

Revision to **Prisoners' experience of prison and outcomes on release:**
Waves 2 and 3 of SPCR

Addressing offending behaviour (Sample 1 and Sample 2), Section 3.1, p. 13

A figure on page 13: 'around one in five (21%) reporting that they had attended...' **has been corrected to:** 'around one in four (24%) reporting...'

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29 October 2014



Ministry
of Justice

Prisoners' experience of prison and outcomes on release: Waves 2 and 3 of SPCR

**Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime
Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study
of prisoners**

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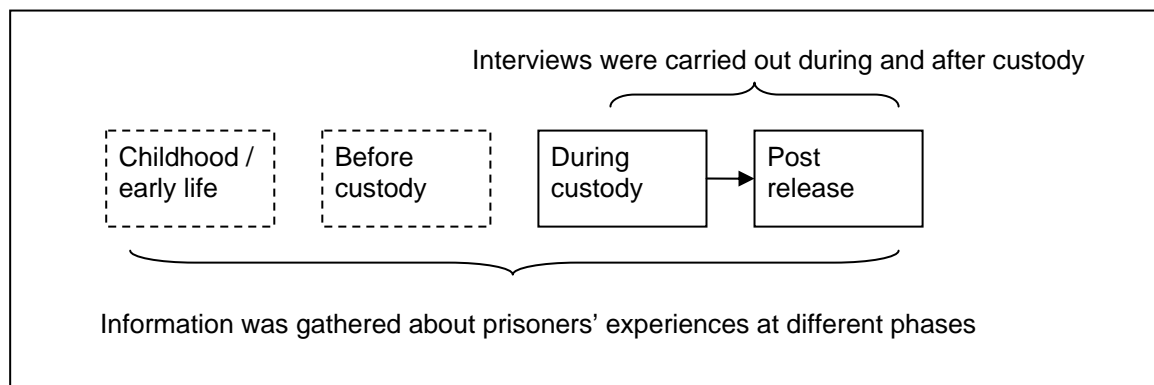
1. Summary

This report presents the findings from Wave 2 (in-custody, pre-release) and Wave 3 (post-custody) of Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR), a longitudinal cohort study of male and female adult prisoners sentenced to between one month and four years in England and Wales between 2005 and 2007. Prisoners were interviewed in prison and in the community between 2005 and 2010 and re-offending was followed-up using police records for two years after release. The report describes prison routine, prisoners' expectations of life after custody and actual outcomes on release, including employment, accommodation, drugs and alcohol, and finance, benefits and debt.¹ It is not an exhaustive account of SPCR Wave 2 and 3 data, but rather aims to summarise the key results from these waves. Results from Wave 1 of the survey (administered on reception to custody) have already been published.

This report is based on self-reported survey questions from a representative sample (SPCR Sample 1) of 1,435 prisoners, most of whom (76%) were sentenced to less than 12 months. Some missing data (due to survey attrition) has been recovered, and some supplementary material from longer-sentenced (18 months to four years) prisoners (SPCR Sample 2) is also reported. Comparisons with earlier prisoner surveys are also made.

Prisoners were asked about their time in custody during the Wave 2 interviews, which were conducted shortly before release, and about their outcomes on release during the Wave 3 interviews, which were conducted shortly after release. Figure 1.1 provides a schematic outline of interview topics and timing.

Figure 1.1: SPCR interviews and topic areas/life stages



¹ Wave 1 results, which describe the prisoners' backgrounds, and the technical reports, which explain the sampling and methodology, are available on the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) website.

Findings

Wave 2 and Wave 3 results cover experiences and activities in custody, expectations on release from prison, and actual outcomes on release. The main findings (relating to Sample 1, unless otherwise stated) were:

Wave 2 (in-custody)

Prisoners' experiences of prison included spending time in their cells, participating in paid work, attending education and training, being treated for substance misuse problems, and contacting their family and friends:

