prisoners*, London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and is explored further in the report by Sheffield Hallam University for the Small Business Service (2004) *Reducing Re-Offending: The Enterprise Option*.

²¹ Numbers may have been slightly larger since late supplied starts data will not have been included in the data returns collated by EISS - and on which this assessment is based.

Figure 3.1: Beneficiary recruitment across DPs, 2005-2007



Valid cases = 695

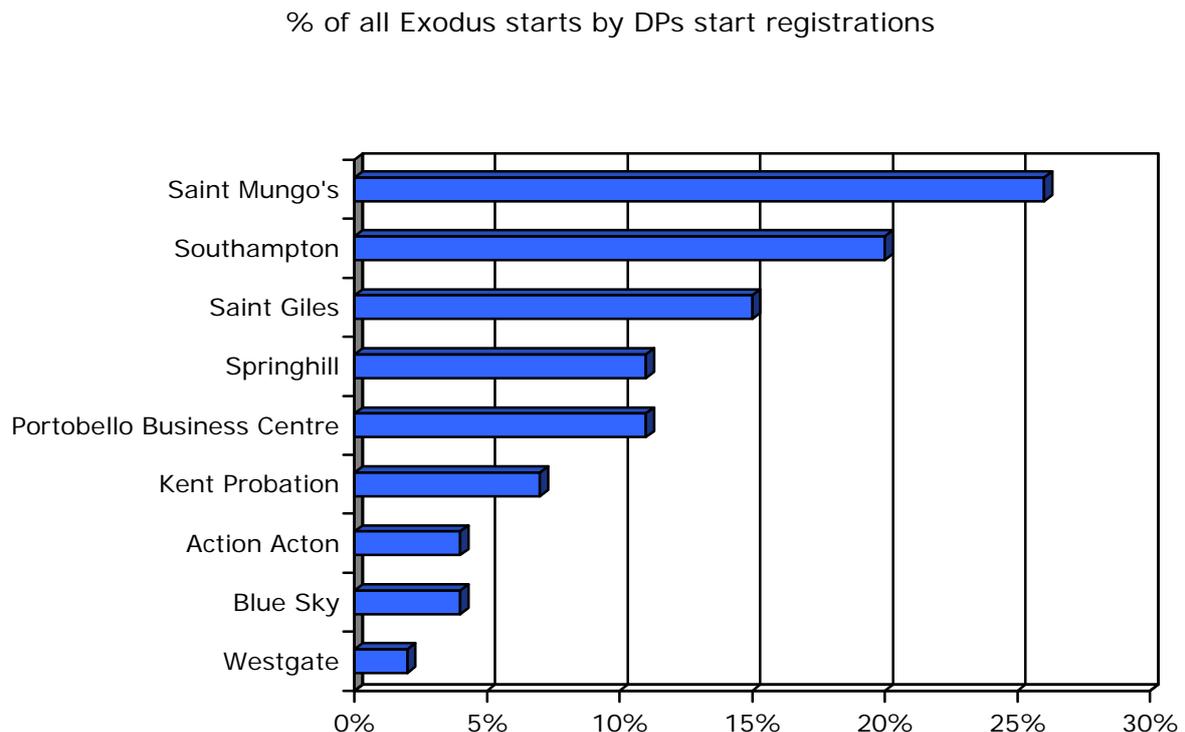
Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

The broad characteristics of this cross-DP recruitment are reviewed in more detail at Annex C, but a more detailed analysis shows:

- A number of the fast start DPs (St Giles Trust, Springhill, St Mungo's, Southampton) were able to put in place structures for selection, assessment and early delivery which ensured an early start to recruitment. By mid October 2005, these projects and other early starters had already recruited the first 50 beneficiaries, with ten per cent of all subsequently recruited beneficiaries engaged by early December 2005.
- Exodus recruitment accelerated in early spring 2006 as other DPs (eg Kent Probation) put in place the necessary capacity and working arrangements to recruit and support beneficiaries. In the six months following Easter 2006, the DPs were collectively recruiting an average of 45 new starts a month. This was the peak of DP activity, and April to September 2006 alone saw 40 per cent of all starts to the programme.
- There is no evidence from the distribution of recruitment that organisational and funding uncertainties of late spring and early summer 2006 had any direct effect on recruitment, or any observed knock-on effects in support. Indeed, the peak recruitment across DPs was in August 2006, with 62 starts across DPs.
- Although recruitment levels slowed after summer 2006, monthly starts remained at, or close to, the levels achieved in early and mid spring 2006 until March 2007. Recruitment seems to have fallen sharply since. These data have yet to take account of late registered starts but the available evidence suggests that most DP have closed or sharply limited new starts since Easter 2007.

Within this, Figure 3.2 shows that recruitment by registered starts across Exodus has been dominated by three DPs, with St Mungo's, Southampton and St Giles Trust securing over six out of ten of all starts (61%). While these data are an accurate reflection of recruitment activity and effort, the different focuses of DPs, and the post-recruitment collaboration evidence in some, makes them difficult to compare. In addition, this needs to be interpreted with caution, and particularly in a programme such as Exodus, whose success centred on quality of innovation and outcomes from support, and not just levels of recruitment.

Figure 3.2: Beneficiary recruitment by DPs, 2005-2007



Valid cases = 690

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

DPs have different scales of recruitment and emphases, but Exodus overall has seen considerable diversity in its recruitment of short-term offenders in custody and PPOs. Although entry to the Exodus programme has emphasised male and white offenders, this was in line with the expected focus of DPs (see 3.6 below). The available evidence is reviewed in more detail at Annex C but shows:

- Nine per cent of all starts were women short-term offenders or PPOs - with the proportion of female starts slowing in the last two months of the programme, but otherwise varying little since summer 2005.
- Just over two thirds of starters were 25-49 years of age (69%), but recruitment also seems to have been successful in securing starts from younger offenders, with very nearly a quarter (24%) under 25 years of age.

Statistical analysis of the monitoring data does not provide a firm basis for contrasting the characteristics of recruitment between DPs, mainly because this is distorted by the highly focused approach in four of the DPs.

It is evident in some cases that DPs have been working with different client groups than those expected. In part, this has been due to the fact that less potential beneficiaries than expected have come from particular geographic areas, and that the prison population itself is changing (eg in HMP Brixton, between a half and two thirds of prisoners are typically on remand with, since legislative changes, an increasing number on life and indeterminate sentences).

For example, the Southwark Returns project based at HMP Ford has widened its target areas to include neighbouring London Boroughs, and now includes Portsmouth and Southampton, and Action Acton indicated that SEEDA had been very accommodating when they wanted to add a small number of beneficiaries who live outside the designated geographical area for their project. At the same time, recent monitoring evidence (yet to be verified) suggests that at least two DPs have been recruiting a small number of beneficiaries who fall outside not only the definition of their original target client groups, but also the eligible beneficiary scope for the Exodus DPA. These issues are not set to materially affect the overall recruitment levels, but are currently being reviewed for their funding implications.

3.3 Backgrounds of beneficiaries

The evaluation has also been able to draw together some evidence of the starting points of these recruits to DP support. This assessment focuses on four main indicators - the first of these generic and the others mainly centred on issues relating to employment background and potential employability of those recruited. More specifically, these look at:

- Issues of disadvantage affecting beneficiaries prior to custody.
- For those out of work prior to custody, the length of time unemployed.
- Educational attainment of beneficiaries (highest qualification level attained).
- Literacy, numeracy or ESOL limitations of recruits.

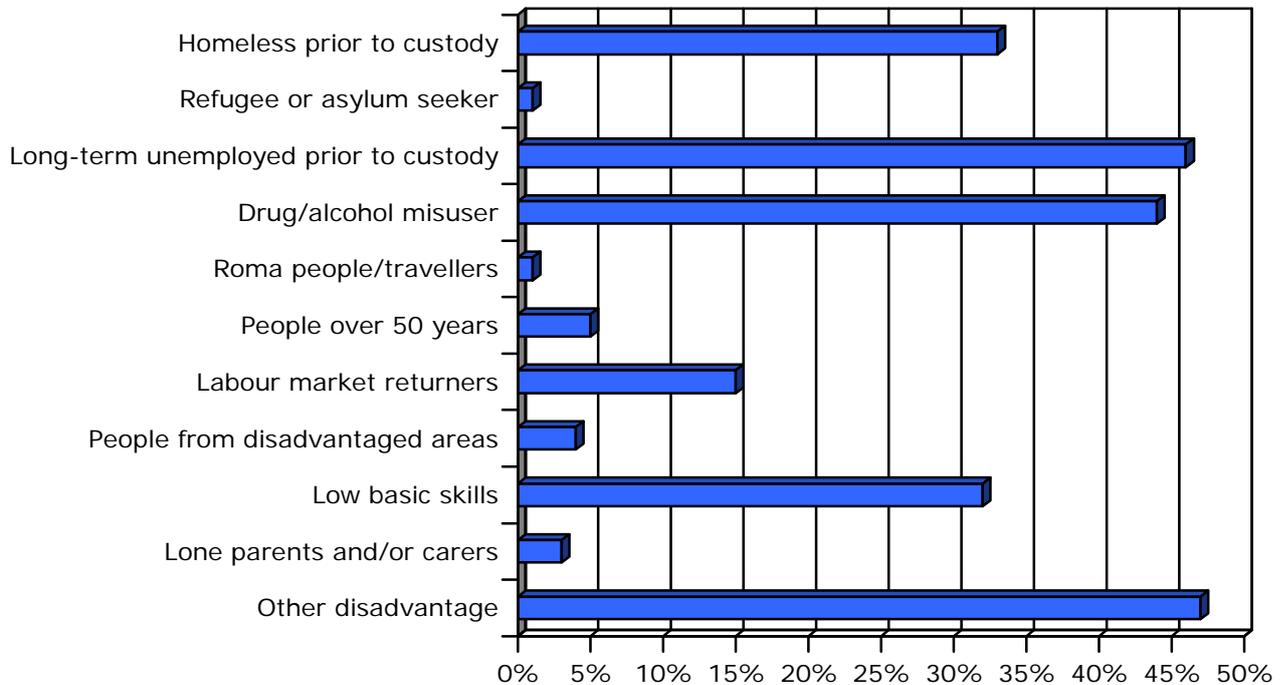
Each is considered in some detail below, with classification of data as drawn from the available monitoring data.

Beneficiary disadvantage: Figure 3.3 summarises a series of disadvantages affecting individual beneficiaries (prior to custody). These data are drawn from DP-level formative assessment of individual beneficiaries to categories set across Exodus, although with some variations across those DPs in how these were classified.²²

²² Although there seems to have been a high level of consistency across DPs, there were evidence contrasts in how those recording these data classified: labour market returners; basic skills (especially ESOL-related issues) and travellers/vagrants.

Figure 3.3: Beneficiaries and disadvantage, 2005-2007

% of all Exodus starts by disadvantage



Valid cases = 690

NB. These figures do not sum to 100% because of multiple disadvantage of many individuals.

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

On this evidence, several issues of disadvantage stand out affecting beneficiaries. The first is that most are affected not by just one, or even two, disadvantages beyond their offending record which might affect their future employability, but by several. Although the cross-classification and overlap of some of the indicators makes this difficult to assess statistically, the available evidence suggests that each of the beneficiaries recorded an average of 2.3 of these issues. This feature influenced all DPs, although those recruited to St Mungo's, St Giles Trust, Blue Sky and Southampton tended to show higher than average levels of recorded multiple disadvantage. Multiple disadvantage was lowest in Springhill (1.3) and beneficiaries recruited to the Portobello Business Centre (1.5).

Dominant among these disadvantages was experience of long-term unemployment, affecting very nearly a half (46%) of beneficiaries prior to custody, and the individual being a drug and/or alcohol misuser (44%) - the two issues often being interrelated. This was closely followed by the beneficiary being homeless prior to custody (33%) and presumably at risk of returning to this on release.²³

Just over a third of these beneficiaries were also assessed as having low levels of literacy, numeracy or ESOL (32%). Some caution is needed in interpreting this figure because of uncertain arrangements (and consistency) in assessing literacy, numeracy and ESOL attainment levels, and in reporting and classifying these needs within the standard ESF 'disadvantage' categories.

Three of these issues are explored in a little more detail, since they may have a particular bearing on employability and the focus of employment-related support needed.

Long-term unemployment: For those out of work prior to custody, the length of time unemployed varied but most were classified as long-term unemployed (out of work for over 26 weeks). This is significant not only as an issue of work-readiness, but also in post-release access to programmes of labour market support for the long-term unemployed. Of those long-term unemployed, just over a half had been out of work prior to custody for over three years.

The proportion of those beneficiaries with no recent work experience was predominantly age-related - lowest among the under 25s (45%) and highest among the older beneficiaries of 50 years or over (66%). This was an important cluster of disadvantage for most DPs, with Action Acton and St Mungo's both having nearly two thirds of their beneficiaries affected previously by long-term unemployment. Only in the Portobello Business Centre and Springhill did the proportion fall below a third.

Educational attainment: A summary of beneficiaries' educational attainment before custody is set out in Figure 3.4, based on the assessed highest level of qualification they held.

Based on previous research, the level of recorded highest level of qualification would appear to be considerably lower than would be expected. For example, HM Government (2006) *Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment: Next Steps* indicates from latest data that just over 50 per cent of offenders have no qualifications and previous research indicates that this rises to two thirds in the case of female prisoners.²⁴

The possible under-recording of previous qualifications (if this is what it is) could be accounted for by a number of factors. These could include, for example, that: a wide range of information needs to be gathered at the stage of initial interview/assessment and that this simply may have been overlooked, or unexplored; a lack of clarity about how to collect the information and/or educational levels and equivalencies; that Exodus is focusing on personal development and employability, rather than learning/qualification issues (about which other partners such as OLASS²⁵ would be more concerned).

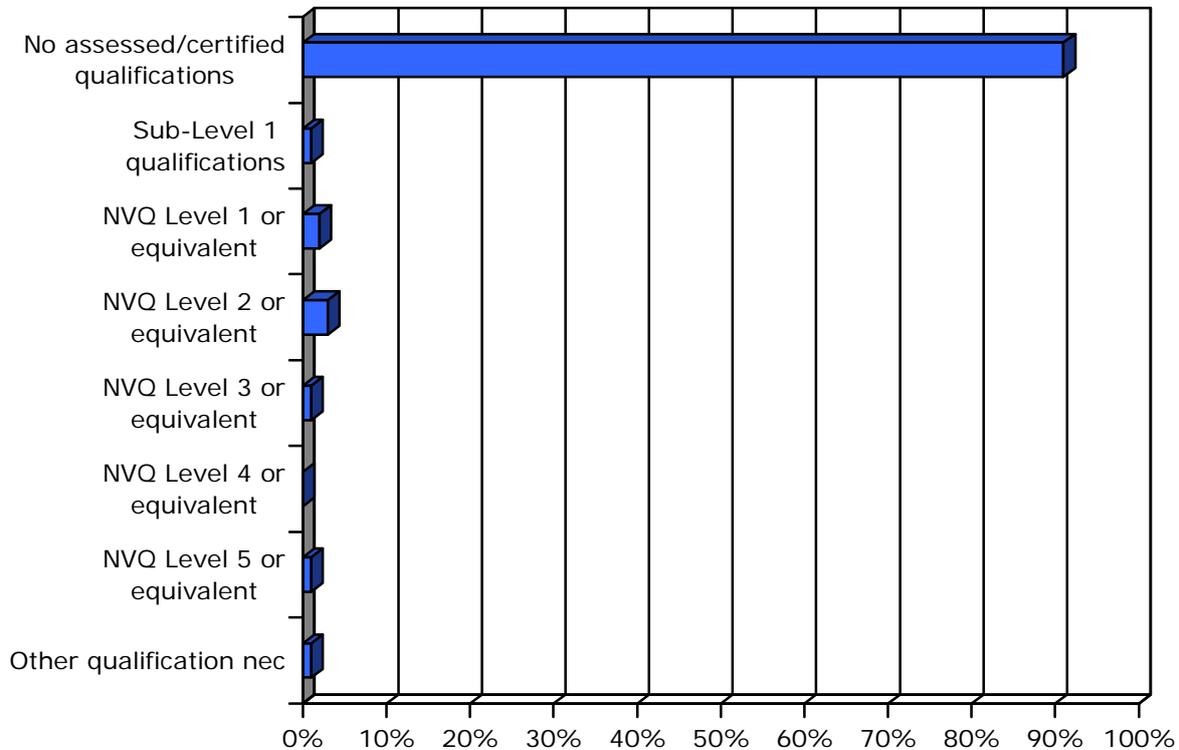
²³ Home Office research into the Offender Assessment System (OASys) indicated that: '*...drug use and accommodation were the offending-related needs most predictive of reconviction*'. Source: Home Office (2006). *The Offender Assessment System: an evaluation of the second pilot*. Findings 278, London: Home Office.

²⁴ Home Office (2001), *Through the Prison Gate: a joint thematic review by HM Prisons and Probation*. London: Stationery Office).

²⁵ Department for Education and Skills (2006), *The implementation of OLASS: Assessing its Early Impact and Examining the Key Challenges. Phase Two Report*. Research Report 794. Sheffield: DfES.

Figure 3.4: Beneficiaries and qualification attainment, 2005-2007

% of all Exodus starts by highest level of qualification held at registration



Valid cases = 690

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Literacy, numeracy or ESOL limitations of recruits: As noted above, just over a third of these beneficiaries were also assessed as having low levels of literacy, numeracy or ESOL (32%). Some caution is needed in interpreting this figure. Firstly, although HOST has discounted multiple recording of 'basic skills' in this analysis from available MI, it seems that those recording disadvantage data have found this a less than straightforward issue to classify. Other data suggests that the recorded levels of basic skill needs, in one of more of these areas, were very much higher in Blue Sky (48%), Southampton (43%), and also St Giles Trust (38%) than among other DPs, with Portobello and Westgate recording just 15 and 14 per cent respectively. The suspicion is that some DPs may have formally assessed levels of functional basic skills aptitude, some may have informally assessed this, and some may have only recorded this where such difficulties were more overt. This variability would be consistent with efforts elsewhere to benchmark literacy and numeracy capabilities among hard-to-place beneficiaries.

3.4 Outputs and performance gaps against targets

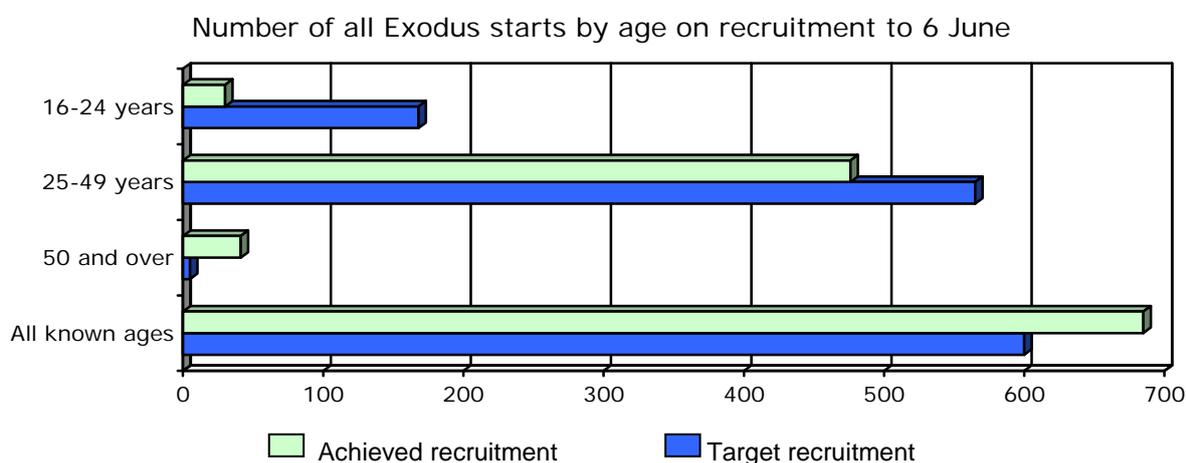
The success and effectiveness of Exodus cannot, and was not expected to be, measured by numerical achievements. Qualitative issues such as the quality of innovation, mainstreaming and transferability, were at the heart of the performance that the programme was expected to be able to demonstrate. Nonetheless, quantitative measures are a valuable guide to the effectiveness of delivery, and also provide indicators for assessing effectiveness across different forms of delivery and client groups. Three sets of such measures are available to the evaluation:

- Recruitment levels and distribution.
- Inputs and activities undertaken to support beneficiaries.
- Achieved beneficiary outcomes and post-custodial destinations.

Findings against each of these are summarised below. For recruitment further detail is set out at Annex C, and for activities and outcomes, at Annex D.

Recruitment levels and distribution: At the time of writing, and shortly before the end of the initially agreed Action 2 timetable, Exodus had recruited 699 beneficiaries into DP activity. This exceeded the initial target for recruitment (600) by 17 per cent, and was only a little short of the revised extended target of 750. These data are inevitably affected by some lag between recruitment and central registration, and it seems likely that by the time all beneficiary data are submitted for activity to the end of June 2007, the extended target will have been exceeded.²⁶ No separate data are available for individual DPs on performance against the extended target, since the decision in spring 2007 by the Partnership to extend recruitment targets across Exodus does not seem to have been disaggregated to revised project level or diversity targets.²⁷

Figure 3.5: Beneficiaries recruitment against targets, 2005-2007



Valid cases = 685 (14 beneficiaries with age not recorded)

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

²⁶ Time lags between recruitment and DP submission of documentation to EISS vary between projects, but a mid June (18 June) estimate of likely final (end June) registered recruitment derived from EISS puts the achieved level of beneficiary recruitment slightly over the extended target. Completed data to end June will be available by end July 2007.

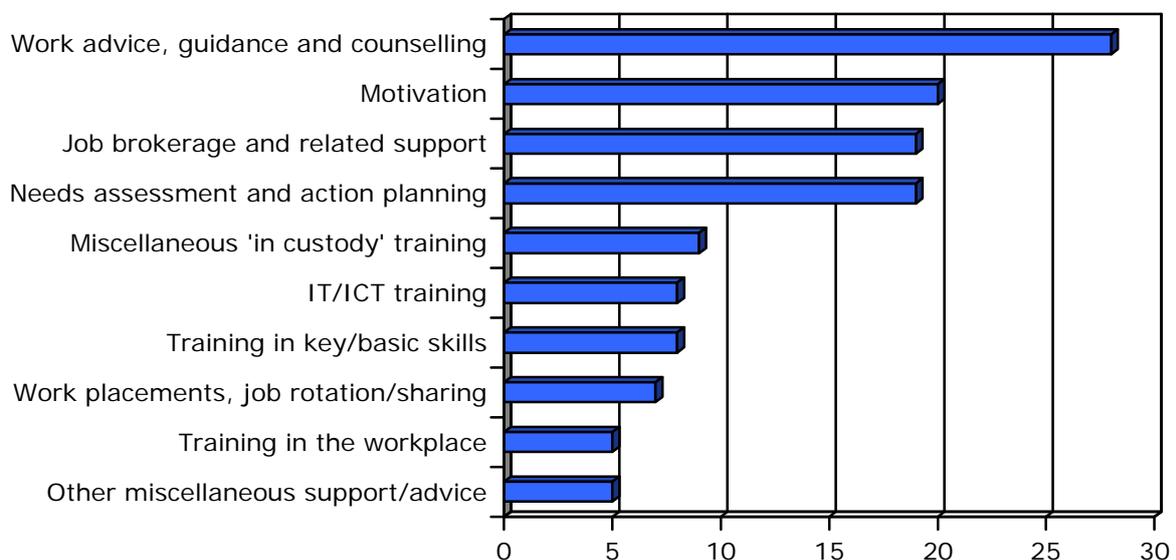
²⁷ While there is some evidence that informal agreements may have been made between SEEDA and all or some DPs, EISS confirmed that no adjusted DP-level targets against those set out in the original DPA have been agreed.

The data suggests very substantial success among the projects in reaching the overall (initially) proposed targets - both among those with broad reach and anticipated higher levels of recruitment, and more focused DPs. Figure 3.5 suggests some shortfall for recruitment of 25-49 year old beneficiaries, and this seems to have reflected a much stronger than anticipated focus across projects on recruitment of younger offenders. Among 16-24 year olds, it seems that DPs overall have recruited nearly six times as many beneficiaries as was originally expected. The data also provides for a picture of the achieved distribution of recruitment among short-term offenders and PPOs against other initially agreed targets, and these are reviewed in the following section.

Activities undertaken to support beneficiaries: Beneficiaries seem to have been supported with a wide range of assessment, advisory and direct support to increase employability and work preparation. The mix varies substantially across DPs reflecting different project emphases, and small numbers for some DPs means it is inappropriate to review these quantitatively between projects. Unfortunately, the available data does not record 'real-time' activities, but only those for beneficiaries on leaving Exodus, with data consequently limited to just over a third of the starters (36%). No monitoring data on inputs would seem to be available for those who continue on programme.

Figure 3.6: Activities supporting beneficiaries after recruitment, 2005-2007

% of all Exodus starts by recorded input(s) to 6 June



Valid cases = 255

NB. Numbers do not sum to 100% because of multiple inputs to beneficiaries

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

The monitoring arrangements provide for recording multiple inputs (activities) for each beneficiary. However, on this evidence it would seem that single input support to individuals is the norm, with no more than one in four beneficiaries receiving two or more inputs in the recorded support activities. At the same time, these data are open to misinterpretation. They show for example, that under one in five (19%) of the recorded leavers received initial needs assessment and/or action planning.

Without this formative input, some doubt might be raised on the delivery of any 'needs-based' activity-based support to at least some of those joining. This may be accounted for by differences in classification of activities by some DPs, and or by some beneficiaries being recruited for very specific inputs such as pre-release job placement or brokerage, and not having (or not being recorded as having) any initial assessment. Nonetheless, on this evidence, a question must be raised as to whether all those recruited did receive an individual assessment prior to support or to leaving.

For those who did receive direct Exodus support, it seems that DPs have been able to develop a wide range of support activities related to employability and job brokerage. Most of these have been what might be called *downstream* activities, such as job-related advice and guidance (29%), motivational support²⁸ (20%) and various training inputs. Upstream activities which are closer to job placement have also played a role with job search guidance or help - including for self-employment (19%) the most widespread. Activity focused on employment brokerage seems the least extensive, with work placements and job rotation or sharing affecting around one in 14 beneficiaries (7%).

After general advice and guidance on employment, skills development seems to have been the most widespread activity, although affecting under one in four beneficiaries (21%). Outside this, non-vocational training was a feature of many DP activities, and specifically the one in 12 receiving key or basic skills training (8%). The level of basic skills training does not seem to align with the evidence on literacy, numeracy or ESOL needs among the beneficiaries. Earlier evidence showed over a third of beneficiaries were recorded as having low basic skills - a figure which itself may well be a substantial under-estimate in DPs - yet relatively few seem to have received any additional support from Exodus projects in this area. It is not clear, if the apparent discrepancy reflects a lack of systematic attention to this issue, or the availability of other non-Exodus support to beneficiaries for literacy, numeracy or ESOL training while in custody perhaps under established OLASS programmes.

Examples of education and training in action within case study projects include:

- *Blue Sky*: The 'Decide' project is operated by Blue Sky (in co-operation with Clancy Docwra, Slough Accord, Hounslow CIP and HMP Bullingdon). The beneficiaries go through an intensive 12-week programme studying for a City & Guilds qualification in street works at Level one and Level two. By June 2007, there had been three courses completed with an average of ten participants on each of the courses. Another ten were due to start on the fourth course on 11 June.
- *Project Spring*: Within HMP Springhill, the manager of Project Spring's job club is line managed by the Head of Learning and Skills (HoLS) reflecting the link between education and training (learning and skills) and employment activities. In the job club, prisoners may identify (often with professional assistance) the need for training to fulfil the requirements of particular job vacancies (IT skills are a common need, for example) and these can be relayed to the education and

²⁸ The importance of motivation in regard to offenders who are frequently reluctant learners is shown in research such as Wilson D; Logan M (2006), *Good Vibrations in Prison – Breaking Down Walls*. Birmingham: University of Central England.

training department for action. Similarly, there are cases where prisoners will use the job club after completing their training to seek employment. It suggests a strong synergy between the two activities, and responsiveness to perceived labour market needs.

- *Action Acton (AcA)*: Some of the clients who voluntary and statutory agencies refer to AcA's Exodus project are not eligible for support, but nevertheless staff can often refer them on to other projects where they have eligibility, or use other funding streams to enhance their employability.

A good example of this are the beneficiaries that have been referred to the construction programmes which AcA also deliver, such as the CSCS training programme, where free tools are supplied which can be retained for subsequent use. The organisation runs Citizenship courses and Skills for Life assessment, training and support. IT training is available, as are free diaries for beneficiaries to help them organise their daily lives more effectively. E-mail accounts are available which, together with texting, have proved to be useful ways of keeping in regular touch with beneficiaries. Also available is a software package which addresses basic financial needs.

- *St Giles Trust*: The Exodus project is funding 20 per cent of an NVQ Trainer/Assessor post at HMP Brixton (with the other 80% coming through a separately funded St Giles Trust Project). Work has been put forward for a Butler Trust Award, and their work is highly valued by the prison.

There is a lot of interest amongst prisoners in becoming Peer Advisers. Forty-eight recently applied for the most recent training programme and eight were eventually recruited, having gained necessary security clearance through the prison as well as being assessed as suitable candidates through the selection process.

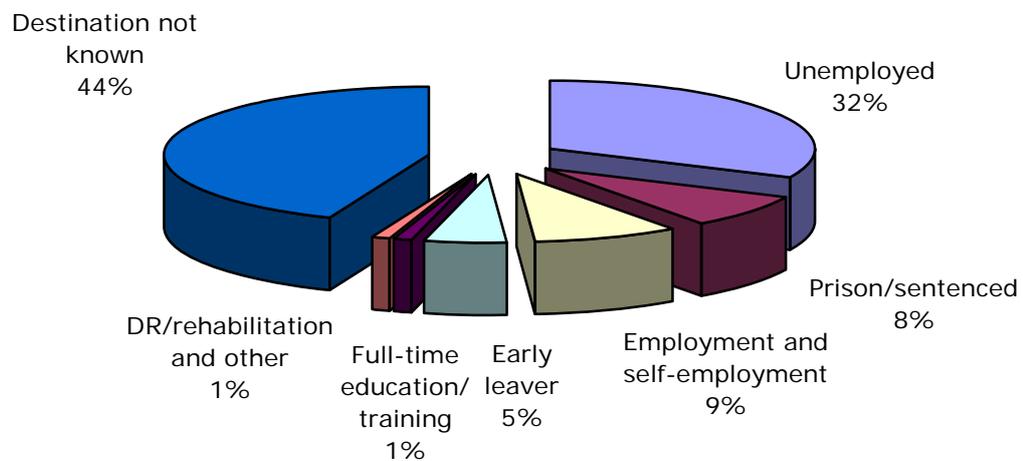
Those selected to undertake training (which leads to an NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance assessed by Advice UK) undertake a series of core sessions on guidance and legislation issues alongside briefings from key agencies about their work and referral processes.

Beneficiary outcomes and destinations: What of the outcomes from post-recruitment support to these beneficiaries? The available evidence here is limited, with destination evidence available for only just over a half (56%) of the 'leaving' beneficiaries (Figure 3.7). The remainder are recorded as leavers, but with no known outcomes or destination.

One well-placed stakeholder referred to these succinctly as: '*... the beneficiaries who have just fallen into a black hole*'. Some non-recording of outcomes might be expected in a volatile population, where short-term offenders in particular might be affected by early release (at least 8% of these beneficiaries), and with some dislocation between any in-custody and any through the gate (or post-custodial) monitoring. However, this level of unrecorded outcomes is disappointing, and presents a discouraging, and perhaps misleading, picture of the beneficiary achievements. The evaluation has been able to review some of these monitoring gaps with DPs, and suggests these may under-record achievements because of the focus (in some projects) on near-release outcomes. In addition, where there is discontinuous support, an earlier exit report is unlikely to be updated by new information on changed outcomes. It also reflects challenges in some DPs for continuity of beneficiary contact after release - and in supporting through the gate ('end-to-end') provision to which most aspired.

Figure 3.7: Beneficiary outcomes and destinations, 2005-2007

% of all Exodus leavers by recorded outcome to 6 June



Valid cases = 255

NB. Numbers do not sum to 100% because of multiple inputs to beneficiaries

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Overall, just one in ten of those leaving Exodus support had entered employment, self-employment or full-time education and training. Even if the 'not known' destinations are discounted, the proportion is no higher than one in seven (14%) of those with known outcomes recorded as going into employment, and most of these into full-time work, with a smaller proportion going into self-employment (2%). Rather fewer went directly into education or training (2%). Others were recorded as returning to custody, although this will have involved a mixture of sentenced remand prisoners and others (8%). The largest single recorded destination was into unemployment, affecting well over a half of those with recorded outcomes (57%).

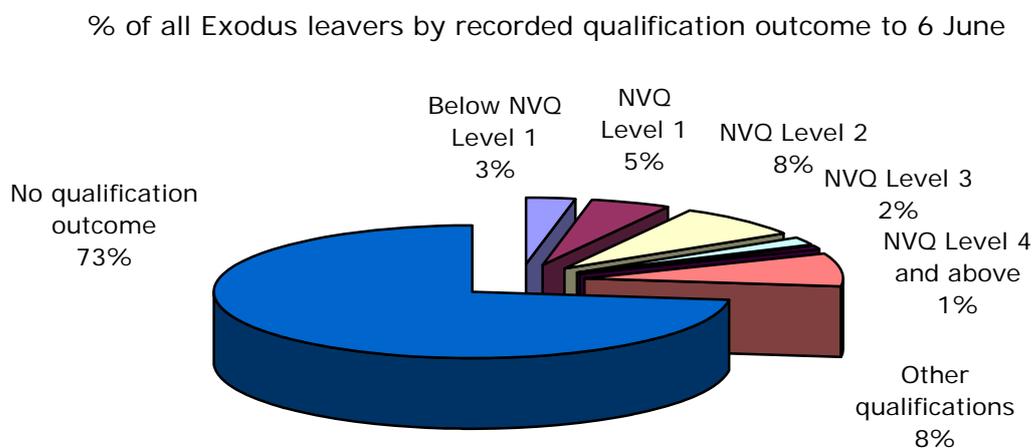
Separate data for individual DPs needs to be interpreted with some caution, given the relatively small numbers of leavers with recorded destinations in virtually all projects. However, on this evidence, Blue Sky seems to have been more successful than most in achieving employment-related outcomes, or in securing data to support this. Monitoring data for others may be misleading, and for at least one of the DPs, the evidence cited at project level on employment outcomes is inconsistent with the monitoring data, painting a more successful picture of achievements. Consequently, Southampton demonstrates 23 per cent successful employment outcomes in DP-level evaluation evidence and 29 per cent into training or work placements - exceeding the recorded employment outcomes from the Exodus whole project monitoring five-fold. Here, it would seem that at local level there has been some continued tracking of beneficiaries who may have initially left Exodus without an employment outcome, but were later known to have secured full or part-time work or self-employment.

There are no data available on the extent to which those securing employment have sustained this. No provision has been made to capture any subsequent experience of beneficiary leavers - although with a relatively short duration project and apparent problems in capturing even through the gate destinations, longitudinal evidence would clearly have been problematic. However, at least one project - Southampton City Limits - was able to comment that of its leavers with employment, some were known to have held the same job for over a year.

The other area where there is some outcomes evidence is for qualifications secured as a beneficiary. The previous analysis has shown that the great majority of beneficiaries had no recorded qualifications at recruitment. It has also shown that just under one in three received some form of training or education through Exodus support, including basic skills training. On this evidence, it seems that 90 per cent of those with training or related support secured qualifications.

However, this was not a feature of support for most beneficiaries. As a result, those with qualification outcomes were in a minority, at least among leavers. These constituted just over one in four of all leavers (27%). Figure 3.8 sets out the outcomes for those who were successful, and shows a spectrum of achievement. Around a third of those securing qualifications were defined as 'other' qualifications. Some of these were very specific to vocational needs such as fork lift truck driving certification.

Figure 3.8: Beneficiaries and qualification outcomes, 2005-2007



Valid cases = 265

NB. Numbers do not sum to 100% because of multiple inputs to beneficiaries

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Among others, it seems that those achieving at above NVQ Level 1 or equivalent (11%) exceeded those with attainments at Level 1 or below (8%). The data are again too limited to provide for any analysis of contrasts between individual DPs.

While these are significant achievements, it seems that they fall a long way short of what DPs had planned to achieve. Consequently, target data had provided for the great majority of beneficiaries (83%) securing a further qualification. In reality, it seems that nearly three quarters have not (73%). Targets were not achieved at all levels, but seem to have been further adrift for those below Level 1 than above. Here, DPs had anticipated 35 per cent of beneficiaries would secure a qualification - in practice, very few were able to do so.

In reviewing this achievement, it may be that the targets set at the outset of the project were not sufficiently guided by what was achievable on the ground, particularly in the context of short-term offenders who, experience has shown, may only spend as little as eight weeks in an establishment prior to moving on, or whose sentence plan may be disrupted by having to be moved prematurely to another part of the estate, due often to security concerns or population pressures.

3.5 Implementation and equality of opportunity

The ESF-EQUAL programme has at its heart the goal of funding regional and sub-regionally based innovations aimed at tackling priority areas of disadvantage, and in particular boosting equality of opportunity among those groups. The goals of Exodus reflected this, and the available data suggests substantial achievements in recruitment against equal opportunity targets. These data are reviewed in more detail at Annex C, but in summary show:

- Recruitment of women short-term offenders and PPOs exceeding target by a fifth - rather more than for men (14%).
- Beneficiary recruitment from minority ethnic groups being slightly more successful (against targets) than for white beneficiaries. Although both exceeded target, this was by a larger margin for those classified among minority ethnic groups, who together accounted for 42 per cent of all recruits against a target of 39 per cent.
- However, this success was not evenly distributed - with most of the enhanced recruitment coming from much larger numbers than planned among Asian and Asian British groups. Among minority ethnic groups, Black and Black British were the main recruitment group, accounting for just over a quarter (26%) of all recruits recorded by early June 2007.
- Older offenders (50 years and over) were being recruited at very high levels compared to target (over eight-fold), but mainly because of a very low DPA target (under 1% of all recruits).

Compared to baseline data prepared for Exodus late in 2005, this suggests most areas of recruitment were very close to regional population data of prisons in London and the South East. The exception seems to be for Black and Black British offenders, which for 2004-2005 population data accounted for just over 30 per cent of the London and south east prison population. The contrast is not great and may be accounted for by the relatively slightly greater levels of recruitment among London based DPs (where Black and Black British offenders accounted for 39 per cent of the population (against 13% the South East).

The monitoring data provides for an assessment of one further aspect of equality of opportunity - for offender disability. Around one in six of those recruited were registered as having physical (10%), mental (3%) or learning (3%) disability. The proportion with mental disability slightly exceeded the anticipated target in beneficiary distribution (9%), but that for mental disability fell some way short of target (also 9%). However, the largest shortfall was for those with learning disability, where only just over a tenth of the anticipated beneficiaries were recruited. The distributions are too small to allow for any meaningful assessment by individual DPs. It was not clear if this shortfall for ex-offenders with mental or learning disability represented flaws in the data supplied by DPs, or a genuine inability to recruit such beneficiaries.

These data need to be interpreted with some caution. Exodus has been very successful against its originally planned recruitment across DPs (600 beneficiaries) and raised its aspirations for recruitment to an extended target of 750 beneficiaries. However, the evaluation has not been able to secure adjusted and disaggregated targets at DP level or across diversity indicators against that 750 (see above). This would seem a significant limitation to understanding the relative 'quantitative' success of the programme in supporting different facets of diversity. This hard data also does not provide any process evidence of the extent to which Exodus - as an EQUAL-funded programme - has supported the proposed embedded arrangements for ensuring robust equal opportunity

processes were embedded in entitlement, needs-based delivery and quality assurance at DP level

There is very little evidence in case study DPs of specific work being undertaken in regard to targeting particular groups. Rather, projects have sought to focus on the needs of specific offenders who fitted the appropriate eligibility criteria (usually by nature of their offence leading to a short-term sentence, being a PPO, or being domiciled in a particular geographic area).

One specific project that addressed the needs of female prisoners was the Development Partnership which has been operating in HMP Holloway, which was identified as a case study so that the work undertaken there could be looked at in more detail.

The specific rehabilitation and re-settlement needs of female prisoners are well documented. A frequent judgement has been that there is the need to more adequately address their support needs²⁹ that they are often inadequately prepared for release.³⁰ Inspection reports by HMP Inspectorate of Prisons have highlighted the challenges that HMP Holloway faces with, at the time of the last inspection, around a third of the inmates being foreign nationals and just under half (45%) from black and minority ethnic groups.

Most of the prisoners face substantive barriers to effective re-settlement and many have lifestyles that were described as 'chaotic'. For example, just under half (some 46%) on entry were said typically to be homeless, just over half (55%) have children in care³¹ and the majority (over 90%) have drug/alcohol and frequently related mental health issues (particularly those addicted to crack cocaine). Drug use was said to be up to three times higher amongst female than male prisoners. The main reason given was that many of the women will have been 'paid' for services they have provided (including prostitution) in drugs rather than in money.

In HMP Holloway, increasingly effective referrals to Exodus have been made by members of the prison staff, one of whom was tasked with identifying individuals in the target group and then (where appropriate) conducting a full OASys Assessment.

Staff are also providing presentations about Exodus to new inmates through daily inductions and 'first night' support programmes, as well as identifying potential clients through screening induction forms. The majority of potential clients appear to be identified by this route with only a minority self-referring, or being referred by other agencies. Once identified, and accepted as an Exodus beneficiary, prisoners are assigned a case worker who provides (or makes referrals to) appropriate forms of support and who provides a 'through the gate' service into the community, again providing direct support and making referrals as required.

The Exodus team was commended by prison staff for their willingness, when addressing female prisoners' employability and re-settlement issues: *'to see the human being not the prisoner'*; *'to address practical issues'*; and *'to be flexible and fit in with prison regimes'*.

²⁹ Last year the LSDA has recently published research, funded by LSC, into how to maximise the benefits of OLASS for female offenders. It indicates *'...that the learning journey approach did not address the very real needs of women for learning and skills to build confidence and tackle the damaging effects of low esteem'*. It recommended that *'...the quality and delivery of information and advice on learning and skills from women offenders in prison and on release need to be improved to ensure they are comprehensive, accurate and appropriate to individual needs'*. Learning and Skills Development Agency (2006), *Maximising the benefits of OLASS for female offenders: an evaluation of the issues*. London: LSDA.

³⁰ Social Exclusion Unit (2002), *Reducing Re-offending by Ex-prisoners*. London: SEU/Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

³¹ The wider effects of imprisonment on prisoners' families have recently been examined in: Smith R, Grimshaw R, Romeo R, Knapp M (2007) *Poverty and disadvantage amongst prisoners' families*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

As a consequence, it is said that the Exodus project is viewed as *'part of the team'*. This situation was contrasted with those organisations which were *'standalone'*, and/or only *'deal with part of the problem'*. In turn, arrangements with these organisations - partly because they rely solely on volunteers - can break down, and *'crucial opportunities to make a difference are lost'*. An example of the team's responsiveness was that they are regularly available at 0800 hours (when most prisoner releases are undertaken) at the gate to meet prisoners and provide appropriate support.

The ability to provide flexible support is assisted by the fact that they can *'plan their own workloads'*, and they have control of a modest beneficiary budget to pay for travel, and other pressing beneficiary needs, particularly during periods where entitlement to Jobseekers' Allowance and other benefits are being agreed.

3.6 Empowerment and integrating the client group

Empowerment and integration of beneficiaries has been an important delivery principle underpinning Exodus. The evaluation suggests this has occurred through a variety of means. In terms of current delivery for example, the proposal to develop Project Spring was developed with and by serving prisoners, and HMP Springhill has involved prisoners in the refurbishment of premises in preparation for the job club. Other projects have sought to address individual empowerment through tackling key barriers to progression, including issues such as confidence/self-esteem, reviewing offending behaviour, ways of seeking employment, and declaring criminal convictions.

Some individual beneficiaries (eg from St Giles Trust and Southampton City Council projects) have had a chance to talk about their experience at trans-national workshops, at events in the UK and in other partner countries. Engaging beneficiaries was reported to have particularly impressed trans-national partners.

Other work is pending and subject to extension funding. For example, financial exclusion is a key barrier to the rehabilitation and re-integration of ex-offenders, as a criminal conviction is very likely to bar an individual from securing a range of financial products, including a bank account to assist with payments (including benefits).

In terms of a future development (if funding allows), UNLOCK, the National Association for Ex-Offenders, has developed a programme (in partnership with the HBOS Foundation) to deliver the 'Unlocking Financial Capability Programme'. This is a one-day workshop which focuses on the practicalities of using a bank account and banking services (including ATMs). As part of the proposed extension of Exodus, existing beneficiaries could be offered training, and 'train the trainer' activities might be undertaken. This work would build on a successful 12-month pilot project in the south east (in partnership with NOMS, the Prison Service and Halifax Bank of Scotland) to provide bank accounts to individuals due to be released.

Within a restricted work stream, beneficiary interviewees undertaken by the evaluation team to date have evidenced individual/anecdotal examples of significant empowerment provided by beneficiaries. For example:

- *TW successfully completed his six-month contract with Blue Sky, during which the contractor, Slough Accord, was so impressed with the standard of his work and his level of commitment, they have offered him full-time employment.*

TW said: 'Blue Sky has helped to sort my life out. It has helped me to understand things better, like the benefits of saving money and having a job. It has helped guide me away from crime and drugs. I had skills before I started breaking the law, but in that way of life you forget about the basic stuff. Blue

Sky helped to pick up the pieces, almost like starting from scratch, re-learning them. Blue Sky has helped change my life; it's the only thing that ever worked for me. I've been on other programmes, but they haven't worked.'

- AP was released from HMP Holloway in late summer 2006 after spending eight months in custody, and served the remainder of her year long sentence under Home Detention Custody (HDC).

She became involved with the Exodus project early during her sentence and said she has been able to: *'...get a lot of help from them both whilst inside and now since being released'*.

She mentioned that she had particularly valued: *'...my case worker being there when I got out – otherwise I'm pretty sure I'd have gone off and celebrated which may have meant me coming back'*.

AP said she had got a hostel place through Exodus, in an all female hostel in North London, that she was doing voluntary work in an office, and had completed an NVQ which they had arranged.