- Most prisoners were in contact with their family and friends while in custody, either by letter (91%), telephone (88%) or through visits (70% received visits from family or partners and 38% received visits from friends).
- Prisoners' levels of privilege differed, and a minority (21%) received additional punishments during their sentence.
- Around half of prisoners (53%) participated in paid work in prison, with 'cleaning' the most frequently reported job undertaken.
- Most prisoners (64%) were assessed for education and training needs, with nearly a quarter (23%) attending education classes. Few prisoners attended courses to address their offending behaviour: five per cent reported attending anger management programmes, and seven per cent 'thinking skills' or cognitive behavioural programmes.
- Most prisoners were received into custody with substance misuse problems (64% reported using illegal drugs in the four weeks before custody – Light *et al.*, 2013) and most (72%) reported being assessed by a healthcare worker while in custody. There was evidence that fewer prisoners received help with addiction problems (27%) than reported they needed it (40%).
- Three in ten Sample 2 (longer-sentenced) prisoners (30%) reported using illegal drugs during their custodial sentence. The most frequently reported drug used in custody was cannabis (by 22% of prisoners) followed by heroin (by 14% of prisoners). Reported drug usage patterns shortly before and after custody were similar to usage patterns in custody, with cannabis and heroin the most frequently reported drugs used.
- Fewer prisoners received help in custody with accommodation (22%) and with employment (19%) on release than reported that they wanted such help (37% and 48% respectively).

- Prisoners reported spending around seven hours per day out of their cells (most of which were shared) on average. This is less than the ten hours mandated by Prison Service Orders.
- Prisoners' relationships with staff were reportedly good, with 80% reporting that they 'got on well' with staff.
- Around half of prisoners (53%) who reported being physically assaulted by another inmate did not report this to a member of staff.
- One in five prisoners (20%) said they had no accommodation to go to on release from custody and a smaller proportion (15%) reported being homeless shortly after release. Twenty-nine per cent said they would have a job to go to upon release.

Wave 3 (after release)

The ex-prisoners were interviewed a few months² after release from prison. Topics covered their employment and accommodation status, and drug usage:

- Just over one-quarter (28%) reported having worked since release from prison, and nearly three-quarters (73%) reported claiming benefits shortly after release (mostly Jobseeker's Allowance): this was higher than the 64% who reported having claimed benefits at some point in the year before custody.
- Around one in six (15%) reported that they were homeless at the time of the interview.
- Over half (54%) reported that they had used illegal drugs since leaving prison. This was lower than the proportion which reported having used illegal drugs in the four weeks before custody (64%).
- Nearly one in five prisoners (17%) was in prison again at the point of interview, and more than two-thirds (68%) had been reconvicted of at least one proven re-offence within two years of release.

² Wave 3 interviews were planned to take place around one to two months after a prisoner's release. In practice, 53% of interviews took place within 14 weeks of release; 20% between 14 and 20 weeks; and 27% more than 20 weeks after release. See Cleary *et al.* (2014) for details.

Conclusion and Implications

Overall, this report shows that prisoners had accommodation and employment problems both before custody and upon release. More prisoners reported needing help with accommodation, employment, substance misuse issues and offending behaviour than reported receiving it during custody. These findings are relevant to the delivery of interventions, both in prison and in the community, to address these needs.

In addition, the research found that a large minority of longer-sentenced prisoners (30%) reported using drugs whilst in prison (during the Wave 2 interview period, 2006 to 2008). This was lower than the reported usage by the same prisoners in the four weeks before custody (57%). However, it was higher than the levels detected by random Mandatory Drugs Testing (MDT) (9%) during approximately the same period (2007/2008). The difference between MDT-detected and self-reported drug usage in custody is well understood, and occurs because of a number of factors, including counting methods and the dissipation rates of certain drugs. MDT measures the proportion of prisoners who have misused drugs in the days before the test, whereas the research asked whether drugs had been used at any point in custody, which in some cases will have been over a number of years. Overall, both self-reported rates of drug usage and MDT detection levels appear to have declined since around 1997 (when they were 43% and 21% respectively).