She said: *'I would like to think that I would have coped on my own. However, the help I've had from Exodus has meant that things have been much less daunting. Everything can seem a struggle when you're trying to get back into society. The help they've given has meant everything to me.'*

3.7 Contribution of the trans-national dimension

Individual DPs have had limited direct engagement in this tier of activity in Exodus, and there is little documented evidence of their direct contribution (see Chapter 2). The evaluation data shows four DPs reporting at least some direct participation which they felt had some effects on the project, but with little evidence of direct impact on implementation.

In the in-depth reviews, the selected DPs also had limited engagement. Three had participated, but in two of these there was thought to be limited transfer of knowledge into the local delivery - although in one case staff changes meant this 'expertise' had soon been lost to the DP. Another had spoken at a trans-national event, and saw value in this in *'...raising the profile of what we were doing...but not much else'*. At least one of the DPs had been able to propose - and support - beneficiaries attending the UK-based (Leeds Castle) event.

Some DPs had also sought to engage partners in the trans-national events, but with mixed success and effects. In one, an attending partner felt that trans-national events were: *'...wasteful and ...money used on them would be better spent at a local level'*. In contrast, the same DP had seen a partner attend the trans-national event to the Netherlands, and had reported (May 2007) this to have been very useful, supporting information exchange and good networking.

3.8 Overview

The review of the 13 approved DPs that did progress beyond the initial planning stage shows both common themes and diversity in their scope and focus. This has enabled Exodus to pilot work with both short-term offenders and PPOs in a variety of contexts, and gave it the potential to assess delivery lessons and the relative effectiveness of approaches taken.

The evidence suggests that DPs have been highly effective at tapping latent demand for such provision among the client group. At the point of review, the level of recruitment of beneficiaries has substantially exceeded the initial target and was only a little short of the extended target. With the exception of attracting beneficiaries with mental or learning disability, Exodus has also been very successful for supporting equal opportunity recruitment targets, and this distribution seems to reflect that in the wider prison population. The shortfall for recruiting offenders with learning disability is substantial, and suggests that Exodus has been less robust in testing, or recording, delivery to this important segment of the client group.

Much of the recorded work with beneficiaries was focused on employment and employability, related to advice, guidance and counselling, motivation, job brokerage, needs assessment and action planning. This would seem to be consistent with the end-focus of Exodus, and reflects the range of DP support which has been brought to bear. The evidence is less robust for looking at the depth of this support - although these issues are touched on in the following chapter on innovation and lessons arising for delivery. The services provided have resulted in some nine per cent of beneficiaries recorded as entering employment or self-employment and a further one per cent entering full-time education and training.

However, disappointingly, many of the outcomes of the work with beneficiaries remain unrecorded, with destination information being available for only just over half of the leaving beneficiaries, in part reflecting difficulties in tracking individuals who were voluntarily engaged in provision. What may seem a flaw in the monitoring process also seems to reflect wider difficulties for delivering genuinely through the gate provision - a substantial issue in the transferability and effectiveness in service delivery.

This under-recording of 'hard outcomes' for individuals probably substantially understates the wider achievements of the project, which was intended from the outset to be more about exploring new ways of working (eg through new forms of partnership working) and new methods of supporting short-term offenders and PPOs. The lack of virtually any systematic 'soft outcomes' evidence, means it also does not take account of the profound effect the programme has had with individual beneficiaries, as recorded in case study evidence and through personal testimonies.

As will be explored later in the report, the lack of more rigorous and sophisticated systems for collating and analysing the wider outcomes of the work undertaken through Exodus to date makes it more difficult to evidence the success (and related costs) of inputs for given outputs which commissioning bodies will increasingly need to have.

Chapter 4: Innovation and Added Value

4.1 Introduction

A key aim of Exodus was to explore novel ways of addressing the re-settlement needs of short-term offenders and PPOs. In this, a major recent research study by the Home Office³² on 'what works' in regard to re-settlement activities concluded that developing individually tailored services was crucial, and indicated that:

'A multi-modal, or individually tailored approach involves providing prisoners or probationers with (as necessary) cognitive skills training, drug treatment, sex offender treatment, educational and vocational training, together with help in securing accommodation. Addressing the range of their needs is certainly a challenge and requires appropriate assessment and co-ordination by way of case management'.

Exodus has developed a range of interventions, many of which follow an 'individually tailored' approach. In this chapter, we look at:

- Cross-regional innovation within Exodus and the value added by it.
- Quality of innovation within Development Partnerships.
- The added value of activity in Development Partnerships.
- The contribution and impact of the trans-national dimension.
- The constraints to adding value and innovation at DP level.

It also draws together the cross-cutting themes emerging from this review for issues to be explored in more detail in the final chapter of the evaluation.

4.2 Cross-regional innovation and added value

The aim of Exodus was to set up opportunities to develop services on an *area, intra-regional* and *inter-regional* basis. With the active support and management of the HM Prison and National Probation Services in London, a Consortium of the DPs in London was formed at an early stage in the development of Exodus, and this has met regularly, under the chairmanship of the Prison Service.

The consortium has been valued by the London DPs, and was felt by those interviewed (both stakeholders and DPs) to have brought necessary rigour to the process of managing the development of Exodus on a pan-London basis. A 'traffic lights' reporting system which was introduced has allowed projects to reflect on those areas which are performing well, as well as those which require development. In addition, under the chairmanship of St Giles Trust, practitioners from across the projects in the London have met to review practice within Exodus and to discuss effective approaches.

³² Harper G, Chitty C (eds) (2004) *The impact of corrections on re-offending a review of 'what works'*. Home Office Research Study 291. London: Home Office. It should be noted that this report highlights some of the weaknesses in the current UK evidence base. This it indicates is due to 'many of the delivered by correctional services (having) suffered from poor implementation', and, 'sub-optimal research designs'.

These interviewees also reflected on a growth in confidence levels and trust through working in the London Consortium which provided the necessary conditions for partnership development. Some mentioned, as an example of good practice within partnership working, the discussions there had been regarding 'matched funding' for the proposed extension, where some of the larger voluntary and community service (VCS) providers had been able to work through, and support, smaller providers to ensure the required match could be properly evidenced.

The DPs in the south east have only very recently had the opportunity to benefit from a similar mechanism. By contrast with the very early start made in London, progress in developing consortium working in the south east was much slower. Contributory factors here may include that the South East Prisons 'Foundation' Project did not take place. The south east region was also seen as more disparate nature - spatially, with no ready geographical focus for 'easy' travel to a central focus for the DPs, and structurally with the south east consisting of three quasi-autonomous prisons service 'areas'.

The lack of such a focus in the South east was commented on in HOST's pre-interim report, and again in the November report of the evaluation. Feedback from the cross-DP stakeholder workshop in November re-enforced this gap, and efforts were commenced under the auspices of the Government Office South East (GOSE) and the South East Prison Service, to establish such a forum. This subsequently saw some involvement by NOMS, with a first meeting early in 2007. Some of those interviewed felt that these early meetings had been very effective. Those who felt they were less effective were more likely to stress that the consortium is at a formative stage, and that most developments had occurred without consortium input.

Beyond these intra-regional arrangements, many of those interviewed commented on the lack of 'cross-regional' activity across Exodus. It was felt that the project had too readily divided into work undertaken in either London or the South East. This issue was raised prominently by DPs in the November workshop but it seems that measures to secure cross-regional working have been small-scale, bi-lateral across DPs, and mainly opportunistic. More recently, some DPs observed that more attention should have been given to the cross-regional dimensions of the project, in particular because, as one noted: *'...so many prisoners from London transfer into the south east and then return to the city'*.

There has been some bi-lateral sharing and collaboration across projects. For example, there has been considerable sharing (with resulting synergies) between those projects managed by the St Giles Trust, which include projects in both London and the South East, and within the London Consortium. Bi-lateral links have also grown up under the 'Exodus umbrella'. For example, HMP Springhill mentioned they have accepted visits from other Exodus DPs, and the Southampton City Council and the smaller Mid Hants project have discussed mutual progress and developments.

However, these links have not been facilitated by Exodus, where formal opportunities for 'networking' were mostly achieved through the stakeholder workshop attended by most of the DPs in November 2006, conducted as part of the evaluation. The value of this was also recognised by some of the stakeholders attending from the Strategy Group, with one commenting there was evident enthusiasm for sharing among DPs with the inter-play of ideas and better practice and which she also felt: *'... gave me a better understanding of some of the practical issues around in custody support'*.

A number of projects expressed their disappointment that, as a consequence, opportunities had been lost to share experience, and contribute to innovation and added value. As one DP manager put it: *'Early promises of information exchange and contacts simply have not been realised.'*

4.3 The quality of innovation in Development Partnerships

A principal aim of the project was to develop programmes of support (in an innovative and client-focused way) to enable the more effective re-settlement of short-term offenders and PPOs - an area in which there is a limited UK evidence base from which to draw. For example, previous research into projects seeking to meet the needs of PPOs showed that there was a mismatch between PPO offending-related problems (principally accommodation and ETE) and the involvement of appropriate agencies that can meet such needs,³³ which Exodus projects have sought to address.

A considerable amount of activity has gone into the development of partnership working activities through Exodus, including developing experience of working, in different combinations, with the public, private and VCS sectors. The value added by these arrangements is covered in the next section.

A range of innovatory activity was seen in case study DPs. Against a background of past practice, the evaluation suggests practices with significant innovation included:

- Beneficiary workbooks with self-paced and embedded self-assessment tools.
- Job clubs established as pre-release and interactive support to beneficiaries.
- Peer Advisers working with case workers.

Beneficiary workbooks: These workbooks have been developed by the St Giles Trust (principally the team at HMP Brixton). The workbooks have a range of self-assessment tools, some of which the project have devised themselves, and others which have been developed and tested elsewhere. The tools cover a range of areas, including decidedness and job-readiness, and on personal and social dimensions (akin to comparable tools such as the Rikter Scale).

If baseline statements were recorded, with additional work the workbooks have the potential to be a metric to assess 'distance travelled' either on their own, or in connection with adviser case study and/or offender diary approaches. In addition, they could be used via the Employability Assessment Tool developed by Kent Probation Service as part of their Exodus project.

Feedback from beneficiaries, and peer review by advisers, has led to the development and usability of the materials. However, their wider use, as both a career development and 'soft outcomes' tool, is yet to be fully realised.

Job clubs: The use of job clubs as a method for external labour market job preparation and brokerage is well developed, and their benefits well documented.³⁴ However, the use of job clubs with offenders is less well researched, and effective approaches are less well understood, although some conventional job clubs have clearly been operated by Jobcentre Plus and other bodies. Within Exodus, there are two main job club initiatives: Project Spring at HMP Springhill, and the more recent development of the job club at HMP Holloway.

In terms of the former, as indicated, the need for Project Spring was identified by inmates themselves, who have been involved in its subsequent development. The project has sought to develop a fresh approach, for example, by maximising accessibility to the

³³ Home Office (2005), *Early Findings from the Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Evaluation*. Home Office Development and Practice Report 46. London: Home Office.

³⁴ Bysshe S; Hughes D; Bowes L (2002), *The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance: A Review of Current Evidence*. Derby: University of Derby.

user group (although some of the practical difficulties in doing this are explored later in this chapter). The service has an open access policy whereby prisoners can drop in and use the facilities such as computer access, newspapers, etc, whenever they like (subject to opening hours), and user feedback suggested that this is a 'unique part of prison life' as it was less encumbered by the rules and regulations that can inhibit the effectiveness of other prison services.

Existing and newly developed partnerships with employers have broadened the scope of Project Spring and helped ensure a better placement of prisoners into the labour market. As such, it was believed the project offers a model that could well be used in other category D prisons. Essential ingredients in the development of the facility have included a favourable top management at the prison and highly motivated operational staff. Links with employers (of all kinds) are also crucial to its effectiveness.

In terms of HMP Holloway, the job club is now operational one morning a week and has a waiting list. The programme has been developed using materials that have been used successfully elsewhere within projects run by St Giles Trust (including from the team at HMP Brixton). It includes external input, including from 'Dress for Success', a charity which aims to support disadvantaged women to be able to have suitable clothing for work. It is hoped to link the programme to the NOCN accredited 'Preparation for Work' course run by the OLASS provider at the prison.

A possible service development is the extended use of the 15 volunteer link workers (mentors) who have been trained by PACT as part of the project. At present, every beneficiary is given a link worker. However, engagement was reported to be limited at present, particularly once 'through the gate'. The idea of developing closer links with the Job Club and exploring other ways of using the link workers is being considered.

Peer Advisers: A number of the DPs being led by St Giles Trust are building on the work they have undertaken in the past on the use of Peer Advisers (which is currently the subject of a three-year external evaluation study). In terms of specific work within Exodus, the project operating at HMP Brixton is receiving 20 per cent funding for an NVQ Trainer/Assessor post to train Peer Advisers at the prison. The work there has been put forward for a Butler Trust Award and is highly valued by the prison staff.

There is a lot of interest amongst prisoners in becoming Peer Advisers.³⁵ Forty-eight recently applied for the most recent training programme, and eight were eventually recruited, having gained necessary security clearance through the prison, and having been assessed as being suitable candidates through the selection process.

Those selected to undertake training (which leads to an NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance assessed by Advice UK) undertake a series of core sessions on guidance and legislation issues alongside briefings from key agencies about their work and referral processes. The key advantage of Peer Advisers was said to be that: *'...prisoners feel more comfortable talking to other prisoners'* and that they are: *'...known on the wing - and have respect'*. The Peer Advisers at HMP Brixton (and those spoken to, for example, at HMP Ford) work closely with project and HMP staff and are well aware (through training and support) of the limits and boundaries in which they operate.

A key development issue within prisons for the use of Peer Advisers appears to be to ensure that the Offender Management Units are able - through their sentence planning - to ensure they can spend sufficient time (minimum six months) in the prison to complete the training and start using their skills.

³⁵ The role of prisoners acting as peer tutors has been highlighted in a study of good practice in the context of offender education and training. See: Learning and Skills Development Agency (2006) *Just Learning: Case studies in improving offender education and training*. London: LSDA

A current development at HMP Brixton includes trying to get Peer Advisers to work in different pathways and to achieve a shared vision of the value of having a team of, say, 12 Peer Advisers available in the prison at any one time.

4.4 The added organisation value of activity in DPs

The added value of activity in Development Partnerships is felt at a number of different levels, both organisational and individual. This section considers the first of these.

Some of the DP models that were developed were complex. For example, the original proposal from Southampton City Council³⁶ named it as the lead partner providing the core management group, with a manager from Training and Employment Initiatives and from City Limits,³⁷ supported by HMP Winchester and the National Probation Service. These partners were to meet quarterly but sometimes met more often, depending on whether there were any outstanding issues (eg summer 2006 reorganisation).

The core management group were to be supported by a local consortium steering group, which included: Southampton City Council initiatives (Supporting People, Substance Misuse Team and Community Safety); In-BIZ self-employment agency; the voluntary sector (including the Salvation Army, Society of St James and Two Saints); Hampshire Constabulary; the LSC for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and Jobcentre Plus.

In terms of the DPs, some attempted to assess the quality of partnership links they had forged. For example, the HMP Holloway Development Partnership conducted a stakeholder survey³⁸ of 45 internal and external agencies with which the project works in March 2007, with responses returned in April. Thirteen survey forms were returned (29% response). The responses were generally positive, and just over three in four felt that the project was successful in regard to areas such as assessing needs, helping beneficiaries deal with housing problems and linking them into other services.

The team concluded that although the response was lower than had been hoped, it had identified gaps in the marketing of the service and: *'...the need to provide formal feedback to agencies once beneficiaries are discharged into the community'*.

The Development Partnerships have involved a mixture of partnership models, including statutory/VCS and VCS/public and private. In terms of each of these in turn:

Statutory/VCS: Involvement of statutory and VCS providers in the Prison Service had been an essential feature of pre-release support across Exodus. Experience of working within the Prison Service appears to be mixed, with very good experience having been recorded at a strategic level (particularly in London), but with more varied experience on the ground.

³⁶ Southampton is categorised by Government Office SE as a 'Crime Priority Area'. It is one of SEEDA's 119 most deprived wards and the OPDM Indices of Deprivation list Southampton as one of the five most deprived wards in the South East. Southampton City Council Research into 'Barriers to Employment for Disadvantaged Groups in Southampton' (2004) noted that 'Southampton has approximately 500 unemployed people who have a criminal record.'

³⁷ City Limits have been offering supported employment to a range of groups (for example, those with severe learning difficulties and people with mental health needs or physical disabilities) for the past 16 years. See: <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/health/ld>.

³⁸ Another project managed by St Giles Trust (The Lambeth and Southwark Returns) similarly conducted a survey to which there were 12 returns. The response was broadly positive, but with some concerns about a lack of publicity which is being addressed through the project's action plan.

For example, senior staff at HMP Holloway were very supportive of the work that Exodus has undertaken and were grateful for the additional resource that they represented.³⁹ The team there was described as professional, and able to both identify and address problems. The fact that they could provide a co-ordinated response was welcomed, and that the resource they provided was: *'...ring-fenced, and could not be pushed into other areas'*.

Similarly, a number of prisons contacted indicated the Exodus work had enabled them to 'extend their reach'. For example, senior staff at HMP Winchester prison commented that she simply had not the staff resource to make the extensive linkages with key agencies and, for example, to take ex-offenders to interview as Exodus staff had done; those at HMP Ford said that the resources Exodus provided enabled them (through peer advisers and paid staff) to offer an effective accommodation service which contributed directly to KPTs.

By contrast, another DP commented that although they believed the 'intentions of the Prison Service are good', they found that 'bureaucratic systems' and operational issues such as 'staff shortages or sudden increases in numbers of prisoners' mean continuity is hard to establish.

In this context, the importance of securing the support of staff (both at Governor grades and on the wings)⁴⁰ was stressed. However, the attitude of HMP staff to resettlement, and the attention and resource they currently give to this activity, is variable and can be limited (particularly in the context of current high numbers of prisoners and having to make efficiency savings). As one Governor grade interviewee put it:

'This prison's responsibility ends at the gate.'

Outside the prison service, only one police authority was directly engaged at an early stage with project developments - Hampshire Police. This force was engaged in both the Westgate and Mid Hants and the Southampton City Council project, although this would appear to have been in mainly an advisory rather than a fully operational capacity. DP reflection is consequently limited from VCS/statutory bodies of police as active partners.

For the National Probation Service (NPS), involvement has been particularly focused on work they have been undertaking with PPOs. Here, relations between NPS and the VCS in Exodus have to be seen in the context of wider concerns some have about the 'direction of travel' of policy in regard to the increased involvement of the VCS in service delivery envisaged in the Offender Management Bill.⁴¹ Despite this, there is evidence within Exodus DPs of robust working relationships being developed, although sometimes after a slow start. For example, in the projects run by Action Acton (AcA) - supported by St Giles Trust - a high degree of trust has been built up, to the extent that the Probation Service and Police regularly refer individuals to AcA for help and support, or believe that the delivery team is capable of signposting them to another agency more appropriate for their needs.

The Probation Services in North London reported a strong and valuable working relationship with the Exodus delivery team, which includes sharing information, client progress reports and daily telephone contact. They have also appreciated the additional funding for PPOs for travel expenses, training courses, and interview costs and the

³⁹ A number of prisons visited during fieldwork indicated that they were tasked with making three per cent efficiency savings during the current operational year.

⁴⁰ Braggins J; Talbot J (2006), *Wings of Learning: the role of the prison officer in supporting prisoner education*. Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, London: The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.

⁴¹ See, for example, NoMS 'Offender Management Bill – the Facts' leaflet (<http://noms.justice.gov.uk/documents/OMBill-Facts-Leaflet?view=Binary>).

support offered for interview preparation. Ealing Probation Service said that they have become reliant on Exodus and that, without their commitment:

'...the PPO scheme in Ealing Borough would not be able to function to its full potential'.

A good recent example of this collaboration was when, in May, the team were involved with the Central London Probation Service in submitting individuals to Thames Water for employment. To prepare beneficiaries, the team organised comprehensive pre-interview preparation, which included increasing their background knowledge about the company, interview techniques, ensuring they had clothes suitable for an interview, literacy testing, help with application forms, and so on. Three were submitted and all were engaged.

Following this, London Probation Service asked a member of the AcA team to host an open day to help prepare other clients for recruitment to South West Trains. Subsequently, 17 were put forward for an interview with SW Trains, and again were thoroughly prepared, with a range of exercises which also included visual and literacy tests. The interviews were held in early June and 13 beneficiaries are expected to be offered jobs.

By contrast, there was no evidence of links having been established between projects and sentencers, although there clearly was evidence of support when attending court.

One interviewee from NOMS stressed the importance (in time) of establishing links with sentencers to be able to complete the feedback to them of both the impact of the sentences available to them in general, and in particular in regard to particular individuals they have sentenced.

Public/private/VCS sector links: Similarly, there have been good examples of wider Public/Private and VCS links developing. For example, the 'Decide' programme operated by Blue Sky has worked well with 25 participants, all of whom had been offered jobs with Blue Sky (of whom 18 had accepted) with one joining Clancy Docwra. The partnership with both Accord and Clancy Docwra was adjudged to be a great success, as were similar arrangements that Project Spring had with the acclaimed National Grid Offender Training and Employment programme.⁴²

In the case of Project Spring, the programme has introduced too a small number of relatively local employers to the prison, and the job club has been the focus of this activity. In discussions with one employer (logistics sector), the motivation in collaborating with the prison was two-fold: to meet a real need for staff, and to provide an opportunity for a disadvantaged group in the labour market.

4.5 The added value of activity in DPs to individuals

As well as 'adding value' by helping develop the capability and experience of organisations working in partnership to address the re-settlement issues of short-term offenders and PPOs, the DPs have clearly been working with individual beneficiaries themselves, and in particular have been exploring the level and intensity of support required, to enable individuals to re-engage.

⁴² Through this programme, the company works with over 60 partner employers, and since its inception in 2000 is on target to help over 1,000 offenders from 22 prisons by the end of 2007. The success of the programme is illustrated by the claim that the re-offending rate of those going through the programme is as low as seven per cent, achieved by attention to the following elements: stringent selection of offenders; training carried out off the prison site; Meeting identified skills needs; Mentoring pre- and post-release from prison.

As indicated in Chapter 3, many of the Exodus project beneficiaries face substantive barriers to effective re-settlement, with many of them having lifestyles that were described as 'chaotic'.

In respect to short-term offenders, there is successful practice to draw on, notably from the evaluation of Pathfinder projects.⁴³ This evaluation confirmed that: *'...short-term prisoners' re-settlement problems are often a combination of difficulties in accessing opportunities and resources and difficulties which have their roots in the prisoners' attitudes, habits and habitual responses to problems'.*

The report went on to highlight that studies, such as Zambie and Quinsey⁴⁴ (1997) and Maruna⁴⁵ (2000), indicate that recidivism is likely to be influenced by offenders' thinking as well as their circumstances. It concluded that:

'It follows that services for released prisoners must address not only the multiple problems they face, such as lack of settled accommodation and employment, drug and alcohol abuse, but also the personal resources, strategies and motivations they have for dealing with them'.

The experience of the projects that have piloted case working with short-term offenders and PPOs through Exodus echoed these findings. They emphasised that, in the words of one: *'...effective re-settlement is very resource intensive, and requires staff to be available almost on a daily basis at critical points such as immediately on release.'*

The case worker role was seen as: *'...providing practical solutions to pressing problems' as far as possible, 'getting people to do as much as possible for themselves and helping them to realise their potential'.*

Developing 'beneficiaries' resilience' was seen by some interviewed as a key skill so that they could 'ride the knocks better'.