2. Background

Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) is a large, longitudinal cohort study of adult (aged 18 years and older) prisoners conducted in the field between 2005 and 2010. The survey consisted of interviews on reception to prison (Wave 1), prior to release (Wave 2) and post-release (Waves 3 and 4³). SPCR interviewers asked prisoners about their lives before custody, their experiences of prison, and what happened to them after release. The prisoners were sentenced between 2005 and 2007 to between one month and four years in prisons in England and Wales. The overall sample of 3,849 prisoners consists of a largely representative (of prison receptions) sample (Sample 1) of 1,435 prisoners sentenced to between one month and four years, and a second sample (Sample 2) of 2,414 prisoners sentenced to between 18 months and four years.

2.1 Aims

The aim of the current report is to:

- describe events in prison and outcomes on release as reported by prisoners;
- compare prisoners' answers about help received in custody with earlier answers about their needs; and
- to compare prisoners' expectations of life after release with actual outcomes.

This report is not an exhaustive account of SPCR Wave 2 and 3 data, but rather aims to summarise the key results from these waves.

2.2 Approach

Results in this report are mostly⁴ from SPCR Sample 1⁵ (1,435 prisoners: 1,303 male and 132 female), which is representative of the prison reception population sentenced to between

³ Wave 4 was asked only of Sample 2 prisoners who had been interviewed at Wave 3; therefore, the sample has not been reported here.

⁴ Findings from Sample 2 (longer-sentenced prisoners) are provided where comparisons are made between longer- and shorter-sentenced prisoners, and where data for Sample 1 prisoners was not available because of survey attrition.

⁵ Further information on Sample 1 demographics can be found in Light *et al.* (2013) and MoJ (2010a), and Sample 2 demographics in Brunton-Smith & Hopkins (2013). Details of the sample methodology and the Wave 1 questionnaire are published in the Wave 1 Technical Report (Cleary *et al.*, 2012a) along with Wave 1 results on the MoJ website: MoJ (2010a); Light *et al.* (2013); Hopkins (2012); Cuniffe *et al.* (2012); Williams *et al.* (2012a, 2012b); and Boorman & Hopkins (2012). Longitudinal analyses across Waves 1 to 3 of the survey are also available (Brunton-Smith & Hopkins 2013, 2014) along with Waves 2-4 methodology technical reports (Cleary *et al.*, 2012b, Cleary *et al.*, 2014) and the Missing Data Technical Report (Brunton-Smith *et al.*, 2014).

one month and four years⁶ in prison. Most of these prisoners (76%) were sentenced to less than one year (Williams *et al.*, 2012a). Where longer-sentenced prisoners were of interest, or where Sample 1 results were not available (due to loss of data caused by survey attrition), Sample 2 of SPCR was used. Sample 2 is representative⁷ of the longer-sentenced (18 months to four years) prisoner reception population. Unless otherwise stated, results presented in this report describe Sample 1.

Over the course of the survey (2005 to 2010), some prisoners who had been interviewed at Wave 1 (on reception to prison) were not contactable or declined to participate in later waves. This loss of participants resulted in reduced and potentially biased samples at Waves 2 and 3. In order to rectify this, multiple imputation was used to adjust estimates for missing data where appropriate. This is a technique which creates statistical proxies for missing data based on available data and is explained in detail in Brunton-Smith *et al.* (2014).

Survey participants' data were matched to the Police National Computer to allow proven re-offending and criminal history analysis to be undertaken (Boorman & Hopkins, 2012).

This paper reports key findings from Wave 2 (pre-release) and Wave 3 (post-release) of SPCR. Aggregate answers and base sizes for recovered Wave 2 and 3 survey questions are available as a series of supporting tables. Base sizes for analysis of data which were not part of Waves 2 and 3 of SPCR are provided in this report. SPCR results are compared with earlier prisoner surveys: the 1997 Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (Singleton *et al.*, 1999); the 2001 Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) survey (Singleton *et al.*, 2005). See Annex A for more information.

⁶ Fewer than 10% of prisoners were sentenced to more than four years in prison in 2006: *Offender management caseload statistics (annual)*, available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics-and-data/prisons-and-probation/omcs-annual.htm>.

⁷ Includes a boosted sample of 400 women prisoners. A proportion of the women in the sample were randomly removed to ensure it was representative. The final sample consisted of 2,171 prisoners: 2,014 men and 157 women.

3. Results

3.1 Wave 2 – Prior to release from prison

SPCR prisoners were interviewed at Wave 2 shortly before their release from prison. They were asked about their experience of prison life, help they received in prison, whether they participated in paid work, about which programmes and courses they attended, and their expectations on release (see Cleary *et al.*, 2012b for the methodology used and the Wave 2 questionnaire).

Prison life

Questions about prison life covered accommodation arrangements, time spent locked up, privileges and punishments. Almost all prisoners (93%) reported living in a cell (with a room or dormitory the other options), and most prisoners (69%) reported that they shared their accommodation. The prisoners reported being locked up for most of the time (17 hours on average) the day before the interview. Thus, they spent seven hours on average out of their cells, or ‘unlocked’, which is less than the ten hours mandated by Prison Service Orders.⁸

This finding is in line with a review⁹ by HM Inspectorate of Prisons in 2007, which also suggested that time out of cell was significantly less than the ten hours required. The HMIP review found that those who were unlocked for more than ten hours experienced better outcomes than those who were unlocked for less, including better mental health, more positive expectations and better access to services (HMIP, 2007).

SPCR prisoners were asked about levels of privilege and punishments. Most prisoners (75%) were on ‘standard’ levels of privilege at the time of interview, with 19% on ‘enhanced’ and 6% on ‘basic’. Around one in five prisoners (21%) reported having received a punishment, formally known as an ‘adjudication’, while in custody. These punishments varied (Table 3.1).

⁸ Prison Service Order 7100. Regime Monitoring Guidance, 2007.

⁹ HMIP reviews are based on quantitative and qualitative interviews.

Table 3.1: SPCR Sample 1: reported punishments received in custody

Type of punishment	Per cent reporting
Loss of privileges (e.g. television in cell)	9
Caution	7
Loss of earnings	7
Cell confinement	6
Closed visits (visitors separated by glass screen)	3
Some other punishment	10
None of these	79

Multiple responses possible for type of punishment.

The most commonly reported punishment was loss of privileges (9%), followed by a caution and by loss of earnings (7% each), and then cell confinement (6%). Closed visits, where prisoners and visitors are separated by a screen, were reported by three per cent of those who reported being punished.

Contact with family and friends

The majority of prisoners reported being in contact with family and friends while in custody, although the nature of the contact varied, from telephone calls and letter-writing to face-to-face visits. More than nine in ten prisoners (92%) sent letters from custody, while a similar percentage (91%) received them, and 88% used the telephone. Most prisoners (70%) reported being visited by their family or partner in prison, and more than one-third (38%) by friends.

More than two-thirds (69%) of longer-sentenced¹⁰ SPCR prisoners, when asked what would be important to them in custody, responded 'being in a prison near their family and friends'. This was the most frequently reported response, reported more frequently than being paid more for the work they undertook (60% of responses) and being able to do 'proper' work (39%).

Work in prison

Just over half (53%) of prisoners reported having participated in paid work in prison of some type (Table 3.2).

¹⁰ Sample 2 of SPCR.

Table 3.2: SPCR Sample 1: reported participation in paid work in custody

Type of paid work	Per cent reporting
Cleaning	30
Kitchen work	19
All construction	17
Works department (including maintenance, painting or decorating)	11
Packing	9
Laundry	8
Another type of work	35
Did not participate in paid work in custody	47

Multiple responses possible for type of work undertaken.

Cleaning was the most frequently reported type of work undertaken by SPCR prisoners, reported by nearly one-third (30%) of those who said they were working or had worked in prison. Nearly one in five prisoners (19%) reported working in kitchens, 17% in construction and 11% in the works department. Fewer than one in ten prisoners worked in packing (9%) and in the laundry (8%).

Education and training

On reception to prison, 41% of prisoners reported that they needed help with education (Hopkins, 2012). Most prisoners (64%) were assessed for education and training needs¹¹ in custody, and nearly one-quarter (23%) went on an education course specifically to help their reading, writing, maths/numbers or English speaking skills. For nearly one-quarter (24%) of SPCR prisoners who attended a course, a component of the course was related to working or getting a job.