A key issue in developing the case worker approach was found to be one of the time necessary to build relationships (particularly those that would be able to be sustained once prisoners were 'through the gate') and how best to disengage from beneficiaries in the first instance, if they were not seriously willing to engage, and secondly at the point when they should be being encouraged (and enabled) to do things for themselves.

For example, one project noted in a recent report that case workers were spending a great deal of time providing practical and emotional support to beneficiaries (eg attending court and helping to resolve issues related to outstanding charges).

The project manager concluded that:

'A number of beneficiaries show signs of becoming dependent on the support provided, and over the next month there is a need to review how these clients are moved on.'

⁴³ Lewis S; Vennard J; Maguire M; Raynor P; Vansone M; Raybould S; Rix A (2003), *The Re-settlement of short-term prisoners: An evaluation of seven Pathfinders*. (Can be found on Home Office RDS web-site: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds)

⁴⁴ Zamble E; Quinsey V (1997), *The criminal recidivism process*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁵ Maruna S (2000), *Making Good*. Washington: American Psychological Association.

4.6 The added value of the trans-national dimension

The trans-national dimension has established its own work programme, and through this is said to have developed tools for assisting formative assessment of beneficiaries. UK stakeholders (see Chapters 2 and 3) have contributed to this process, and in some cases have seen value arising from the networking, cross-member state review and associated events.

The evaluation has been tasked to look at the impact of the trans-national activities on, among other issues, the added value and innovation of Exodus. We have identified no such direct contribution to the practice and focus of the central Development Partnership, and none to the working groups. Although individual stakeholders have in some cases greatly valued their engagement with practitioners and policy-makers outside the UK, and have seen some knock-on value for their own agencies, no direct benefit to Exodus has been identified. The same is true for the DPs themselves, although levels of engagement here have been low (see Chapter 3).

4.7 Constraints to adding value and innovation

A range of constraints to DPs adding value were also observed across the different evidence strands from the evaluation. These included:

- Agreeing roles and responsibilities.
- Project visibility and connectedness.
- Rates of attrition.
- Security and systems in the secure estate.
- Restricted time frame.
- The lack of suitable accommodation.
- Employers' willingness to engage.
- Lack of IT systems.
- Evidencing success.
- Lack of critical mass.

Agreeing roles and responsibilities: It is clear from our review of effective working within DPs that these arrangements are enhanced when there is at the start a clear process, which the speed of formation of some of the DPs did not encourage.

For example, partners in the Lambeth and Southwark Returns project reported that there had been some operational tensions. Issues raised included a lack of clarity about boundaries and reporting lines, and difficulties in terms of 'dual management' when partner staff appear to have been attached to the project, rather than fully seconded. Concern was expressed, for example, that a member of staff was appointed by a partner to the project without the lead organisation (St Giles Trust) being involved in the recruitment or selection process.

It was also indicated that some of the wider partners involved in the project were: *'...unreliable'*, or: *'...talk a good game but do not deliver'*. This meant that referral

arrangements become fragile, and increased action is needed to progress chase what should have taken place. As a consequence, in one DP, the view was expressed that the project is at risk of being asked to: *'...fill gaps in provision, without necessarily having being given credit for what they have achieved'*.

These difficulties are acknowledge within the NoMS offender management model, which accepts that: *'...there is no simple formulaic solution to avoiding the waste and managing the tensions caused by...inter-locking systems'*.⁴⁶

Project visibility and connectedness: This was felt to be an issue at different levels. First, at an establishment level, in one London prison, there was said to be 36 initiatives being delivered with, in the views of some interviewees, no visible cohesion or attempt to explain all of them to prison staff, leaving them confused about such things as eligibility for different programmes or their interrelationship.

Similarly, in the South East, following the demise of the proposed South East Prisons Project, official visitors to HM Ford have been known to note their surprise that there is: *'...an Exodus project here at all'*, because they thought: *'...it had not continued because of financial difficulties'*.

Secondly at a strategic level, Exodus did not always seem to be clearly part of wider planning processes. For example, as part of the developing London Resettlement Strategy⁴⁷ launched in autumn 2005, pilot work in the male estate at HMP Wormwood Scrubs has been extended in 2006/2007 to the female estate (HMP Holloway).

It is understood that the pilot at HMP Holloway is seeking to ensure that existing local services support women being released back into their home areas⁴⁸ and does not involve specific casework support. However, despite the fact that some staff previously engaged with Exodus are now involved in the pilot, the potential synergies between it and Exodus seem unclear, and do not appear to have been formally addressed.

The visibility of Exodus has not been assisted by a lack of focus on the provision of adequate publicity materials (see Chapter 2), and the failure to refresh and update the project website, which largely carries historic information about DPs,⁴⁹ although there has been some dissemination of innovative and effective practice through the National Equal Offender Network (NEON).⁵⁰ Furthermore, changes (and gaps) in project management have not provided a clear steer, and have meant that potential synergies and links between DPs have not been identified. As a consequence, many opportunities for added value (and potentially, innovation) have been lost.

Rates of attrition: There appears to be a high rate of attrition between those who have been referred to some projects and those enrolled. For example, in one DP, the ratio was some 1:20. One factor in this particular circumstance was that some 60 per cent of those on remand do not return to prison following their court appearance, and so were 'lost' to the project. Another factor (as indicated) is the voluntary nature of arrangements which mean that, once recruited, beneficiaries may choose to disengage even if this is not in their best interests.

⁴⁶ Home Office/National Offender Management Service (2006), *The NoMS Offender Management Model*. London: NoMS.

⁴⁷ See: www.gos.gov.uk/gol/Community_safety/Londonresettlementstrategy.

⁴⁸ The work is focused in eight London Boroughs (Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Islington, Camden, Hackney and Tower Hamlets).

⁴⁹ This issue is being addressed by some DPs individually. For example, Recently (April 2007) the City Limits SEO organised an event at HMP Winchester on reducing offending with presentations on how Southampton Exodus and Winchester CLIC were working on this issue. This was attended by 40 key staff, including prison service and police personnel, and the Lord Lieutenant who is the patron for CLIC.

⁵⁰ See, for example, NEON E-Zine: http://www.equal.ecotec.co.uk/ezoneassets/ezone3/neon_issue1.pdf.

Security and systems in the secure estate: There was feedback from beneficiaries and practitioners about the difficulties of seeking to operate progressive resettlement policies within prisons. For example, a focus group of beneficiaries at HMP Springhill felt the provision of services did not operate in an optimum way. They mentioned, for example, that the limits on passes away from the prison (currently a maximum of 12 hours) meant that some prisoners were unable to take work that involved long daily journeys, and this was a particular problem from Springhill, given its relatively isolated location.

Many of the prisoners were from London and would prefer to seek work there, because this would be where they would reside when they had completed their sentence. While the use of private cars was allowed for those prisoners working outside, for many it was not an option because of the cost (particularly insurance), and so the only alternative was to rely on expensive and slow public transport. It was felt as a consequence of this, and other factors, that although the prison was now really geared to resettlement, they lacked the flexibility to maximise what could be achieved.

Restricted time frame: One well-placed interviewee stressed that in terms of the model of what works best with short-term offenders, it was a question of what could be learned in the '*...short time available for interventions - maybe between two to eight weeks*'.

He also indicated that he felt it was a question of focusing in on those: '*...who could be assisted*', for example, by screening out those whose primary needs were drug rehabilitation, or who had mental health problems, and focusing on those who are willing and able to engage in the world of work. This he suggested meant testing areas such as employability and motivation.

The lack of suitable accommodation: This was particularly, but not exclusively highlighted in the London-based DPs. For example, the Lambeth and Southwark Returns project highlighted that their clients were often said to be accessing the lowest tier of supported housing where specific needs they have may not be addressed.

Employers' willingness to engage: For some DPs, this was a recurrent issue in holding back the quality of their innovation, and one they felt was very difficult to address. Project Spring indicated that developing the involvement of employers has proved difficult and continues to present a challenge to the project. Prior to the start of the project, HMP Springhill already had some useful employer links⁵¹ that provided valuable job opportunities for some prisoners, and the project has sought to increase these. However, despite strenuous efforts on the part of the prison, attendance at information events for employers has been disappointing with, for example, the first one attracting only ten per cent of invitees, while the second event attracted none.

The beneficiaries in the focus group expressed their disappointment that their contact with employers on site was minimal, though they understood some of the reluctance of employers. A more productive engagement of employers has come through different routes. In particular, the project has benefited from the widely acclaimed work of National Grid and its Offender Training and Employment Programme.

Programme staff at Action Acton reported that employers have been generally very supportive, but all the partnership agencies feel that most companies are wary of employing short-term custody offenders, many of whom may have several convictions. They are more receptive to approaches regarding more mature prisoners who have

⁵¹ See, for example: Wilson D; Wahidin A (2006), '*Real Work*' in Prison: Absences, Obstacles and Opportunities. University of Central England: Birmingham.

spent many years in prison, and had time to reflect on their lives and consequences of their actions, than short-term offenders who have not.

Lack of IT systems: At present, management information on offenders and ex-offenders is held on a variety of different systems, which it is hoped will be addressed through the introduction of a single case record using C-NOMIS.⁵² The importance of effective data-sharing is a crucial element that has been identified as a key success factor in evaluations of previous interventions with PPOs and others.⁵³

The lack of a current 'case management IT system' is a major barrier and, as one well-placed interviewee put it: *'Nobody is going to scale up delivery based on a system which is built on exchanging bits of paper.'*

The Mega Nexus system (which may be piloted if extension funding is granted) was, some felt, 'a start', but others were clear that what is needed is a system that:

'Gives a 3D view including, for example, soft outcomes, and ways of discerning (through having pre-exit assessments) offenders' likely/predicted patterns of re-offending, so that the impact of continuing interventions can be monitored and evaluated.'

There are examples of where the issue was being tackled in case study projects. For example, Southampton Development Partnership collates a range of statistics on database, and data are kept by City Limits. The lead team consider this information to be more extensive than that required by ECOTEC. For example, the core team indicated that they had acquired the OASys scoring information from the prison, and have replicated this to establish whether clients had a particularly high need.

Similarly, Action Acton has worked hard to build up their database of employers, seeing this as central to efficient job brokerage. They contact employers by telephone and through personal visit, and have been particularly effective with construction companies and the warehousing and catering sectors.

Additionally, AcA are building a database of other agencies which can link to the work which they are delivering. For example, housing trusts and charities are particularly important for ex-offenders. The need to have a named contact is always considered important, and most of the partners (St Mungo's and Probation Service in particular) are happy to share information about contacts and new services that are launched in the three Boroughs.

Evidencing success: The need to evidence the success of programmes in respect to beneficiaries' attitudinal and behavioural change ('soft outcomes') as well as supposedly 'hard outcomes' (such as securing work or entering learning) has been long recognised, particularly in the context of ESF projects.⁵⁴ Some development activity has taken place within Exodus. For example, it was reported at Action Acton that progress is monitored daily, and the project believes that it has a good grasp of success factors and the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation.

⁵² C-NOMIS will contain data including offender demographics (including nationality, ethnicity, education, employment, disability, addresses, and other relevant personal data), their court proceedings, offences, sentences, licences, risks, interventions on which they are placed, their attendances, performance and progress on their sentences including enforcement and breach of community sentences and licences.

⁵³ Home Office (2005), *Early Findings from the Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Evaluation*. Home Office Development and Practice Report 46. London: Home Office.

⁵⁴ ECOTEC (1998), *Soft Indicators: Demonstrating progress and recognising achievement*. ESF Employer Initiative Support Unit (<http://www.employment.ecotec.co.uk/download/soft/pdf>).

It was indicated that all the partners are involved in this process and should be able to identify registrations and outcomes easily. Evaluation of the project operates at two levels: satisfaction with process and outcomes by beneficiaries, and a judgment (made by Project Network staff) on how far beneficiaries have progressed in their attitude to work/training, how they organise themselves and their life, and what further support they now need. Identifying 'soft' outcomes, however, has proved to be more difficult to evidence, and the consortium development team are constantly exploring ways that this can be achieved.

A number of interviewees stressed the importance of recording 'soft outcomes', which was a major point of agreement (and proposal for action at last November's stakeholder workshop). Some mentioned the use of devices such as logs/diaries (on paper or on digital media) for beneficiaries to record their progress, and for practitioners to draw up case studies, which a number of projects (including St Giles Trust) have done, although unfortunately not to any agreed style or template.

Lack of critical mass: It was argued by some interviewees that, in the words of one:

'...although outcomes are important, ultimately Exodus is not about numbers but about persevering with clients who constantly face discriminatory barriers which must always be viewed in the context of their lifestyles, which are frequently chaotic.'

Despite this, it was recognised that without a 'critical mass' it would be difficult to demonstrate the costs and benefits of approaches piloted within Exodus. For example, Blue Sky indicated it is already: '...a significant employer of ex-offenders, employing around 40 a year'. However, by comparison with the largest employers of ex-offenders, who are taking around 100-120, they are: '...hardly scratching the surface'.

They estimated that Blue Sky could potentially be taking on about 500 to 1,000 beneficiaries a year, if it were able to replicate what it was doing here in other areas. At present, it was felt to be: '...a nice little project improving the lives of 20 to 30 a year'. The organisation believes the model is: '...very scaleable', because it has a very significant element of commercial income attached to it, so the amount of grant funding required is far less.

4.8 Overview

Exodus has operated at a number of different levels (ie at a project, area/sub-regional, regional and cross-regional basis) and has had an opportunity to add value and be innovative at each. At the area and regional levels, a very mixed picture emerges. In London, there is clear evidence of a sense of shared endeavour, with partners working closely together (chaired by HMPS/NPS) to develop both the effectiveness of individual projects, and their collective impact (although as indicated, links to wider regional plans such as the London Re-Settlement Pilots were not always clear). By contrast, arrangements for DPs to come together in the south east (and/or to learn share with London DPs) have been much more restricted.

At a DP and sub-regional level, a range of partnership arrangements have been tested out and valuable lessons learned in terms of effective ways of working between, for example, statutory agencies (notably HMPS, NPS and NoMS) and the VCS, and between VCS (including social enterprises) and the private sector. The challenge of engaging Local Authorities in this mix has also been highlighted. Here, Exodus has not seen universal success, but does show important lessons to guide wider practice through the experience of the Southampton DP (where Local Authority interest pre-dated Exodus), as well as through Action Acton and Blue Sky.

The extent of the 'distance travelled' in some of these relationships should not be underestimated (eg, one VCS partner, quoted as 'invaluable' at the end of the project, was reported at the start to have been 'barely on speaking terms' with key agencies). Less comfortable messages emerge from other projects where Local Authority engagement has been sub-optimal.

The evaluation suggests that innovation and added value at a project level do not happen in a vacuum, and pre-conditions seem to have included:

- *Supportive senior management and engaged practitioners* (as can be seen, for example, in the St Giles Trust projects, where innovation has been encouraged and sharing actively facilitated through internal project management, and in HMP Springhill).
- *Well-thought through delivery models and partnerships* (as can be seen, for example, in the Southampton-City Limits, Action Acton and Blue Sky DPs).
- *Willingness to re-apply successful practice in different locations* (as can be seen, for example, in the use of Peer Advisers in St Giles Trust Projects).
- *Willingness to seek stakeholder and client views and make necessary changes.* (as can be seen in the research undertaken with stakeholders in the HMP Brixton and Holloway DPs).

As indicated, there have been a significant range of constraints in terms of measuring and evidencing progress, particularly at an individual level. This is in part due to the lack of agreed assessment technologies (particularly for short-term offenders, where there was some uncertainty about the relevance of OASys and the use in its place in London of interim tools such as LISAR) and the fact that C-NOMIS is not yet in place.

It is hard to evidence innovation and added value without goal setting on this issue and clear measures to assess change and success against these criteria. In general, DPs have adopted an informal approach to setting their goals for innovation - and what was expected from them, and the cross-programme monitoring can do little to support this. Combined with the small-scale nature of much of the development activity, this has hampered the objective assessment of innovation - and identifying lessons that have been learned through Exodus to date. However, there is scope to address this if Exodus is extended.

Chapter 5: Mainstreaming and Sustainability

5.1 Introduction

An important expected achievement from Exodus was progress towards mainstreaming the activities developed in Action 2. This is an important underpinning principle for ESF-EQUAL funding, and aims to ensure that innovation is transferred to mainstream practice. This chapter looks at the progress towards mainstreaming, and draws on near-end-of-Action 2 evidence from stakeholders, the DP survey and the in-depth case studies of selected DPs to look at:

- The potential for mainstreaming the delivery to short-term offenders and PPOs as developed within in Action 2.
- Near-end-of-project progress in achieving mainstreaming.
- Success factors supporting mainstreaming achievements.
- Constraints to mainstreaming.
- Issues identified likely to affect the overall sustainability of Action 2 delivery.

At the heart of this have been the 13 funded projects for all DPs. Here, effective progress was expected to see not only delivery and reflection on innovation, but also embedding of their Action 2 activities in established support for offenders and ex-offenders, and/or securing new 'mainstream' funding to take forward the 'trialled' services funded through Exodus. This chapter draws particularly heavily on the experiences of the five 'case study' DPs, looking at early, interim and near-end-of-project achievements.

5.2 Potential for mainstreaming in Action 2

Exodus was developed against a background of accelerating public policy concern with the challenges of tackling recidivism in certain offender groups, and particularly among short-term offenders and PPOs in particular.⁵⁵ It was seen as a highly timely initiative in two regions, with some distinctive challenges, to harness enhanced employability as a route out of repeat offending, and to provide practical evidence of what might support the (then) impending introduction of Custody Plus.⁵⁶ While the challenge remains, much has changed in the public policy environment in which mainstreaming was set to take place. These issues may have had a substantial bearing on the potential that could be tapped by DPs when preparing for mainstreaming.

While these issues are very largely beyond the influence and control of Exodus, they are important in the mainstreaming backcloth. Two issues would seem to be of particular significance:

- The clarity of the public policy context, funding routes and timing.

⁵⁵ Home Office (2004), *Reducing Re-Offending National Action Plan*. London: Home Office.

⁵⁶ For further background, see <http://www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk/docs/Custody Plus-discussion-paper.pdf>.

- The national and regional infrastructure within which these 'new' opportunities are being developed and implemented.

Clarity of the public policy context: Policy-makers remain committed to the principle of harnessing preparation for, and support to, employment (and employability) as a cornerstone in tackling recidivism. However, the precise focus for policy measures to address this has seen some uncertainty as Action 2 has progressed. The prospective introduction of Custody Plus was initially seen as one such key focus. As late as April 2006, although the initiative was then subject to a short-term postponement, key stakeholders were pressing DP partners for early messages on local collaboration and service effectiveness to embed in new arrangements to support implementation - then anticipated from late autumn 2006. By the time HOST prepared its interim report, this pressure had passed, and government announced a new commitment in delivery to emphasise engagement of VCS organisations, although with details obscure.

Stakeholders were on common ground commenting on the changing picture, but not all interpreted the scope for clarification as any better. One stakeholder went so far as to say:

'It's been two years of uncertainty and shifting sands ... and now no one is still prepared to make any second guesses (on service commissioning) until after 27 June and probably until after the style of the new PM is clear.'

Another was more optimistic, and felt the situation for future funding opportunities was:

'...a bit clearer, but the willingness among key (funding) agencies to make decisions on service purchasing are held back by ... budget allocation delays, or uncertainty over the Comprehensive Spending Review'.

Others were concerned about the effects of uncertainty (in May and early June 2007) of leadership of the Ministry of Justice, and any new or modified priority or focus within this 'new' department on resettlement. In short, while some of the funding pathways for service mainstreaming (eg Local Area Agreements (LAAs), ROMs commissioning) were seen as clearer, the willingness or ability of agencies concerned with policy implementation was seen as held back by issues of focus or uncertain funding levels within them.

National and regional infrastructure: As more funding decisions for offender support services are, or are due to be, devolved, the infrastructure for making these becomes an important issue for mainstreaming. Several stakeholders commented on the: *'...almost continuous change around GOs, RDAs, NoMS and ROMS'*. More than one observed that there was a continued reluctance to engage with the re-offending agenda and issues by the key development agencies likely to commission, or shape priorities for, new services. One felt this was a particular issue for agencies in the south east regarding re-offending with:

'... some key players...embarrassingly not engaged, and some people deliberately looking the other way'.

These are subjective assessments, and may be subject to the clear frustration of stakeholders keen to work with what, for some, will seem like long-delayed new services. However, there remained a wide sense of inertia among a multiplicity of agencies with various social and economic interests in the resettlement agenda. Any such inertia would impair the process of mainstreaming. Most stakeholders regarded this as external to Action 2, which Exodus could do little to influence. However, two stakeholders felt that the apparent failure centrally within Exodus (see Chapter 2) to promote what is being achieving by DPs (and how), and the implications to potential

funding agencies and development groups had held back local actions on mainstreaming. This was seen to place: *'...each (individual) project (DP) out on a limb'*. Both felt that key connections, such as with the re-offending development and policy teams at the Home Office, could only be robustly made at whole partnership level. Another added that the Strategy Board had itself not done much to engage with the mainstreaming issues, and in particular the LAAs, with this not aided by a failure of central discussion of whole project evidence on effectiveness and outcomes - which itself was thought to be linked to the absence of an Exodus-level Communications Strategy, and partner (or other) lobbying to take this forward.

The over-riding sense among stakeholders was that the major constraint, centrally and at DP level, was the flux within this infrastructure of policy development and implementation. As one who was close to this process commented:

'The machinery of government has not helped in all this. There has been serial re-organisation making any communication and relationship building precarious, and with sliding doors on policy. All this has made it very difficult at a time when people really needed a sense of stability (to support mainstreaming).'

Beyond this, stakeholders did sense that there was money available, and especially for sub-regional and regional type collaborations and actions which Exodus should be well placed to tap. One emphasised the importance of the 19 LAAs, and the scope to tap funds from the Voluntary Sector Block within that. The key in this was thought to be securing local-level links, understanding the agendas and forging appropriate ways or working through consortia. However, this stakeholder cautioned that not all DPs were well placed by culture or capacity to tap such sources. Particular attention was drawn to the fact that LAA funding bids would need to relate to the agreed targets and priorities to be drawn from a list to be developed nationally of 200 priorities/targets.⁵⁷ Certainly, over this period, DPs' confidence in the potential for mainstreaming had eroded.

In October 2006, all but one of the DPs were expressing confidence in the potential for mainstreaming their activities. All but two had felt they had started at least some preparation for this. A month on, and following the cross-DP review of mainstreaming potential at the 7 November stakeholder workshop, HOST's interim report expressed some caution about this confidence at local level. In particular, it suggested that DPs held different views about what would constitute effective mainstreaming, and that their quality of preparation was often little beyond embryonic activities, such as in one of the larger DPs: *'...putting it on the agenda for next month's management meeting (of partners'*. At the time, only three DPs could be identified as having a systematic mainstreaming plan or strategy in place. Few seem to have identified this as a distinctive development role.

For many, mainstreaming remained an aspiration rather than an activity. A review across DPs in May-June 2007, showed only two DPs confident that they had achieved, or shortly would achieve, mainstreaming of all their Action 2-funded activities. This was a quarter of the level shown in October 2006.

Among those that had made some progress, there was also concern that the opportunities they either had, or were seeking to tap, were constraining key aspects of mainstreaming. One provider, for example, had surveyed some 45 local stakeholders towards the end of spring 2007 and found three in four recognising great value in the services and delivery they had provided in Action 2. However, the same provider felt there was now very limited prospect for mainstreaming this activity, and that any

⁵⁷ Not likely to be available until autumn 2007, and the agreements will individually be restricted to picking no more than 35 of these as a focus.

continuation would be of specific parts of delivery which ran counter to the main delivery lesson that *'a holistic service needed to be offered'*.

There have been efforts to present the outcomes of Exodus projects to commissioning bodies and other funders. For example, St Giles Trust has discussed their work with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), with a view to seeking to improve arrangements for Exodus clients claiming benefits, and a joint-presentation was made by the London Consortium to the ROM. It was reported that this was well received. However, it was indicated that the ROM had a range of questions around unit costing for outputs and outcomes of the interventions which were insufficiently evidenced at the time of presentation (spring 2007).

5.3 Current progress in achieving mainstreaming

The caution reflected by some of these stakeholders on the scope for mainstreaming successes (and by HOST in autumn 2006) seems to have been well placed. The May-June review with selected DPs suggested a highly variable picture in progressing mainstreaming. What emerged was:

- Two DPs (Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits) have clear strategies for mainstreaming their Action 2 activities. Both had seen significant early achievement against these strategies, and both had additional medium- and longer-term goals to widen the roll-out: nationally for Blue Sky and sub-regionally within a wider geographical collaboration for Southampton. Mainstreaming strategies in other DPs were at best informal, and in two cases seemed to centre on just one or two possible funding routes. Southampton, in contrast, had identified and seen some early funding from six distinct funding routes, and was pursuing each of these.
- One DP (Blue Sky) had seen considerable early success in securing funds to roll-out Action 2 or associated activities beyond the time frame of the current project. Secured 'new' funding exceeded that allocated under ESF-EQUAL funding in Action 2 for this project. This involved building on the existing quasi-commercial partnerships of this DP to roll out the social enterprise model of this project to localities in two other regions, as well as to other areas in the South East. The potential also seems to be in place to widen this roll-out even further, with the project and its partners assessing scope nationally to raise capacity to 1,000 beneficiaries a year.
- Four others had also seen some early success (Action Acton, Project Spring, St Giles Trust and Southampton-City Limits) in securing supplementary funds to support Action 2 activities, but in all cases this extended the planned activity but not the time frame of Action 2. Two of these drew on existing and relatively small-scale sources of project-based or grant aid (Action Acton and Southampton-City Limits), and the other from tapping further European Funding (Project Spring with the ESF-ENGAGED programme). All were at funding levels of less than the ESF-EQUAL allocations in Action 2.
- Two of the DPs (Project Spring and St Giles Trust) now saw scope to continue Action 2 beyond its current time frame by embedding the activity within the local HMPS budgeting arrangements, particularly at HMP Springhill and Holloway, although with some possible loss of staff capacity. There was less confidence in other VCS-led projects, although the St Giles Trust indicated that they were actively exploring other funding options, on their own, and in partnership with other groups.

Overall, the evaluation suggested success in early mainstreaming in Blue Sky, and some success in Southampton-City Limits, where there was now strong potential for securing longer-term resourcing through the same or similar local collaborations funded through a Local Area Agreement. Project Spring was also likely to see at least some continuity of the Action 2 activities through embedded activity. Both St Giles Trust and Action Acton saw themselves as pursuing various possibilities for continued funding, but neither now saw mainstreaming as probable. Despite having clearly demonstrated the quality and value of their services respectively to their HMPS and probation partners, both had seen their early optimism about mainstreaming fall sharply in the last eight months. Notably, one of these (Action Acton) also saw a key partnership (for referral) within Action 2 (St Mungo's-Action Acton) as already eroding.

These DPs were selected for in-depth review by the evaluation precisely because of the mainstreaming potential demonstrated by autumn 2006. All have been active in attempting to capitalise on this potential, although with variable success. This activity has variously involved:

- Bringing into the DP specific expertise to support the pursuit of mainstreaming opportunities. This was notably for Blue Sky, which had brought from within the local partnership a funding advisory activity to help inform on routes, bidding and a strategy. The evaluation suggested that similar capacity or expertise might have been needed to better support mainstreaming in other DPs, but here local partnerships did not seem to have been asked to provide such support.
- Building capacity sufficiently early in the project to support the successful search for future 'competitiveness' funding. For some projects, this capacity building happened at the outset of the partnership, notably for Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits, in building in potential for seeking future funding in partner membership. Blue Sky has taken a pro-active stance on building this capacity through ensuring its collaborations involve flexible and fast response partnerships (with commercial and other partners) capable of acting at local and regional level to identify, explore and bid for external funding opportunities.
- Where this capacity has been built in, DPs seem to have seen early successes in securing project funds from other sources. Elsewhere, it has not constrained bidding - with Action Acton and Project Spring both making successful smaller-scale bids for funds,⁵⁸ and St Giles Trust also being active (but not as yet successful) in bidding to other publicly-funded UK or European funding programmes. In all but one case, these bids seem to have been made unilaterally.
- Developing a clear, appropriately positioned and pro-active marketing strategy to help articulate and promote the quality of innovation, successes, and potential of beneficiary support activities. Springhill seems to have been the least active in this area, although hosting some externally initiated visits to its Job Club. Others have seen various levels of activity to promote continued (local) or wider application (roll-out to other areas). For Blue Sky, there has been a conscious focus - and effort - to: *'...aim high - getting to be big to make us un-ignorable'*. Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits seem to have been the most active, with some attributed early successes.
- Seeking to build on local partnership and collaboration to sustain beneficiary support through locally embedded activity in existing (or developing) local services. Successes in this area have been limited, perhaps reflecting the

⁵⁸ Action Acton had secured project funds from the London Region LSC OLASS budget for a one-year programme (£38,000) sufficient to support one FTE member of staff.

evolving nature of those funding routes, but also the composition of local partnerships which seem to have stressed delivery and referral bodies over potential funders. Nonetheless, Action Acton, St Giles Trust and Southampton-City Limits have seen some successes with securing additional project funding within existing funding routes. While significant achievements, for both this route alone has only extended temporarily their project Action 2 time frame, and in both cases with limited sustained or additional capacity. Project Spring has been the most successful in tapping internal budgets.

The mainstreaming activity is also notable for what has not been extensively developed. In particular, the 13 projects have seen a multiplicity of lead partners with very different skills and expertise, and offering some scope for further collaboration to build cross-partner, cross-project and cross-locality capability to tap future funding. As yet, this has seen little activity and less success (all current mainstreaming successes being within existing 'local' partnerships). However, one spin-off from the established cross-London liaison group was a joint presentation (of four lead partners) to the ROMS for London. This was thought by at least one of these partners to have: *'... helped raise interest in the models (of beneficiary support) but it was seen as too costly'*. There has also been a funding collaboration in bidding for project funds between St Giles Trust and Blue Sky for the *Future Builders* programme.

The extension of Action 2 for these projects to December 2007 provides more time, and perhaps further opportunity, to capitalise on what has been achieved, or worked towards, in mainstreaming. This potential seems most robust, and likely to be extended, in Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits. Elsewhere, the DPs reviewed in more depth, and notably those with VCS lead partners, seem to be pinning their hopes on future NoMS funding pathways. However, here there is widespread uncertainty in the DPs on if and when such funding will become available. There seems little prospect that this will be within the six-month extension period. DPs have also shown some interest in exploring the potential for service funding through LAAs, and in particular for collaborations in Crime Reduction Partnerships. To date, only Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits have directly pursued these options.

5.4 Mainstreaming success factors and constraints

The evaluation showed that effective action had demonstrated a number of issues which had helped them to start to mainstream activity, and also more than a few constraints. Both are important process issues in the learning from Action 2, and to any wider roll-out of the practice for building collaborative local action to raise the employability of ex-offenders.

Success factors: With the exception of Blue Sky, the DPs have so far demonstrated limited or partial success in mainstreaming, so any robust assessment of success factors is premature. Not all of the proposed success factors are likely to apply to all projects, depending on their delivery models and focus. Nonetheless, some more generic factors were apparent and show:

- **Starting early:** As was the case with both Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits, who were looking beyond July 2007 long before the mid stage of their Action 2 activity. Both recognised that long lead times were often involved in being able to secure additional or 'roll-out' funds. In the case of Blue Sky, the groundworks contract secured with Gloucester City Council took several months of pre-contract negotiation and six months lead time before the secured funding came into play and beneficiaries could be placed.

- Emphasising quality over quantity: To build evidence of successes and what works well to be able to take to potential funding agencies. All of these DPs have indicated a robust commitment to quality, although in some cases the quality assurance processes built into projects are more obscure. For Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits, this has been seen as important to mainstreaming, and in particular to demonstrating that actions to build employability do translate to sustainable employment (and reduced re-offending). Blue Sky saw this as the 'wow' factor for employers. Here, the emphasis was on beneficiaries demonstrating their commitment, motivation, performance and loyalty - all areas where stereotypical views of employing offenders needed to be challenged
- Good marketing: The evaluation is not in a position to assess the relative quality of marketing actions across DPs, but the available evidence does show that those taking a systematic approach to publishing and promoting successes seem better placed for mainstreaming. While most DPs have been keen to profile individual success stories, some have gone much further in selling their models. Both Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits have seen structured approaches to marketing, although with Blue Sky cautioning the importance of not overselling until there was sufficient confidence on processes and quality assurance, and with the partnership capacity in place to respond to external demands.
- Minimising the funding requirements: One of these DPs at least has felt that mainstreaming opportunities would be maximised if they could demonstrate that their activities were at least partly financially self-sustaining. Blue Sky's social enterprise model has built in the need to secure commercial income and other project-based revenue, and to ensure minimum levels of operating subsidy from any future funding solutions. This approach has also proven more effective when seeking external project-based funding, since it was seen as easier to capture and demonstrate matched funding (without reliance on the bureaucratic burdens which have characterised some other DPs).

Costs may have also been an issue in mainstreaming, but one which is difficult to unpick against a background of considerable diversity in DP approaches to resourcing Action 2 activity. Nonetheless, it seems that Blue Sky at least has seen enhancing the cost-effectiveness of their delivery model (unit costs to beneficiary) as an important issue in wider roll-out. The emphasis here has been on using the Action 2 experience to help to build a service costs and delivery model which is competitive with alternative support and employment models. At the same time, Blue Sky has sought to optimise unit costs to outcome by avoiding some high risk beneficiaries, such as those with dependence issues and who have not completed alcohol or drug dependence programmes.

Competitive costs as a feature of mainstreaming may be more important to the supported employment and social enterprise route. Elsewhere, there seems to be an assumption that the often high unit costs associated with delivery (and outcomes) are not a barrier to mainstreaming if these can be demonstrated to be offset by later cost savings to the public purse (in later health care, re-offending, etc). However, in those DPs relying more on this approach, there is no evidence that projects have been able to demonstrate such offsets (indeed no DPs have systematically assessed re-offending effects, let alone costed the financial implications). For whatever reasons, such *offset cost* models have seen little or no mainstreaming success, so far, in the time span available for Action 2. They may in any event have limited application in a public funding model where 'savings' from one funding route are accrued not by the direct funding agencies, but others in the public sector.

Some success factors also emerged which were more distinct to those DPs working closely with employers in securing work experience, work trials/placements or jobs.

Issues emerging here as better supporting projects in the transition from Action 2 to mainstream-funded support included:

- Putting in place beneficiary support activities which went beyond building employment potential in individuals to producing early and demonstrable 'real' employment or associated successes. For Blue Sky (and perhaps Southampton-City Limits), this involved considerable effort in selection of beneficiaries who were better matched to the work opportunities the project could support: *'...going to those you know you can help'*. In contrast, VCS-based DPs took great pleasure in avoiding selection which avoided hard-to-support beneficiaries, with Action Acton sensing that their achievements had involved multiple disadvantage beneficiaries who were the hardest to support. In contrast, Blue Sky argued that their selection was not about 'cherry picking' but ensuring that beneficiaries who were greater risks to the credibility of the project support among employers should be avoided.
- Going beyond support in Action 2 for beneficiaries, to actively build employer demand for ex-offenders. Not all DPs have been comfortable in this area, and some such as St Giles Trust felt that this aspect of Exodus should have been delivered predominantly through the two proposed (but not recruited) employer liaison officers. Others have sought to build their own employer liaison capacity by systematically developing employer links and promoting ex-offender employment with these. Not all have been successful. Project Spring saw very little success in widening employer interest much beyond the employers where they had pre-Action 2 relationships. Action Acton also had difficulty in moving beyond its evolving employer database to translate employer contact into work opportunities for beneficiaries. Blue Sky and Southampton-City Limits seem to have been more successful (Blue Sky notably so by focusing efforts onto a small cadre of employer partners and building those relationships into the core of their activities).
- Relating the employment and placement challenges of projects to local labour market circumstances and prospects. Here, Blue Sky, Southampton City-Limits, and to a lesser extent Project Spring, have seen mainstreaming better supported by targeting particular segments of the labour market (ie for work-placement, intermediary employment or future skills building). Lower skilled construction work, warehousing, distribution and community work all seem to have been more appropriate to effectiveness in future plans for roll-out of support.

Employers also emerge as a far from harmonious group in how projects such as these might work with them in seeking to build demand for ex-offenders. There is also evidence that DPs adopting a multi-layered approach to promoting the attractiveness of ex-offender employment to employers have been more successful in moving towards sustained activity. This seems to centre on recognising that different parts of organisations will have different levers (and attitudinal constraints) to recruiting more ex-offenders. For example, senior managers of larger and public sector organisations may be increasingly motivated by emphasising corporate social responsibility and the ability to profile corporate action on social exclusion. In contrast, some owners, or owner-managers, of smaller enterprises may be more receptive to demonstrating local partnerships aimed at crime reduction and/or community action and responsibility. Middle managers of larger enterprises - public and private - may be persuaded by approaches which can reduce the 'cost' risk to them of employing ex-offenders (concerns over higher turnover, employee motivation, absence and reliability). Blue Sky has been successful in this respect with larger employers, and Southampton-City Limits with public sector and smaller employers.

Constraints: The evaluation was able to suggest a number of apparent constraints to mainstreaming from the experience of these DPs. Some generic factors were reported, such as the lead partners not having very much experience of bidding for external and competitiveness funds, - although Blue Sky had built a sophisticated approach within its partnership to support this need. Beyond this, constraints emphasised were:

- The short-term nature of the funding, which was seen to provide little time to explore and demonstrate value and to find other funding sources.
- The time needed to extend pilot-scale activity in Action 2 into wider capacity and capability that could support projects beyond Action 2. This mainly affected those projects looking to approach mainstreaming by extending their activities beyond the current localities or collaborators.
- The need to build up what Blue Sky called 'infrastructure' costs within their initially smaller-scale and trial activities on Action 2 to better place projects to support wider roll-out with expanded beneficiary numbers. Most projects were not in a position to self-fund this development and could only do so very cautiously - some had not yet seemed to appreciate or rise to this challenge.
- The scope to extend coverage of projects beyond the 'artificial' constraints of Action 2 on short-term offenders and PPOs. Short-term offenders, with: *'...little time to get to them and ... particularly chaotic lifestyles'* in particular were seen as an especially difficult segment of the prison population for mainstreaming of Exodus-type partnerships and activities.

Stakeholders, and at least two DPs, also felt that the delayed commissioning through NoMS and ROMS had the greatest impact, with one adding a knock-on effect:

'...(there is) uncertainty when NoMS funding will become available. The spare money that prisons did have to fund this type of work has been soaked up centrally, and all will now be commissioned through the new process'.

Some constraints reported by DPs were less easy to assess. At least three DPs felt that the success of their own activities had been held back by the lack of demand from employers, and that this was a barrier to mainstreaming. This in turn may reflect central failures in Exodus organisation and resourcing both in programme promotion and also in the unfilled employer liaison posts (see Chapter 2). At the same time, this co-existed with others who had pursued a more focused and collaborative approach with employers in particular segments of the labour market, and where commercial contracts for employers rather than latent demand for ex-offenders had proven the main constraint. Whatever the case, most DPs saw the volatility of labour demand as a constraint, and in particular the need to ensure support to beneficiaries to the likely levels of demand by employers - which could vary with the maturity of different local labour markets, established skill levels, seasonality of demand and other influences. Most DPs seem to have struggled in developing this level of intelligence and understanding.

5.5 Overall sustainability within Action 2

The evaluation has been tasked with looking at the potential and achievement of mainstreaming in Action 2. The evidence presented above does not provide for a clear picture. On potential, DPs individually sustain confidence in the effectiveness and transferability of their different delivery models, but often with limited evidence to demonstrate this. Stakeholders (Chapter 2) are also often not close enough to DPs to reflect on the potential of different models, and here monitoring evidence on their

achievements is not well understood by these partners. There is also a lack of robust evidence from DPs on key measures of success which would condition the potential for mainstreaming, and notably the quality of early or medium-term employment or other outcomes, and effects on re-offending. In this situation, the evidence on potential for mainstreaming is highly subjective.

Beyond short-term measures in some DPs to extend activity for a few months, only two (Blue Sky and Project Spring) seem to have put in place funding arrangements which will definitely see at least some mainstreaming in 2008 and beyond. Southampton-City Limits is also demonstrating strong potential to do so. As shown above, mainstreaming achievements of others are with the paradox that VCS lead partners in particular feel delivery has demonstrated sustainability and value with partners, but without securing commitments for future funding. However, with Exodus on the cusp (at the time of writing) of a six-month extension to DP-level activity, this assessment of limited mainstreaming may yet be premature.

The evaluation does provide some indications of issues in future sustainability, and in particular for scaleable models capable of early wider roll-out of DP delivery and experience. In particular:

- Social enterprise has been shown to have a role in building and demonstrating employability. While the Blue Sky process in Action 2 has been very small scale, and has been centred on 'near employment ready' ex-offenders, it would seem to have a part to play in the spectrum of offender management support and services needed to address re-offending. On this evidence, it seems to be better placed to support PPOs than some of the short-term repeat offenders.
- The social enterprise model would seem well placed to provide sustainable support for low skill transitions of offenders into the labour market - in the case of Blue Sky, through the Groundwork Federation and perhaps LAAs. The intermediary labour market model may be capable of wider 'low skill' application into other parts of the direct labour market dominated by public-private sector (or private-private) medium-term contracting services for labour-based services. However, for this model to be rolled out, it would need to be able to compete within a highly cost-conscious and competitive market and to standards that are: *'...at least as good as the private sector'*. Blue Sky has demonstrated such standards can be achieved, but cautions that this is: *'...Social Enterprise with a hard edge'*. Many organisations with experience of the criminal justice system - and of employer relationships within this - may not be well placed to pursue this.
- At the same time, the social enterprise model as developed in Action 2 is not a panacea and may have relevance only for a minority of ex-offenders. It would seem to have more limited application for short-term, harder to support, or less robustly motivated ex-offenders, and for offenders seeking initial employment outside the low skill domain. The Blue Sky collaborations with committed employer/contractor partners have proven central to the model, as well as effective and able to support wider roll-out. However, sustainability may be better supported by widening the breadth of enterprises engaged. The current highly focused collaborations have proven effective for pilot-level activity within Action 2, but as a basis for much wider application could prove vulnerable to changes of key personnel, organisational or ownership changes in the private sector. Such collaborations may be stronger if durability within a volatile sector of economic activity is factored into roll-out.
- Outside social enterprise, the Exodus experience on sustainability emphasises the need for broadly-based partnerships, with a genuine through the gate support process, well rooted in the prison/probation service and providing added value to

existing custodial and community services. It would also seem to call for this to be operating within a robust local labour market context, with strong and sustained working relationships with appropriate employers. With the possible exception of Southampton-City Limits, it is less clear if any of the DPs have a model for delivery which is yet sustainable against these needs - although all have the potential to develop this.

- Exodus has demonstrated that VCS has a key role to play in sustainable 'through the gate' provision, and in working with in robust and perhaps highly localised collaborations integrating diverse strands of statutory services. They also have important knowledge to help such collaborations work in understanding prison and probation variance. This combination is set to be a viable delivery model in helping employment-based provision have a chance of working when ex-offenders enter the community. It may be crucial to helping the harder-to-reach ex-offenders. However, the sustainability of this model within current and anticipated funding regimes has yet to be demonstrated. The extension of Action 2 by six months may prove critical to securing some mainstreamed activity, even if the VCS-led DPs seem increasingly pessimistic of the scope to do so.

Southampton-City Limits has seen particularly solid collaborative arrangements, but outside this it is not yet clear if Action 2 has demonstrated the robustness of all facets of such localised collaborations. A recurrent limitation would seem to be the quality and depth of such relationships within the prison service. This evaluation (May 2006) expressed early cautions about the consistency of the quality of integration of probation and police services, but the experiences of Action Acton and St Giles Trust have shown these have been strengthened. However, the quality of collaboration within the prison service has remained either patchy or centred on the support of particular individuals, which in turn could be vulnerable to staff changes. It may be that a two-year programme is simply insufficient to demonstrate strengthening of such relationships. However, the evaluation also shows that Exodus has, in some cases, struggled to build a profile within prison service partners, and the very diversity and volatility of project activity in the secure estate would seem to work against building such relationships. As one DP manager observed of its London prison collaborators: *'There seem to be new projects starting every week in the prison'*. They went on to caution that prison officers might feel a bit dismissive of collaboration when:

'...they feel projects are not going to be around that long - so there's not much point getting to know much about them'.

Another noted that in Wormwood Scrubs alone there were 35 other initiatives being delivered, with no visible cohesion or attempt to explain these to prison staff, and with prison officers consequently confused on routine aspects affecting collaboration, such as eligibility. Another commented that collaboration within the prison service was variable because:

'...although intentions are good, bureaucratic systems and such things as staff shortages or sudden increases in numbers (of prisoners) make continuity hard to establish'.

The current mainstreaming experiences in these DPs also cautions that outside the social enterprise model, arrangements may continue to be vulnerable to changes in the funding regime, priorities and its organisation. Continuity of service provision, which seems to be critical to securing sustainable employment, may prove highly vulnerable to any such changes. This in turn would seem to call for broadly-based local partnerships able to modify delivery speedily to different funding regimes, and with the flexibility to anticipate and adapt to such developments. Perhaps the great advantage of the social enterprise

model is its potential durability against such changes, requiring minimal subsidy from grant or programme assistance.

5.6 Overview

The timing of Action 2, which in summer 2005 seemed highly fortuitous for policy developments nationally and regionally, has proven problematic. It is not the place for this evaluation to touch on these issues here, beyond noting that the concern from one stakeholder that: *'...policy changes and agency inertia have pulled the rug out from under our feet'*. The expectation of many stakeholders from spring 2006 that NoMS procurement would be crucial to roll-out and sustainability has proven (as yet) unfounded.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that some of the DPs have remained highly reactive in seeking to mainstream their activities. Some have consequently found it difficult to move away from these early assumptions about mainstreaming, and this is an important issue in their limited progress on building sustainability.

DPs which have been more pro-active are further forward with mainstreaming. At the same time, the cultural strengths which have seen some lead partners quick to develop client-centred and needs-based services within Action 2 have not always supported an ability to look early, and systematically, at mainstreaming. At least one of those looked at in detail still seems to consider any pro-activity in mainstreaming to have been a central responsibility.

The picture overall is consequently mixed on mainstreaming effectiveness, but with most of the DPs generally less optimistic than even eight months ago. However, this is complicated by more than contrasts between the lead partners - and what they were doing. The evaluation suggests that some service delivery, and client groups which are not near employment-ready, those with residual problems of dependence, and those working predominantly with short-term offenders, will be much more difficult to mainstream than others. The early mainstreaming successes have come where DPs adopted a structured approach to focusing on those who they felt they would be best placed to help. On this evidence, there is a need for multi-level services, and for funding pathways for mainstreamed services which reflect some low risks for some aspects of service delivery, and much higher risks for others.

Most, but not all, local partnerships have emerged robustly from Action 2, but on this evidence not all are likely to see scope for further externally-funded and extended activity. Across Exodus so far, there would seem to be diminishing expectations in particular of substantive mainstreaming in the VCS-based DPs. Set against a policy arena which is emphasising a VCS role, this is disappointing and suggests a need in the next six months for central capacity building to support VCS-led partnerships through what some seem to find a difficult pathway. The area where sustainability of services seems clearest is for partnerships which are well rooted in local government - although in this sense Southampton may be at present more enlightened than others - and the social enterprise model which Blue Sky seems to be pursuing vigorously and with strong potential for even wider roll-out. Even here, however, there are clear constraints to widening this model without considerable investment in central capacity, and with some caution among those implementing Action 2 that any extension would need to be conducted cautiously and progressively.

Chapter 6: Issues and Implications

6.1 Introduction

This evaluation has suggested that Action 2 has collectively developed a substantial evidence base, but that the development and delivery partnerships have as yet had limited opportunity to reflect on much of this. This evaluation is consequently timely, and this chapter aims to draw together HOST's assessment of what has been achieved as the programme concludes its initially agreed phase of funding for Action 2. It brings together the findings from Chapters 2 to 5 to reflect on:

- The achievements of Exodus at all levels across Action 2.
- Lessons arising from delivery and implications for future practice.
- The overall quality of innovation achieved across the programme.
- The likely sustainability of delivery from Action 2, and its wider transferability.

This is presented as a provisional final assessment which will be enhanced by reflection, and further feedback, from partners. However, this second interim report comes at a time when Action 2 is set to be extended by six months. This analysis consequently includes a short look at 'next steps' to see how any extended evaluation paralleling this extension could help with evidence-based reflection and review in what might be a critical period for successful conclusion of the programme.

6.2 Achievements of Action 2

Exodus has achieved a lot in two years, and much more than some partners were anticipating in its traumatic mid-project stage. Conceived as a timely and employment-centred response to the long-established challenge of recidivism in the criminal justice system, it anticipated a large-scale and ambitious bi-regional programme to trial practical responses capable of wider transferability. Its roots were in a broad multi-agency collaboration linking London and the South East, which became the focus for Exodus's central Development Partnership, and with front-line of delivery through local Development Partnerships and trans-national collaborations to engage both.

All this added up to a very complex programme, involving various tiers of activity, and complex (and changing) management processes across these. The evaluation has shown that the arrangements put in place for managing the breadth and interactions of these interrelationships has not been without difficulties. Whatever the subsequently apparent limitations, the foundations of Action 2 were well placed for co-operative and wide engagement of statutory agencies and key interest groupings in both regions. These certainly provided for a fast start to selecting projects, kick-starting most of those, and to launching Exodus across both regions. By autumn 2005, Action 2 had apparently secured the intensive and embedded start it sought to deliver, yet very shortly after, Exodus direction and project management was in difficulty.

If this proved to be a temporary setback, the evaluation concludes it was nonetheless a substantial one. Its legacy was a mid-project crisis in confidence among those involved in governance, in programme management and key relationships, the resourcing model for the whole programme, and in the lead partners' capacity and capability to take Exodus forward. The evaluation also shows it was a major achievement to turn around

the programme, but these difficulties saw a mid-project focus on funding and structure which diverted attention at a critical stage from in-project reflection on what works well, what does not, and how this is to be taken forward. It may also have held back sufficiently early attention to mainstreaming, and further compounded partnership difficulties in providing other foundations for the programme, such as its communications strategy.

Unquestionably, Exodus has suffered from a lack of a coherent and cross-project 'challenge' function. If this had existed, it might have added greatly to project interchange as well as much earlier identification of difficulties that subsequently became crises. In the absence of an internal challenge role - by project manager, or at partnership executive level - project interchange has been dependent on cross-project networking which, outside the London region, has been weakly developed. All this has left an imprint on the programme which held back its effectiveness, and which seems to have stemmed from unrealistic assumptions about managing this wide partnership, central capacity to support this, and processes for reflection and communications within (and outside) the partnership.

The evaluation suggests that the roots of these difficulties were mainly in the transition between Actions 1 and 2, and in early relationship building. Unfortunately, the evaluation is not well placed to reflect on the origins (its timely start and scope itself a casualty of the decision-making delays and inertia from early Exodus governance). Whatever the causes, Exodus has recovered enough to ensure that the critical front-line activities have continued to the planned end of Action 2, with neither recruitment - nor its mix - held back. The recovery was also sufficiently timely to ensure DPs are well placed to sustain local capacity to move into what may prove to be a crucial extension phase.

Under the reformed co-ordination at SEEDA, Exodus has moved from what had been seen to be dysfunctional executive direction, to restructuring its key working arrangements and re-establishing partner confidence in the processes, project leadership and direction. However, there were some casualties in this restructuring, and notably the loss of two of the proposed 15 local projects, including the largest. This has seen a reduction in the developmental potential of Action 2. At the same time, the evaluation suggests this was a logical conclusion to a procurement process following EQUAL requirements, and to which the two SE prison service-led projects could not adapt. The process reflected less well on HMPS in that region than on the Exodus foundations, and suggests some flawed and unrealistic bidding from within the prison service in that region. On this evidence, future innovations may be better placed to engage HMPS as collaborative rather than lead partners.

Across the 13 approved DPs that did progress beyond the initial planning, there has been substantial achievement across project inputs, and notably for start-up, local partnership, capacity building and beneficiary recruitment. More specifically:

- Each of the funded DPs established and implemented plans for forging delivery partnerships which variously engaged lead partners to marshal effort, statutory and voluntary service agencies, and specific parts of HMPS. Some also engaged the police at divisional or force level, employers and funding agencies.
- Local partnership arrangements have proven generally robust, and although those with the police and probation service have in some cases proven slower to embed, they have shown wide awareness of value. The delivery collaborations within the prison service have proven the most variable, but this is seen to stem from systemic difficulties within a very hard-pressed service, with some staff shortages and a tradition of highly fragmented, small-scale and largely voluntary

responses to employability of offenders' support and preparation for release into the community (and wider labour market).

- The level of recruitment of beneficiaries has greatly exceeded the initial target, and by early June 2006 was only a little short of the extended target. Although there is some evidence of 'out-of-scope' recruitment among two projects, the scale of this does not detract from the substantial achievements in using various recruitment processes for tapping demand for such services from both PPOs and short-term offenders.
- Early concerns with the diversity of this recruitment against a series of equal opportunity targets have proven largely unfounded. The strength of recruitment has been reflected across much of the short-term and PPO population in prison partners, with gender, ethnicity and physical disability targets exceeded - albeit with much less success for those with learning disability.

On the available evidence, there has been rather less success on outcomes from these inputs. Only one in ten of beneficiary 'leavers' were recorded as entering employment or self-employment, or full-time education and training. This was substantially below the target level, although achievements may have been held back by unrecorded destinations, difficulties in tracking individuals, and ESF evidence requirements. Informal evidence from local sources suggests that at least two projects have seen much greater success, coming close to the 50 per cent 'outcome' target for employment or job-related training.

These data - and the apparent performance gaps against targets - may be being unkind to what the DPs have achieved. The novelty of what has been attempted by DPs means there is inevitably a lack of comparative evidence against which to gauge its successes. Placing at least one in ten beneficiaries from what, in many cases, were very intensive and trial processes is no small achievement, and does not take account of others who will find work after they have left Exodus support. The monitoring arrangements and verification requirements mean there may be significant under-recording of 'hard outcomes'. The shortfall against outcomes gaps for employment also seems to say more about the highly ambitious - and unrealistic - employment targets set at the outset of these projects: aspirations that may have had more to do with securing funding than any labour market basis for such ambitions.

The available evidence also understates the wider achievements of the project, which was intended from the outset to be more about exploring new ways of working (eg through new forms of partnership working) and new methods of supporting short-term offenders and PPOs. In particular, it also does not take account of the profound effect the programme has had with individual beneficiaries, as recorded in case study evidence and through personal testimonies. Unfortunately, few DPs have developed any process for recording 'soft outcomes' of the work undertaken through Exodus. This is a particular flaw in Exodus's ability to demonstrate 'interim successes', and makes it more difficult to evidence the genuine achievements (and related costs) of inputs for given outputs - evidence which commissioning bodies will increasingly need to have. It remains a disappointment that, although some DPs have devised measures for recording soft outcomes, these have in no case been systematically taken forward.

6.3 Lessons and implications

The difficulties that emerged with executive steering of Exodus provide messages about developing governance and oversight process in complex partnerships, which balance cross-partnership engagement with the need for accountability, and responsive and timely decision-making. They also show a need for a lead partnership arrangement

which has sufficient early capacity (and capability) to facilitate executive direction, provides a challenge function and oversight, secures robust guidance to the front-line of delivery, and which retains the credibility of the partnership.

Exodus came curiously late to this, and the modified arrangements have been generally seen to work better. At the same time, the funding focus underpinning much of this restructuring has neglected other important facets of exploiting the capacity of partnership working. The strategic focus and review of the partnership remains under-developed, with the Strategy Group, and most Working Groups, also seeing some loss of momentum from diminishing participation. Developments since summer 2006 have been marshalled very largely from within a core partnership, working often by default from falling attendance at partnership meetings, and it is difficult to see how the wider partnership has added value to the development of Action 2. Wide partnerships, without streamlined processes for delegated executive direction and strong leadership, risk inertia and disengagement by default.

Below central partnership level, Exodus has shown that small-scale and often highly localised developments can achieve fast starts, responsiveness to changing operating circumstances, and are also well placed to broker the diverse sub-regional collaborations needed for front-line delivery of through the gate services. VCS-led partnerships have proven themselves as being able to build, sustain and motivate such collaborations. However, such small-scale development projects are well placed for innovation, and developing and testing novel approaches, but risk becoming delivery and targets driven. In such circumstances, it may be difficult for the crucial front-line to raise its horizons beyond short-term achievement. While the focus on beneficiary recruitment, needs assessment and support is laudable, conducted in the secure estate it encounters burdens of organisation and co-ordination which can detract from looking at the bigger picture.

Arrangements for intra- and inter-project reflection can help cut through these risks. These have not been developed sufficiently broadly in Exodus, isolating projects in the south east in particular, and also not building sufficient synergies across the two regions. The same might be added for the trans-national dimension, which has been seen to be disproportionately centred on stakeholders with limited scope for raising aspirations and expectations at DP level.

In many respects, this evaluation is the first attempt, two years on from the start of Action 2, to look at some of the process messages arising from service delivery by DPs, what works well, and what does not. The assessment is provisional; it needs to be validated by those closest to the front-line of delivery and by beneficiaries themselves as end-users. Nonetheless, it does draw on a cross-section of experience, geographical and local labour market circumstances, and from diverse practitioners. This is not to suggest these are the only messages and lessons emerging: the focus is on those which seem the most generic, and transferable for:

- Partnership formation and collaboration.
- Service delivery, culture and support.
- Employment and employability support.
- Employer liaison and brokerage.

Partnership formation and collaboration: DPs have seen some successes in making multi-agency collaborations work, and work well, to the benefit of ex-offenders and addressing disparate partner goals. Some of the common lessons and messages emerging seem to be:

- Developing, supporting and valuing well-placed local ambassadors for the process, and wider goals. These individuals will act as beacons for key partner organisations in profiling the services and its successes, as signposts to direct support and advice among intermediary agencies, and as process champions.
- Developing and maintaining excellent relationships with partner organisations and individual staff within them, based on clear understanding of mutual support, and any distinctive roles and responsibilities. This may need some formalised underpinning, such as through negotiated service-level agreements.
- Shaping the local partnership, and working relationships and communications within them, to make sure that employment-related advice, guidance and direct brokerage is closely integrated with ensuring that the ex-offender has appropriate advice and direct support for accommodation – often the key to their finding a job and not re-offending.

Partnerships have also been more successful when building in formative employer relationships and expertise to support an understanding of business-centred processes for harnessing people and skills, and for networking within the employer community. Not all DPs have found this very easy. Those that have been more successful have sought to develop relationships which are more durable and based on an enterprise-centred perception of business-community gain from engaging with ex-offenders - issues returned to below.

Service delivery, culture and support: Partnership remains only the starting point of sustainable delivery. Among virtually all of these DPs reviewed in depth in the evaluation, there has been an early focus on building a holistic approach to front-line delivery, which looks beyond building employability and employment. This has demonstrated that recognising and facilitating support for other beneficiary needs is crucial to providing a post-release platform on which work preparation, placement or early employment can prosper. Other messages suggest that successful front-line delivery is more likely to emphasise:

- Enabling sufficiently intensive, dedicated and individualised support to beneficiaries which is needs-based, but delivered through a trusted, positive, proactive, committed support worker providing individual help on an ongoing basis. In this, the relationship of the support worker with the prison or probation staff, employer or trainer is critical to customising this support to needs and circumstances.
- Building genuinely through the gate arrangements responsive to beneficiaries' needs and circumstances, and which recognise the change in circumstance between obligatory participation pre-release, and voluntary engagement post-release. This emphasises the value of pre-release briefings as opposed to a first meeting post-release, when ex-offenders will often not arrive.
- Providing for an information safety net to those leaving custody, and ensuring that Supported Employment contacts are on the ex-offender's short-list key point for community contact and help.
- Establishing a presence immediately on release, ideally by meeting the released offender at the prison gate and taking them to their accommodation.
- Providing for support worker arrangements which can ensure the beneficiary and support operates across HMPS, local government (and other) boundaries and is flexible to wherever they go, in custody and outside.

- Treating the individual as an entitled beneficiary with distinctive needs, rights and potential, ensuring they see themselves as a service customer/client, not as an ex-offender.

DPs also show that without creating dependence, effective services ensure continuity of support to beneficiaries. This is ideally through ongoing face-to-face and personal telephone contact, with provision needing to be made for telephone access. Redundancy also needs to be built into these arrangements - if the key support worker is not available, another member of the team will help. This needs to be part of a wider package of one-stop-shop (first) point of contact for a range of help, and ensuring that support staff are 'there for them'.

Employment and employability support: This has been the particular focus for Exodus activity, although not provided in isolation (see above). Key messages arising include the need for:

- Systematically assessing employment aspirations, and linking this to expert mediation, which helps the beneficiary engage fully with reviewing this against recruitment and selection circumstances, (local) labour market context, and 'real' opportunities.
- Harnessing the intermediate labour market through social enterprise, or via work-trials, work tasters or structured job placements. This may require intensive attention to finding placements, with an emphasis on direct job brokerage and not facilitating employment search. However, effective work trials/placements become wider assets, capable of re-use and even as 'standing' placements.
- Providing informal work supervision and mentoring, from taking beneficiaries to a job or work placement, through to problem solving and mediation between employer and beneficiary. There is also scope among 'repeat' employers to build some in-house capacity to ensure some informed supervision of starters and new ex-offender employees.
- Building in discontinuous support. Success in sustaining beneficiary employment often does not come first time, and beneficiaries need to feel they are part of a 'non-failure' culture.

More controversially, successful placements and job brokerage may involve some dis-empowerment of beneficiaries by putting in place selection of beneficiaries to ensure that individuals are better matched to the work opportunities of the employer, and their specific business circumstances.

Employer liaison and jobs brokerage: The evaluation suggested that for some DPs effective employer liaison and promotion retains a mystical quality. However, some have been more successful than others, and their experiences suggest some common themes, including the value of:

- Pro-actively building employer demand for ex-offenders by going beyond marketing platforms and databases of local employers to ensure direct review and engagement with businesses prepared to contemplate providing work trials, placements, temporary or permanent job opportunities. In this, there seems to be no substitute for direct work with employers, and cutting through the filtering processes often associated with public and private sector recruitment agencies.
- Developing employer liaison capacity, or putting in place collaborations with employer groupings to facilitate systematically developing employer links and promoting ex-offender employment with these. This may involve substantial

persistence, but provides for an ability to go beyond 'vacancies' to opportunities where both beneficiary and employer start with a realistic assessment of what is involved.

- Nurturing links with specific employers, ensuring continuity in employer liaison and regular communications. Ex-offenders established in firms can become important sources for future 'employer' liaison and co-operation, and with the employer's consent for supporting (or supervising) other beneficiaries.
- Adopting a multi-layered approach to employer liaison and brokerage. Employers are not a harmonious group, and different parts of businesses (especially medium-sized and larger organisations) will have different levers (and constraints) to recruiting ex-offenders. However, diversity will be the hallmark - tailoring promotion and liaison to contacts and circumstances of the business.

Last, but not least, DPs that have been more effective in employer collaborations have built in a better alignment of their efforts with local labour market circumstances and prospects. For some, this has involved targeting particular segments of the labour market (ie for work-placement, intermediary employment or future skills building) to better position beneficiary aspirations against likely vacancy levels and 'sustainable' opportunities. Construction (new build and maintenance), warehousing, distribution and community work seem to be common areas where beneficiary expectations better fit demand.

6.4 The quality of innovation

Innovations in delivery within Exodus have reflected action and activities at different levels. A very mixed picture emerges for innovation and added value at regional level. In London, the arrangements put in place with support from HMPS and NPS in the region for a cross-DP consortium has seen a sense of shared endeavour, with processes established for partners to reflect on their evolving experiences and effectiveness. There is also some evidence this has intensified at least some of the cross-partner working arrangements built into DPs, with shared support and beneficiary referral. At the same time, there is less evidence that all partners have shared as fully in this process, or that this collaboration has provided for a single voice into other regional arrangements, such as the London Re-Settlement Pilots.

The south east has been much less well served by cross-partnership working, and through most of Action 2, projects have mostly remained isolated and disconnected. Here, DPs were seeking such collaboration, but action to support this was taken only late in the programme and remains embryonic. Geography may not have helped inter-DP collaborations in this region, but it would also seem that central partnership arrangements have not been flexible enough to respond to this need.

Innovation at DP and sub-regional level has been more extensive. A range of novel partnership arrangements have been developed and piloted, with valuable 'process' lessons learned for effective ways of working between, for example, statutory agencies (notably HMPS, NPS and NoMS) and the VCS, and between VCS (including social enterprises) and the private sector. The practical challenges of engaging local authorities in this partnership mix has also been highlighted, although with mixed successes. Here, Exodus shows important lessons to guide wider practice through the social enterprise model of Blue Sky, and for service delivery partnerships most notably through the experience of Southampton-City Limits. The evaluation also suggests that the 'distance travelled' in some of these relationships is substantial and an important outcome for Exodus.

Within delivery arrangements, there has also been demonstrated innovation, and added value. Particular features have been: beneficiary workbooks and self-assessment tools; pre-release job clubs; secure estate Peer Advisers; and Peer Advisers working with case workers. There has also been innovation in the quality of engagement of beneficiaries in delivery models, and in trans-national working.

At the same time, Exodus has shown some continuing and diverse rigidities in key relationships or collaborations. In particular, less comfortable messages emerge from other DPs where Local Authority engagement has been cautious and sub-optimal. DPs working within the secure estate have also found commitment among HMPS staff, but also some difficulty in building the quality of sustainable relationships needed against a background of 'prison churn', often conflicting pressures, fragmented in-prison initiatives, and the knock-on consequences of volatile funding regimes.

To date, there seems to have been limited reflection within some projects, and across them, on what underpins effective new ways of working. However, looking across some of the DPs, the evaluation suggests that innovation and added value are directly enabled by: well engaged and supportive senior management; committed and engaged practitioners; well thought through delivery models and partnerships; a willingness to adapt and apply successful practice in different locations; a reflective process among practitioners with (at DP level) a willingness to seek (and build on) stakeholder and client views, and make necessary changes.

Constraints to innovation have been more easily identified. A particular feature has been difficulties in measuring and evidencing achievements, and in particular interim progress at an individual level, in part due to the lack of agreed assessment technologies, particularly for short-term offenders. It is harder for the evaluation to assess the quality of innovation and added value without goal setting on this issue and clear performance measures to assess change, with DPs generally adopting an informal approach to assessing innovation. Cross-programme monitoring can do little to support this, although the evaluation suggests there is scope to address this if Exodus is extended.

6.5 Sustainability and transferability

Action 2 started with what seemed like a highly fortuitous focus and timing for (then) well-developed policy developments nationally and regionally. This promise has not been sustained. The combined effects of changing policy tactics (if not priorities) for tackling re-offending and resettlement have presented Exodus, and in particular DPs, with a considerable mainstreaming challenge. In particular, the expectation of many stakeholders from spring 2006 that NoMS procurement would be crucial to roll-out and sustainability has proven (as yet) optimistic. Changes to the infrastructure of key government agencies, their organisation, capacity and procurement focus has further complicated the situation.

The evaluation suggests that some DPs have been able to move forward on this critical issue more effectively than others. Nonetheless, most have made too little progress on securing funding which will sustain their activities beyond the end of the EQUAL funding, in some cases expecting Exodus centrally to be providing more support and guidance in this area. This support may or may not stem from unrealistic expectations of the role of SEEDA or other partners on the Strategy Group, but it has not been forthcoming.

More could also have been done by Exodus centrally in building on the very early (November 2005) platform for promoting the programme with other stakeholders and agencies. The lack of a centrally resourced communications strategy which would help to inform and engage procurement (and potential procurement) agencies has meant that most DPs have had to tackle these opportunities unilaterally. There is some evidence

that critical links between DPs and the regional resettlement strategy teams have not been forged sufficiently because of this gap.

DPs which have adopted more pro-active approaches have made more progress in mainstreaming. However, at best, this is thought to affect three or four of the 13 funded DPs, and others are less optimistic than in autumn 2006 about the scope for sustaining all or part of their actions. In this, some have had a more substantial challenge than others, and particularly those focusing more on harder-to-reach client groups, such as short-term offenders. Indeed, tensions seem to be emerging between likely funding routes and levels, and the intensity of support that DPs have shown is needed in building employability among many in the client group.

As a result, mainstreaming successes are limited. Where they exist, they come from those which have adopted a structured approach to developing mainstreaming strategies, and building the commitment and capacity to take these forward sufficiently early in Action 2. Few have done so, particularly in the VCS sector. The mainstreaming successes nonetheless provide some important messages, and suggest:

- There is stronger sustainability where ex-offender services are well rooted in local government collaborations and local leadership, as demonstrated by the Southampton-City Limits collaboration. Here, Local Authorities can provide the hub for the integration needed across diverse services, for enhancing employment routes and prospects, and leverage within LAAs for sustainable funding geared to local priorities.
- Service developments developed with embedding in mind, such at the HMP Springhill Job Club and Kent Probation Service Partnership, are also the most likely to provide sustainability. These may require lower levels of public subsidy, but still require some dedicated funding to ensure that the intensive levels of support needed can be sustained.
- The lowest cost option may be the social enterprise model which, with Blue Sky shows strong potential for even wider roll-out. However, the lead times to rolling out such arrangements may be much longer than for other funding routes, and there are clear constraints to widening this model without investment in central capacity. This is also not a universally applicable solution, with some doubts about its applicability to short-term offenders. Any roll-out would also need to be conducted cautiously and progressively.

In short, Exodus has some early indications of sustainable practice, but this has not been demonstrated by very much progress in mainstreaming at what was expected to be the end of Action 2. For some DPs, two years within Action 2, and with considerable uncertainty and disturbance in the middle, has proven too ambitious for effective mainstreaming. Others have not prepared for this sufficiently early, even when this was clearly an expectation of their Exodus activities, or have lacked a systematic approach to mainstreaming. DPs in neither of the two regions seem to be well engaged in regional resettlement planning, and there is evidence that other delivery models have captured the attention of NoMS.

All of these issues have impaired mainstreaming, and it is to the credit of a minority of these projects that some progress has been made. The major constraints may have been outside the influence of sub-regional and regional action - with policy and the infrastructure set up to implementing this lagging behind the practical responses of DPs. Local actions which were conceived as a timely response to policy development have become detached from those developments. In this respect, the decision to extend DP funding within Action 2 to the end of the year may prove critical, and provides an opportunity for harnessing LAAs and other emerging opportunities to build sustainability.

6.6 Next steps

The evaluation has set out provisional and independent reflections of the Exodus process at regional and local level, with a brief assessment of the contribution of the trans-national dimension. It has also attempted to map what can be learnt from DP successes in particular. This is a starting point for the process of reflection needed to build on the lessons from Action 2 as Exodus moves into Action 3.

The six-month extension provides a valuable opportunity for a more structured approach to review and reflection to make the most of the last two years. It also provides an opportunity for filling some of the substantial gaps in terms of evidencing achievement. Some more specific development issues also emerge which the extension of Action 2 provides opportunities to address, and in particular:

- a) An urgent need to expand the 'in-depth' evidence base from this evaluation with parallel work in DPs not covered as 'case studies'. Such a platform was anticipated in the earlier evaluation action plan, but was later condensed to reflect budget limitations. It would be timely now to roll out the earlier proposal to ensure that the evaluation captures all available evidence from the different delivery models tested.
- b) Individual review of DPs to assess their state of play on mainstreaming, and the scope for synergies in building collaborations that might help integrate where appropriate, or otherwise take forward, the delivery models beyond Action 2. This might look to refreshing the 'action research' component built into the earlier evaluation model, and which provided for individualised review (and feedback to) all DPs from the evaluators.
- c) Any DP level review (eg b) above), might be combined with identification of evidence gaps (and opportunities) in individual DPs that might hold back mainstreaming, and in particular evidence of 'missed' hard outcomes, and more generally of interim positive achievements and soft outcomes with beneficiaries. Such action at local level may need separate guidance on methods and measures, including some working guidelines (and illustrations) on interim achievements and soft outcomes, perhaps drawn from an extended analysis from within the current evaluation. It will also need to be integrated with a more collective response to help to fill some of these evidence gaps (see below).
- d) In parallel, Exodus might seek to explore and define the evidence that funding and procurement bodies are looking for when determining service relevance, cost-effectiveness and appropriate capacity. This would ensure that DP or collective responses to filling current evidence gaps are informed by what potential funders want to know, as well as by what is of value for monitoring purposes. Some stakeholders are well placed to gather such evidence, either through membership of existing fora (eg Regional NoMS Working Groups covering ETE and other strands) or through other partnership activity (eg Resettlement Boards and NEON).
- e) Any guidance from Exodus for DP-level planning for the Action 2 extension will need to emphasise the importance of balancing any additional recruitment of beneficiaries with appropriate action to support existing beneficiaries in achieving interim or employment outcomes. This is not about artificially boosting outcomes evidence, but rather concerns recognising that Exodus has already demonstrated that delivery models can convert latent demand into beneficiary recruitment, and can do so in a variety of offender circumstances. What is less clear is if this can effectively support those recruited into demonstrable interim and employment outcomes, and how such achievements compare across delivery models and

situations. Issues here include looking at differences in working with short-term offenders and PPOs in open, secure, and community settings.

- f) To support a more broadly-based and critical assessment of Exodus's achievements, some external evidence is likely to be needed on how this contrasts with other delivery models. This might call on the evaluators extending their brief, perhaps working with NEON or others, to collate and assess external evidence on the outcomes achieved from delivery pilots in other regions.
- g) Organising and conducting an *acceleration event*, to provide for a cross-project review to assess the success within (and constraints to) respective delivery models. It would also build on the evaluation findings to identify specific DP evidence of practical ways of tackling emerging rigidities or issues of development for mainstreaming of delivery. This could be combined with a critical assessment of these evaluation findings, which may provide a starting point for this reflection. However, it would need to be conducted sufficiently early in the extension process to enable DPs and others to take forward outcomes well before the extension period ends. For this reason, we believe the re-scheduled stakeholder workshop (which is currently proposed to be held in November) would be too late to provide a focus for this, and would strongly recommend an event no later than mid September. The necessary scope of this event, the issues to be identified and covered, and the opportunity to build in joint action planning, calls for an appropriately intensive residential event, perhaps of 24-36 hours' duration.
- h) Linked with an acceleration event, we propose it would be very timely to re-establish the central commitment to develop an appropriate and forward-looking Communications Strategy for the whole programme. This would be a timely response to what seem to be significant issues for DPs in raising the profile of their individual projects, and achievements. There would seem to be considerable scope to bring together a collaborative approach to promoting Exodus achievements and lessons through appropriately positioned 'end-of-project' promotional material, a refreshed website, and (critically) with co-ordinated efforts making best use of existing stakeholder opportunities to better engage key regional influencing groups. Exodus has much to promote, but does not yet seem to be as sufficiently well placed to promote lessons learnt and implications among regional decision-making and interest groups concerned with resettlement as other delivery models.

Other development needs might emerge from stakeholders' reviews of this report. The evaluation suggests these all need to be seen as crucial for making best use of the last six months of funded activity. This will need close collaboration between the central and local partnerships, and a more credible process for articulating, demonstrating and promoting achievements and lessons. The evaluation is not in a position to be prescriptive about how this should be taken forward. However, it does raise the need for urgent action if the time is to be well spent. This calls for the same sense of urgency and concerted effort across partners as SEEDA, working with EISS and other core partners, was able to marshal for the refinancing and restructuring of Exodus a year ago. We doubt that so much effort will be needed, but there is a need for fast decision-making to ensure that such processes are in place by early September. Any delay beyond then will mean that little can be made of these important opportunities.

HOST commends this assessment to partners. We regard it as a provisional assessment, which needs to be validated by wide review within Exodus, and can be further built on by the proposed actions in the next six months. HOST welcomes the opportunity to continue to support a timely focus on review and reflection, but also cautions that the current evidence suggests best use needs to be made of that time if, as one seasoned observer said:

'...we do not want Exodus to contribute to the history of good ideas that have been lost'.

Annex A

The evaluation methodology

Annex A: The evaluation methodology

1. Introduction

HOST Policy Research (HOST) was commissioned as the external evaluators to the programme in March 2006. The focus was to be on Action 2 in the programme, with the evaluation expected to be robust, cross-programme and independent, and to provide for both a formative and summative evaluation across the two participating regions: London and the South East.

Changes to the scope of the evaluation consequent on the restructuring of the programme, and central cost reductions in SEEDA in summer 2006, saw the emphasis shift wholly to a summative evaluation. Two Evaluation Action Plans have guided the shape and process of the evaluation:

- The first (April to August 2006) was based on post-commissioning refinements of the methodology set out in the HOST tender, and guided the initial fieldwork with stakeholders and preliminary planning for summer fieldwork with DPs (later rescheduled to autumn 2006). Implementation of this action plan was put on hold (as with some of the mainstream delivery) in June 2006 as a result of the subsequent review of the programme.
- The second (September 2006 to July 2007) was developed to reflect agreed streamlining and cost reductions necessary to accommodate the restructured budget for Exodus agreed in summer 2006.

This summary draws together the methodology which emerged from this consolidated process, and reflects the adjustments to fieldwork scope and content, and reporting, agreed with the R and E Working Group.⁵⁹ Further details are set out in the revised Evaluation Action Plan. An overview of the quality of the restructured evaluation process is also set out, together with commentary on the quality of co-operation from those to be involved.

2. Aims and objectives

Although the evaluation has changed in its scope and coverage to reflect wider developments within the programme, its aims and objectives remain unchanged from those set out by SEEDA in the original Invitation to Tender (ITT). The focus was on Action 2, and required a multi-level and focused external evaluation which was expected to complement the arrangements put in place for internal evaluation and monitoring. Working within these arrangements, the external evaluation sought to provide *an independent and cross-cutting assessment of the extent to which Exodus meets the established goals for the programme*, and in particular:

⁵⁹ As at 7 September 2006.

- i) The quality of innovation and added value of the work of Exodus.
- ii) The potential for mainstreaming the work of Exodus to sustain effective actions.
- iii) The achievement of mainstreaming the work of Exodus.
- iv) The level of empowerment of beneficiaries served by Exodus.
- v) The achievement of equality of opportunity by Exodus.
- vi) The publicity and awareness raising achieved by Exodus.

These remained cross-cutting objectives. They were expected to affect all tiers of Exodus activity: funded sub-regional development activity within the two participating regions, regional and national integration, and trans-national review. The analysis also needed to be set against an evolving regional policy context aimed at tackling the long-standing crisis of re-offending among certain offender groups.

3. The approach to the evaluation

The evaluation has involved six separate but interrelated stages, with different evidence-gathering phases in each. It is based on *light-touch* processes to minimise disturbance and to make best use of available monitoring data, and has involved:

- Stage 1: Intensive project planning, inception and secondary research to shape and implement the Evaluation Action Plan(s), combined with staged feedback to take account of changes in Exodus activity over 2006-2007.
- Stage 2: Design and development, with an initial phase of developing and refining evaluation tools, taking into account in-project monitoring and internal evaluation, and adjusting these to changing project circumstances.
- Stage 3: A progressive and two-tier review of DP working models, progress, processes and achievements against goals and programme expectations. This will combine light-touch engagement with all DPs, with in-depth fieldwork on five of these projects selected as most relevant to future mainstreaming. This has included one cross-DP review event (with one other planned), organised as stakeholder workshops to feed back on, and critically review, findings.
- Stage 4: An initial and end-of-evaluation review of the regional and regional-national dimensions of the programme, including partnership working, policy links and integration.
- Stage 5: Trans-national impact-level review, specifically looking at local and sub-regional level engagement in these processes set against wider EQUAL goals.
- Stage 6: Collation and reporting of the Stages 3 to 6 evidence, with timing and delivery aimed to complement key decision points for Exodus.

Stage 1: Inception stage and secondary research

The planned inception stage of the project was completed by mid April 2006, although the summer 2006 re-organisation of Exodus and subsequent developments have seen the inception process being revisited. The early planning included some early secondary research in April and May 2006 to ensure the evaluation made best use of the available opportunities for evidence gathering and reflection, and in particular: preliminary liaison with SEEDA, EISS, and members of the R and E Working Group; discussion with the (then) Management Group for Exodus on proposed scope; a wider baseline review (April-May 2006) with key stakeholders (see also Stage 4 below); and a parallel, light-touch consultation with 14 of the (then) 15 DPs⁶⁰ to assess partnership composition and their views on the proposed evaluation process. The initial inception stage also included collating and reviewing beneficiary and other monitoring tools to assess the scope of available quantified information.

In practice, the changes to the organisation, co-ordination and shape of Exodus, and some of the associated disruptions, have also substantially affected the evaluation. The evaluation has needed to evolve as these developments have been anticipated by central partners. The approach and reflections agreed in the initial inception arrangement have consequently changed to accommodate a reduced budget for evaluation and some disruption to timing. In particular:

- The evaluation had planned to attend and observe all (then) Management Board meetings. In the light of the restructuring of the programme, this was regarded as an unnecessary burden on the evaluators, with their available time better harnessed for fieldwork with DPs and others.
- The planned schedule of baseline discussions with all DPs (June-July 2006) was postponed for six months until after the summer 2006 revised arrangements for Exodus were embedded. In consequence, the planned three-stage review of DPs was condensed to two review points (see Stage 3 below).
- The anticipated arrangements for including in-depth review of all DPs were re-focused to emphasis five selected DPs with identified strong mainstreaming potential. All DPs continued to be included in the evaluation, with the inputs from the local projects not selected being through the (added) stakeholder workshops, and from two self-assessment surveys and monitoring data, rather than individual and in-depth review.
- A proposal to include a series of beneficiary-led focus groups agreed in the early inception discussions gave way to a reduced cost and smaller-scale focus on evaluator-led focus groups.
- An interim review of the project with stakeholders planned for early autumn 2006 was also cancelled, with stakeholder experiences and inputs reviewed in two stages (April-May 2006 and May-June 2007, but not in-between).
- Continuous review of the monitoring data was replaced with a staged process, with an preliminary and mid-term review (October 2006), and a May-June 2007 review.
- The planned fieldwork to review quality of engagement in the trans-national dimension, and impact at sub-regional, regional and national level, was limited to an embedded assessment of effects (and not process) in the Stages 3 and 4 fieldwork.

⁶⁰ This did not include - at SEEDA's request - the Woodhill HMP project.

The main effect of these changes has been to change the evaluation into a more focused activity, which has remained robust and independent, but where the original intention for a formative evaluation with summative outputs has been replaced with an almost wholly summative process. These were planned changes, necessary to accommodate the knock-on effects of the re-organisation of Exodus and to develop more cost-effective inputs consistent with the reduced evaluation budget.

All changes were agreed with the R and E Working Group, which has been the steering group for the evaluation. This has met periodically (March, June, September, November 2006, and July 2007⁶¹) through the evaluation. There has also been *ad hoc* liaison between HOST and the SEEDA project manager and SEEDA senior staff. At the mid point of the evaluation, the first stakeholder workshops also provided an opportunity for stakeholders and the individual DPs to help plan the next stage of the evaluation, and was successful in securing important inputs to shaping its focus.

Stage 2: Design and development

The evaluation has aimed to work with, and add value to, the existing monitoring evidence, with fieldwork additional to any existing data compilation through DPs and others. Following review of monitoring data, a *common information matrix* was developed to covering the anticipated additional evidence needs from the different stages of the evaluation. This required some similar evidence being collected from different sources and at different times of the programme, both to 'triangulate' different experiences of different stakeholders, and to map changing practice and effects. The design stage focused on a number of distinct evaluation tools:

- The self-completion e-survey questionnaire for the baseline interviews with each of the DPs (Stage 3, October-November 2006), with a composite design allowing for different roles, and role mixes, across different projects. A second e-questionnaire was produced for the 'final' survey of all DPs (for May-June 2007).
- A semi-structured checklist for the multi-input interviews for those DPs selected for in-depth interviews. This shared core content with the baseline survey for comparability, and added additional profiling information and questioning on key development issues - these influenced by the first of the stakeholder workshops (November 2006). This checklist was extended for the follow-up interviews of May and June 2007.
- An unstructured interview guide (and briefing notes) to inform focus group interviewing with beneficiaries in the in-depth DPs.
- A semi-structured interview checklist for the baseline interviews with stakeholders (April/early May 2006), extended to review end-of-project development issues and policy synergies for the May-June 2007 interviews.

This design process also built in collection of available DP-level performance evidence on added-value of the delivery to beneficiaries. This ensured that the evaluation went well beyond readily quantified outcomes for beneficiaries.

Stage 3: Review of DP progress and achievements

Exodus is a multi-layered programme with considerable diversity in the local actions embedded across the established (and new) local development activity (DPs) in London and the South East. A major part of the resources of the evaluation were expected to be

⁶¹ The March 2007 meeting was cancelled as the fieldwork for the evaluation was at that stage suspended pending a decision on the extension of the DP activity from July to December.

devoted to this local dimension, but with a focus on the established (residual) nine lead partners.

The original methodology had provision for a formative dimension to this stage of the evaluation, based on baseline and interim feedback to project managers. It also provided for direct and staged engagement of all DPs, and for embedding beneficiary-led focus groups. In the re-shaping of the evaluation, these gave way to a more streamlined, focused and lower cost approach, as outlined above. The revised approach was summative in emphasis and centred on a twin-track approach to provide for the most cost-effective use of evaluation resources.⁶² The proposed baseline review (June/July 2006⁶³) was postponed and rescheduled to focus on fieldwork with five selected DPs in December 2006 and January 2007. This in-depth analysis centred on those projects selected (with the R and E Working Group) as having greater relevance for mainstreaming, as identified from the baseline analysis and discussion at the first stakeholder workshop.

The twin-track approach was an important feature of the evaluation and involved a range of fieldwork in the selected DPs - see below - which went beyond the lead delivery agents (and teams). This included a series of discussion with delivery partners' agencies, other key local stakeholders, and also integrated discussions with (HOST-led) beneficiary focus groups (where arrangements for collectively reviewing beneficiary experience and needs are established by DPs), and delivery partner reviews - customised to the specific context of each DP.

DPs not selected for in-depth analysis were assessed on a light-touch basis by a baseline (October/November 2006) and end-of-project (April/May 2007) e-survey. The first survey saw responses from all but two of the funded projects, and the second from all but four (although two of these were among the DP case studies). Projects not responding could not be covered by the analysis other than through available and centrally collated monitoring evidence.

The mid-project assessment - in-depth DPs - was conducted in December 2006 and January 2007 with:

- Blue Sky.
- St Giles Trust (focusing on the Holloway HMP partnership).
- Portobello Business Centre.
- Project Spring: HMP Springhill.
- Southampton: City Limits.

The in-depth interviewing and content included customised additional inputs to the generic interview checklist, with all lead partner interviewing conducted face-to-face and partners by a mixture of face-to-face and telephone interviewing. This flexibility in defining added inputs for the in-depth aspect was a vital part of the in-depth stage of the evaluation. It allowed the fieldwork to combine some comparability of evidence gathering with local customisation to tap identified beneficiary engagement opportunities, and taking account of early mainstreaming evidence (and implications). Each in-depth review was brought together in a visit report by the link HOST team

⁶² This was not a feature of the original HOST methodology, but has been proposed in the inception discussions by stakeholders, endorsed by the Management Board and the R and E Working Group, and continued as a feature of this adjusted workplan.

⁶³ Evaluation fieldwork in this period was in any event suspended pending the outcome of budget re-organisation across Exodus.

member, and submitted to the lead project manager at the DP for comment and amendment of factual material.

These December-January interviews were followed up in May-June 2007 with the same in-depth DPs and conducted on the same in-depth basis as for the mid-project reviews. Content was repeated to provide for comparable analysis, although with additional questioning on mainstreaming arrangements and plans, quality of innovation (and sustainability), and final out-turns on achievements. The findings were drawn together in final revisions to the mid-term visit reports, and validated with lead managers as above. The overall goals were to provide for each a near end-of-Action 2 assessment of progress and distance travelled locally against common Exodus goals and any local expectations.

In addition to the twin-track fieldwork, the evaluation has built in a participative element and cross-project critical review by DPs through stakeholder and DP workshops. This aimed to centre on two cross-DP invitation workshops also involving a small number of other stakeholders.⁶⁴ The events were to be organised and directly funded by SEEDA.⁶⁵ In the event, the workshop scheduled for November 2006 took place and made a significant contribution to the first interim report, and to shaping the first phase of in-depth fieldwork. A second event was planned for late May or early June 2007, but did not take place due to SEEDA concerns about the uncertain timing for any extension of the programme, and doubts about DP willingness or ability to take part at that time. In the event, the second event has been provisionally rescheduled for November 2007.

An additional input to the sub-regional dimension of the evaluation has been the collation and review of cross-DP monitoring data from EISS. This has been the main input to the quantitative side of the evaluation. HOST has worked closely with EISS staff to review not only the 'Annex 5' monitoring data for 2005-2007, but also to select and assess selected breakdowns to profile the numerical achievements of the DPs. EISS has also contributed commentary on emerging queries and issues, mainly concerned with DPs' use of the data classifications built into the monitoring process.

Stage 4: Review of the regional and regional-national dimension

Early interviews with regional agencies and stakeholders engaged in the governance of Exodus (regional tiers) were concluded by mid May, and reported to the R and E Working Group.⁶⁶ This stage of the evaluation was important to the reviewing process, quality of partnership and issues of integration, especially against a complex and changing infrastructure and policy context for reducing re-offending. This involved:

- **Secondary and documentary research.** This progressively reviewed the documentation regarding the focus of Exodus against regional and national priorities and developments (ie from Stage 2). This was a continuing review, taking account of documentation as it emerged from national, regional and other developments.
- **Baseline regional stakeholders/Management Board interviews.** The evaluation conducted a two-stage series of individual discussions with key players at regional level. A total of 18 agencies were involved in the first stage (April-May 2006), with these often engaging two to three people in each in the semi-

⁶⁴ This is likely to be limited to members of the R and E Working Group, and up to two or three others to be nominated by those members.

⁶⁵ SEEDA will fund the venue and facilities, day-subsistence and associated costs, and other staff time for marketing, invitations, delegate liaison, and all other aspects of organisation of the event other than professional facilitation on the day. The facilitation costs (including professional staff time, presentation materials, and T and S) will be met by HOST within the terms of the revised evaluation contract.

⁶⁶ This was brought together in a pre-interim report submitted to SEEDA in early June 2006.

structured interviews. These were positioned as 'baseline' interviews, although in practice many of those interviewed had been involved in Action 2 for many months. The late start to the evaluation⁶⁷ meant that, beyond retrospective feedback from these interviewees, the evaluation was not able to critically appraise the start-up processes and quality of transition from Action 1 to Action 2. Just over a quarter of these interviews involved some overlap with those likely to be interviewed for national agencies. The emphasis was on: partnership working; EXODUS integration and impact at regional/national levels, relationships and communications; quality and relevance of innovation; mainstreaming achievements and potential; and integration with regional/national development issues (and agents).

- **Near end-of-Action 2 regional stakeholders/Strategy Group interviews:** These focused on the same agencies as the baseline stage, and similar (updated) content extended to include 'achieved' mainstreaming and integration issues. Interviews combined face-to-face with an option for telephone discussions, if preferred. In all, 16 of the 18 agencies involved in the baseline stage were able to contribute.⁶⁸
- **End-of-Action 2 interviews with national/policy agencies.** A small number of interviews planned for early summer 2007 were instead replaced with a more embedded process which has included: policy inputs from some of the regional stakeholders; discussions on integration with EISS; interviews with NoMS and with selected NEON representatives. Account has also been taken of NEON documentation, and associated feedback. This was seen as a more appropriate focus, given the uncertain status for the extension of Action 2 at the time these were to be set up. HOST was also advised that these agencies were not then well placed to contribute, and would be in a better position to review potential for integration of Exodus lessons when the outcome of the government's Comprehensive Spending Review was known.

A further component of the regional/national dimension is the opportunity for stakeholders to review these evaluation findings, and stakeholder discussion of issues arising from the second of the staged workshops. This is now planned for November 2007 (see Stage 3 above).

Stage 5: Trans-national review

The trans-national (TN) aspect of the evaluation has been substantially re-focused to reflect the narrower scope of the evaluation post-consolidation of Exodus. The new approach centres on embedding this assessment within other inputs (from Stages 3 and 4) rather than requiring separate fieldwork, and in particular:

- Documentary collation and review by HOST, in discussion with EISS as the TN co-ordinators in Exodus,⁶⁹ supplemented with baseline and near end-of-Action 2 discussion to review engagement and integration at local/sub-regional level.
- Appropriate DP inputs through e-survey and case interview (Stage 3) inputs to review any specific engagement with, and effects of, the TN programme.

⁶⁷ The evaluation tendering process was started nearly five months after Action 2 commenced, and was then delayed a further two months by an error in the tendering documentation.

⁶⁸ Contributions were not forthcoming from LDA, or the London region LSC.

⁶⁹ This will not involve (as in the previous Framework Plan) any direct contact (e-mail and telephone) with the relevant programme leads in CARAVEL and HIDAK.

There have also been parallel inputs from the selected stakeholder contributors to the TN programme from SE and London agencies (embedded in Stage 4).

Stage 6: Collation and progressive reporting

In addition to this second interim report, there have been four interim outputs from the evaluation which have reported progress and early findings, and specifically:

- A **pre-interim report** submitted as a short report drawing together the common issues arising from the stakeholder interviews conducted in April and early May 2006.
- A **mid-project issues report** prepared for the November stakeholder workshop and circulated to all attending DPs and stakeholders. This set out a summary of findings from the early stakeholder and cross-DP fieldwork, issues arising (for review and small-group/plenary discussion at the workshop) and proposals for the focus of the next stage of the evaluation.
- An **interim report** drawing together the findings from the baseline stage of the evaluation with DPs in September/October 2006 (Stage 3), and the first stakeholder and DP workshop (7 November 2006).
- A **progress report** prepared at SEEDA's request for the 2006-2007 external monitoring meeting, updating the interim report with further progress on the evaluation, and early findings from the December-January fieldwork with DPs.

The main output of the evaluation was expected to be a (draft) **final report**,⁷⁰ and executive summary - prepared as a summative evaluation report. In the event, this has been prepared at a time when the proposed extension of Action 2 into 2007-2008 has yet to be confirmed. It is presented as a 'near end-of-Action 2' summative assessment which may, or may not, be extended to take account of any extension activities into 2007-2008. The structure of the report was proposed to SEEDA and the chair of the R and E Working Group, and remains very much as planned.

4. Evaluation overview

This has been a difficult, volatile and evolving evaluation. In this, the evaluators aimed to work closely with the programme, and the evaluation process has consequently been affected by the difficulties and disruption evident in summer 2006. The planning, communication and implementation arrangements have been much more complex than anticipated. These have been time-consuming and not without their difficulties, but overall, HOST concludes that the evaluation has risen to the challenge of reshaping its scope and focus to accommodate the restructuring of the programme.

This has involved substantial changes to the originally planned approach to the evaluation, and its scope. These changes have been negotiated and agreed, and put in place with little or no disruption to the overall timing, and with the evaluation meeting its goal to adopt *light-touch* principles. The activity conducted has remained appropriately embedded, robust and independent, and the main loss has been a reduced staged input from stakeholders, an inability to directly review partnership processes, and changing

⁷⁰ Prior to the confirmation of the extension of Action 2, a draft final report was submitted on 6 July 2007. This was considered at the 18 July 2007 R and E Group meeting, by which time the 'significant extension' had been agreed. At that point the report was re-badged as the second interim report. A draft final report to take into account further developments to December 2007 will be prepared for February 2008.

the process from a formative evaluation (with a summative outcome) to a wholly summative process. The changes were consistent with a slimmed-down evaluation process (and budget), but have meant that the evaluation has provided limited opportunities for mid-project reflection. There has also been a more discontinuous, and at times delayed, evaluation process, although with any inconvenience arising from this centred on the evaluation team and not on those being evaluated.

HOST is not in a position to assess how these changes to the evaluation process have affected internal planning or Exodus dissemination. However, while the evaluation has been more focused than had been planned, the process of making the necessary adjustments has not affected the overall quality of evidence gathering and analysis within the revised scope for the evaluation.

One limitation to the evaluation, however, does not have its roots in the summer 2006 adjustments to the whole programme. The evaluation was commissioned much later than expected, and far too late to take more than an anecdotal account of the early stages of partnership working and the quality of collaboration in the first critical months of Action 2. HOST is consequently not well placed to validate the observation of many partners that difficulties emerging in summer 2006 were deep-seated, with serious flaws in the early foundations of Action 2 and its central management. Given the subsequent history of the programme, this remains a serious limitation to the evaluation which has become in effect a 'second half' assessment of Action 2.

Although starting the evaluation process at a difficult time for the programme, the evaluators nonetheless received widespread co-operation. In late spring and summer 2006, this involved all central stakeholders, and later those working within nearly all of the DPs, and strong collaboration also from the sampled DPs in winter 2006-2007 and late spring/early summer 2007. Within those projects, the evaluators have been particularly impressed with the constructive inputs made by both practitioners and beneficiaries, with a consequent regret that the streamlining of the evaluation has dramatically reduced the opportunity for more direct evidence gathering from those involved at the front end of Exodus. Support from EISS in collating the available monitoring evidence has also been timely and responsive. While not all stakeholders were able to contribute to this near end-of-Action 2 assessment, the gaps are not thought to have significantly constrained this analysis.

HOST consequently commends the evaluation to Exodus partners as a robust summative evaluation of what has (and has not) been achieved across the programme. We also strongly recommend that should the extension of Action 2 activities be agreed for 2007-2008, the opportunity is taken to more widely review (and extend) these findings across all tiers of the partnership. This will provide an important platform for developing, and sharing, the process learning developed within individual DPs, but at present too often locked into local arrangements. This, in turn, may be critical to making best use of any extension for assessing the transferability of this learning, and building this into emerging opportunities for mainstreamed activities to reduce re-offending.

Annex B

Summary of local DPs, their partnerships and focus

Annex B: Summary of local DPs, their partnerships and focus

DP	Delivery partners	Area	London	South-East	London and SE	Original focus	Comment
Blue Sky	Groundwork Thames Valley, HMP Bullingdon, Probation, Thames Valley Partnership	4			4	Aim: 'To provide real employment for ex-offenders via an intermediate labour market'. 'A proper job with a proper company'	'To provide a minimum of 30 employment opportunities over 2 years with at least 60% into full-time sustainable employment'
Project Spring (HMP Springhill)	18 'joint stakeholders', including employers and training providers. Work too with Jobcentre Plus, and nextstep			4		Aim: To provide an in-house job club and 'a "total solution"' for both prisoners and employers, helping the former to find work with those employers having difficulties filling their vacancies'	'Community links are established for post-release support and also learning and skills input to achieve Level 2 targets'
Kent Probation/ Citizens Advice Bureaux	Range of local partners, including Prisons, Probation and Legal Services Commission	4				Aim: 'To provide a seamless end-to-end service from point of arrest to post-release support and will include accommodation, substance abuse, ETE and mentoring interventions to secure employment outcomes'	Target Area: Dartford and Gravesham in Thames Gateway. Target Numbers: 80 ex-prisoners over a 2-year period
Westgate/Mid Hants/HMP Winchester	Enham, Groundwork, Hampshire Police, Jobcentre Plus, HMP Winchester, Westgate Support and Care, Winchester City Council	4				Aim: 'To provide a holistic, integrated approach to resettlement with specific application for a rural community where accommodation is a key issue for ex-offenders'	

DP	Delivery partners	Area	London	South-East	London and SE	Original focus	Comment
Southampton City Council	Hampshire Police, HMP Winchester, In Biz, Jobcentre Plus, LSC, Probation, Voluntary and Community Sector Providers	4				<p>Aim: To provide 'a Partnership approach with a strong user involvement element designed to provide a seamless end-to-end approach to resettlement'</p> <p>Target Group: 'Focused on short-term prisoners from HMP Winchester returning to the Southampton, and prolific and other priority offenders'</p>	<p>Links to Westgate/Mid Hants/HMP Winchester Project</p> <p>'Outcomes expected from target group of 100 ex-offenders over a 2-year period with 50% supported into employment'</p>
HMP Holloway Partnership	HMP Holloway, PACT, Shelter, St Giles Trust		4			<p>Aim: To provide 'intensive casework and support services from the start of the sentence with the aim of increasing employment and employability outcomes. The project will place particular emphasis on family links, childcare arrangements and softer outcome measures'</p> <p>Target Group: 'The project will support female prisoners (including remands) released across London'</p>	'Target numbers of 120 expected over 2 years with sustainable employment outcomes of 20% and other outcomes monitored in terms of reductions in recidivism, stability, motivation, education and training etc'

DP	Delivery partners	Area	London	South-East	London and SE	Original focus	Comment
Action Acton (AcA)	'Action Acton has network contacts in job brokerage, regeneration and the voluntary and community sector in Hammer-smith, Fulham and Ealing'	4				Aim: 'To increase the employability of offenders by developing community networks and employment support'	'Target numbers are 50 beneficiaries over 2 years with sustainable job outcomes of 10-15%' <i>Update: AcA is working with St Mungo's Trust targeting short-term prisoners released into the Borough of Ealing from HMP Wormwood Scrubs</i>
Lambeth and Southwark Returns (St Giles Trust)	'South London partnership led by St Giles Trust, including Shelter, HMP Brixton, Jobcentre Plus and Tomorrow's People'	4				Aim: 'To provide accommodation support, employment links, support into employment with ongoing support and the use of an innovative Prisoner Peer adviser scheme, with serving inmates trained to NVQ Level 3 in IAG' Target Group: 'Ex-short term prisoners and PPOs returning to Lambeth and Southwark'	'Target numbers are 120 over 2 years with a minimum of 10% supported into sustainable employment'

DP	Delivery partners	Area	London	South-East	London and SE	Original focus	Comment
London Probation PPOs	'Led by St Giles Trust with primary statutory partners London Probation and Action Acton'	4				<p>Aim: 'To assist Crime and Disorder Partnerships (CDRP) to provide effective interventions for PPOs by providing support across all 7 resettlement pathways'</p> <p>Target Group: 'To work with PPOs in up to 3 Boroughs - Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing and Hounslow'</p>	'The project will work initially with 10 PPOs'
Croydon/HMP Highdown	Lead by St Giles Trust working with HMP Highdown and HMP Ford	4			4	<p>Aim/Target Group: To provide, 'accommodation, training and employment for short-term and remand prisoners and PPOs, by developing links with local accommodation and training providers as well as employers', and, 'offer support to employers who may have anxieties about employing the beneficiaries'</p>	<i>Update: Some work being undertaken with beneficiaries in neighbouring Boroughs</i>

DP	Delivery partners	Area	London	South-East	London and SE	Original focus	Comment
Southwark Returns	Partnership between St Giles Trust and south east Prison region	4			4	<p>Target Group: 'Short-term and remand prisoners and PPOs returning to a single London Borough, LB Southwark'</p> <p>Aim: 'Based in HMP Ford, but also picking up referrals from HMP Standford Hill', 'focus on ensuring beneficiaries have appropriate accommodation on release, and assist with training and employment opportunities. Links are also made with, and support offered to, employers'</p>	<p><i>Update: Original intention was that the project would work on, 'cross-regional prison discharges', including, 'tracking discharges from Kent prisons in particular returning to live in Southwark'. Work is still cross-regional, as HMP Ford is situated in Sussex (South East) and supported returns are to South London Boroughs, as well as to Portsmouth and Southampton</i></p>
Portobello Business Centre (PBC)	Work in association with other projects/ partners				4	<p>Aim/Target Group: To 'deliver business support and training advice and guidance for business start-up for ex-prisoners'</p>	<p>Have operated in: 'Wormwood Scrubs, Holloway, Brixton and Pentonville prisons in London, as well as a number of prisons in the South East'</p>

DP	Delivery partners	Area	London	South-East	London and SE	Original focus	Comment
St Mungo's	'A Partnership led by St Mungo's with HMP Pentonville and HMP Wormwood Scrubs'	4				<p>Aim: To provide, 'ETE and accommodation support'</p> <p>Target Group: Short-term prisoners and PPOs returning to the North London Boroughs of Ealing, Brent, Camden, Islington and Haringey</p>	'A target number of 120 beneficiaries over the 2-year period'

Annex C

Selected tabulations: Exodus delivery and beneficiary distribution

Annex C: Selected tabulations - Exodus delivery and beneficiary distribution

Figure C.1: Beneficiary recruitment, 2005-2007

Beneficiary numbers	By date of start registration (numbers and per cents)		
	Number	% of all starts	Cumulative %
2005:			
August	9	1.3	1.3
September	17	2.4	3.7
October	33	4.7	8.4
November	33	4.7	13.1
December	18	2.6	15.7
2006:			
January	25	3.6	19.3
February	32	4.6	23.9
March	44	6.4	30.3
April	35	5.0	35.3
May	55	8.0	43.3
June	41	6.0	49.3
July	39	5.6	54.9
August	62	9.0	63.9
September	41	5.9	69.8
October	33	4.7	74.5
November	34	4.8	79.3
December	19	2.7	82.0
2007:			
January	30	4.3	86.3
February	36	5.2	91.5
March	35	5.0	96.5
April	22	3.2	99.7
May ¹	2	0.3	100.0
Total to May 2007	695	100.0	-

¹ Starts recorded by 05.06.2007

Valid cases = 695

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.2: Beneficiary targets for Exodus, and achievements to 31 May 2007

	Male		Female		Total	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
16-24 years	25	157	5	11	30	168
25-49 years	520	427	45	49	565	476
50 and over	5	39	-	2	5	41
All ages - known	550	623	50	62	600	685
Others - not known	-	5	-	-	-	14 ¹
Total	500	628	50	62	600	699

Valid cases = 699

¹ Includes nine beneficiaries where age and/or gender not known

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

**Figure C.3: Beneficiary distribution by ethnic groups, 2005-2007
Summary distribution by gender (numbers)**

	Male		Female		Total	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
White	340	360	30	32	370	392
Mixed ethnicity	40	40	5	2	45	42
Asian/Asian British	15	39	-	-	15	39
Black/Black British	150	158	15	26	165	184
Chinese	5	-	-	-	5	-
Other	-	26	-	-	-	26
Not known/declared	-	3	-	-	-	3
Total	550	626	50	60	600	686

Valid cases = 686

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.4: Beneficiary distribution by disability, 2005-2007
Summary of distribution by disadvantage category (numbers)

	Male		Female		Total	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Physical disability	50	62	5	6	55	68
Mental disability	50	18	5	3	55	21
Learning disability	200	21	10	1	210	22
No disability	250	527	30	52	280	579
All beneficiaries	550	628	50	62	600	690

Valid cases = 690

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.5: Beneficiary distribution by pre-custodial qualification levels, 2005-2007
Summary of distribution by DP estimate of highest level of qualification achievements before recruitment (numbers)

	Male		Female		Total	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
No qualifications	500	576	40	58	540	634
Sub-level 1 qualifications	-	7	-	2	-	9
NVQ Level 1 or equivalent	30	12	5	1	35	13
NVQ Level 2 or equivalent	20	19	5	1	25	20
NVQ Level 3 or equivalent	-	7	-	-	-	7
NVQ Level 4 or equivalent	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQ Level 5 or equivalent	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total	550	622	50	62	600	684

Valid cases = 684

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.6: Beneficiary distribution by disadvantage, 2005-2007
Summary distribution by disadvantage category (numbers)

	Male		Female		Total	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Ex-offenders and those under statutory supervision	550	628	50	62	600	690
Homeless	200	204	10	20	210	224
Refugees	-	5	-	-	-	5
Asylum seekers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drug/alcohol misusers	300	274	30	28	330	302
16-17 year olds at risk of school exclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-
Roma people/ travellers	20	6	5	-	25	6
People over 50	5	34	-	2	5	36
Labour market returners	-	103	10	6	10	109
People from disadvantaged areas ¹	300	26	20	3	320	29
Jobseekers with low basic skills	400	118	40	2	440	120
Lone parents and/or carers	-	12	20	7	20	19

¹ Bottom ten per cent of wards

Valid cases = 686

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.7: Beneficiaries by disadvantage by DP registration at 31 May 2007 (number)

Beneficiary disadvantage	Springhill	Saint Mungo's	St Giles Trust	Portobello B Centre	Westgate	Blue Sky	Action Acton	Southampton	Kent Probation	All DPs
Ex-offenders/under statutory supervision	74	180	104	73	13	31	31	136	48	690
Homeless	6	93	49	13	8	7	13	29	7	225
Refugees/asylum seekers	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Long-term unemployed	23	109	52	17	7	15	19	52	22	316
Drug/alcohol misusers	5	93	52	9	7	22	17	74	23	302
16-17 year olds at risk of school exclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Roma people/travellers	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	6
People over 50 years	18	4	4	2	1	1	-	5	-	35
Labour market returners	2	50	18	1	-	9	6	7	10	103
People from disadvantaged areas ¹	1	2	19	3	-	-	1	1	1	28
Job-seekers with low basic skills ²	19	54	38	10	2	15	10	58	12	218
Lone parents and carers	1	5	8	2	-	1	-	2	-	19
Other disadvantage nec	21	58	77	12	8	23	19	72	36	326
Disadvantage index	3.2	5.7	5.3	3.4	4.2	5.6	3.7	4.5	5.0	4.7

Valid cases = 690

¹ Domiciled in local government ward classified in lowest ten per cent by GO deprivation index.

² Includes beneficiaries classified with literacy, numeracy or ESOL requirements.

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.8: Beneficiaries by classified disadvantage by DP registration at 31 May 2007 (per cent)

Beneficiary disadvantage	Springhill	Saint Mungo's	St Giles Trust	Portobello B Centre	Westgate	Blue Sky	Action Acton	Southampton	Kent Probation	All DPs
Ex-offenders/under statutory supervision	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Homeless	8	52	47	18	62	23	42	21	15	33
Refugees/asylum seekers	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Long-term unemployed	31	61	50	23	54	48	61	38	46	46
Drug/alcohol misusers	7	52	50	12	54	71	55	54	20	44
16-17 year olds at risk of school exclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Roma people/travellers	-	1	-	-	-	6	-	-	4	1
People over 50 years	24	2	4	3	8	-	-	4	-	5
Labour market returners	3	28	17	1	-	29	19	5	21	15
People from disadvantaged areas ¹	1	1	18	4	-	-	3	1	2	4
Job-seekers with low basic skills ²	26	30	37	14	15	48	32	43	25	32
Lone parents and carers	1	3	8	3	-	3	-	2	-	3
Other disadvantage nec	28	33	74	16	62	74	61	53	75	47

Valid cases = 690

¹ Domiciled in local government ward classified in lowest ten per cent by GO deprivation index.

² Includes beneficiaries classified with literacy, numeracy or ESOL requirements.

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.9: Beneficiary distribution by pre-custodial qualification levels, 2005-2007
Summary of distribution by DP estimate of highest level of qualification achievements before recruitments (numbers)

	Male		Female		Total	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
No qualifications	500	576	40	58	540	634
Sub-Level 1 qualifications	-	7	-	2	-	9
NVQ Level 1 or equivalent	30	12	5	1	35	13
NVQ Level 2 or equivalent	20	19	5	1	25	20
NVQ Level 3 or equivalent	-	7	-	-	-	7
NVQ Level 4 or equivalent	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQ Level 5 or equivalent	-	1	-	-	-	1
Other	-	6	-	-	-	6
Total	550	628	50	62	600	690

Valid cases = 690

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure C.10: Characteristics of beneficiary unemployment before recruitment, 2005-2007
Length of time beneficiary out of work before recruitment to DP

	Numbers of beneficiaries who were previously unemployed for...					
	Under 26 weeks	26-52 weeks	1-2 years	2-3 years	Over 3 years	All durations
16-24 years	41	25	30	9	52	157
25-49 years	97	52	57	47	200	453
50 and over	5	4	3	4	21	37
Total achieved	143	81	90	60	273	647
Total target	-	30	222	237	111	600

Valid cases = 647 (excludes 44 with delayed/no information)

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Annex D

Selected tabulations - Exodus outputs and outcomes

Annex D: Selected tabulations - Exodus outputs and outcomes

Figure D.1: DP inputs and activities for beneficiaries

Actions for individuals	Estimated beneficiaries ¹	
	Number	Per cent
Work advice, guidance and counselling	72	28
Training	24	9
Training in the workplace	13	5
Key and basic skills support	20	8
Work placements	10	4
Job rotation or job sharing	8	3
Employment aids and job-search help (including self-employment)	48	19
Helping people to join in, assessing the needs of individuals and individual action planning	48	19
Motivation and orientation	49	20
Help into self-employment	9	4
Help into lifelong learning	1	1
IT and ICT training and support	20	8
Other	11	10

¹ This is limited to completers/leavers with exit records

Valid cases = 255

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.2: Beneficiary destination/outcomes, 2005-2007
Numbers of Exodus beneficiaries (with NI numbers) going to...

	Male number	Female number	Total	
			Number	Per cent
Prison/sentenced	21	1	22	8
DR/AL rehabilitation	1	-	1	1
Full-time Education/Training ¹	3	-	3	1
Full-time employment	19	-	19	7
Part-time employment	1	-	1	1
Self-employment	3	-	3	1
Unemployed	80	-	80	31
Other	2	-	2	1
Early leaver – planned	1	-	1	1
Early leaver - unplanned	9	-	9	4
Not known	113	1	114	44
Total	253	2	255	100

¹ Includes pre-vocational training

Valid cases = 255

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.3: Beneficiary destination outcomes by ethnicity

Awaiting data from EISS

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.4: Beneficiary destination outcomes by age

Awaiting data from EISS

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.5: Beneficiary destinations outcomes by disability

Awaiting data from EISS

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.6: Beneficiaries by destination outcome, by qualification on entry

Awaiting data from EISS

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.7: Beneficiaries destination outcome, by disadvantage

Awaiting data from EISS

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.8: Beneficiaries by destination outcome by DP

Awaiting data from EISS

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.9: Beneficiaries and qualification outcomes, 2005-2007

Qualification level	Male		Female	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Qualifications below NVQ Level 1 or equivalent	200	8	10	1
NVQ Level 1 or equivalent	200	13	30	1
NVQ Level 2 or equivalent	50	17	5	5
NVQ Level 3 or equivalent	-	6	-	-
NVQ Level 4 or equivalent	-	-	-	-
NVQ Level 5 or equivalent	-	1	-	-
Other	-	23	-	-
None	100	191	5	4
Total	550	259	50	6

NB. Numbers may not add up where beneficiaries achieve more than one qualification

Valid cases = 265

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.10: Beneficiaries achieving qualification outcomes at 31 May 2007 (numbers and per cents)

Entry qualification	Qualification outcomes of leavers									% of leavers with outcomes
	None	Below Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Other qualification	Leavers	
None	56	3	3	-	1	-	-	2	65	14
Below NVQ Level 1	24	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	29	17
NVQ Level 1 and equivalent	18	2	5	2	-	-	-	2	29	38
NVQ Level 2 and equivalent	32	-	4	8	2	-	-	3	49	35
NVQ Level 3 and equivalent	9	-	2	4	2	-	-	1	18	50
NVQ Level 4 and equivalent	6	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	8	33
NVQ Level 5 and equivalent	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	50
Other qualification	41	2	-	2	1	-	-	3	47	13
Total: Qualification gained	187	9	14	17	6	-	1	15	249	

Valid cases = 249

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

Figure D.11: Beneficiaries achieving qualification outcomes, by DP registration at 31 May 2007 (numbers and per cents)

Outcome qualification	Springhill	Saint Mungo's	St Giles Trust	Portobello B Centre	Westgate	Blue Sky	Action Acton	Southampton	Kent Probation	All DPs
None gained	32	69	18	2	2	12	6	54	-	195
Below NVQ Level 1	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	4	-	9
NVQ Level 1 and equivalent	8	-	1	-	-	2	-	3	-	14
NVQ Level 2 and equivalent	12	1	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	17
NVQ Level 3 and equivalent	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	6
NVQ Level 4 and equivalent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQ Level 5 and equivalent	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Other qualification	2	4	-	-	-	1	4	3	2	16
% of beneficiaries with qualification outcomes	48	16	14	-	33	37	40	17	100	26

Valid cases = 258

Source: HOST review of EISS monitoring data, June 2007