Healthcare and substance misuse

Most prisoners reported substance misuse before they came to prison, with 64% of prisoners reporting that they had used illegal drugs in the four weeks before custody (Light *et al.*, 2013) and 22% reporting that they had drunk alcohol every day during the same period (MoJ, 2010a). Nearly one in three prisoners (31%¹²) stated in their first interview in custody that they would like help with a drug problem, while 15 per cent¹³ stated that they needed help with an alcohol problem (MoJ, 2010a). Two in five (40%¹⁴) reported that they needed help with one or both problems.

¹¹ Most prisons administer a Basic Skills test for literacy and numeracy.

¹² Base size 1,433.

¹³ Base size 1,428.

¹⁴ Base size 1,429.

The majority of prisoners (72%) reported that they had been assessed by a healthcare worker, and just over half (54%) reported being assessed by a substance misuse (CARAT¹⁵) worker. Nearly half of Sample 1 prisoners (49%) and the majority of Sample 2 prisoners (82%) reported participating in voluntary drug testing.¹⁶ Just over a quarter of Sample 1 prisoners (27%) reported receiving treatment or counselling for a drug or alcohol problem while in prison.

In comparison, just over one in five longer-sentenced Sample 2 prisoners (21%¹⁷) reported on reception that they needed help with a drug problem. Seventeen per cent reported that they had drunk alcohol during custody, which is similar to the proportion (15%) reporting that they needed help with an alcohol problem on reception.¹⁸ Thirty per cent¹⁹ reported that they needed help with either drugs or alcohol or both. A similar proportion (33%) reported that they had received treatment or counselling for a drug or alcohol problem during custody, suggesting that longer-sentenced prisoners' treatment needs are more readily addressed than shorter-sentenced prisoners' needs.

Substance misuse in prison

The rest of this section refers to Sample 2 (longer-sentenced) prisoners.²⁰ Sample 2 is representative of prisoners sentenced to between 18 months and four years. Sample 1 is basically representative of reception prisoners (the flow into prison), most of whom are short-sentenced (sentenced to less than one year in prison). When looking at the static prison population (the stock), however, most prisoners are longer-sentenced. In 2006, around three-quarters of the static prison population were sentenced to more than 12 months (MoJ, 2010c). Previous research on drug usage in prison has been conducted on static prison populations, which Sample 2 is more similar to (see Annex A for details).

Nearly one-third of Sample 2 prisoners (30%) reported that they had used illegal drugs at some point during their sentence (Table 3.3).

¹⁵ Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare services (substance misuse).

¹⁶ Since April 2001, all prisons are required to run a voluntary testing programme which involves prisoners who agree not to use drugs and to be tested.

¹⁷ Base size 2,164.

¹⁸ Base size 2,165.

¹⁹ Base size 2,161.

²⁰ Answers from Sample 1 prisoners about substance misuse were not recoverable using Multiple Imputation techniques. See Brunton-Smith *et al.* (2014) for details.

Table 3.3: SPCR Sample 2: reported drug usage during prison sentence

Drug type	Per cent reporting
Cannabis	22
Heroin	14
Unprescribed methadone/tranquilisers	8
Amphetamines/crack cocaine/cocaine/ecstasy/LSD	5
None of these	70

Multiple responses possible for drug type used.

The most commonly reported drug used in custody by longer-sentenced prisoners was cannabis (22%), followed by heroin (14%). Unprescribed methadone and tranquilisers were used by fewer than one in ten respondents (8%) and other drugs were used by one in 20 (5%). Drug use in prison may have declined over time: see Annex A for a comparison between SPCR and earlier survey findings, and random Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) findings over time.

Pre-custody patterns of drug use (Sample 2)

SPCR prisoners were asked on reception to prison in 2006 and 2007 about their lifetime or 'ever' use of drugs. Seventy per cent reported having ever used cannabis. This was followed by cocaine (47%), amphetamines (38%) and ecstasy (42%) (Table 3.4 – PsyMS figures reproduced from Light *et al.*, 2013). Among earlier (1997) PsyMS respondents, cannabis was also the most frequently reported drug ever used (by 74% of offenders), followed by amphetamines (46%) and cocaine (37%).

Table 3.4: Psychiatric Morbidity Study (PsyMS) and SPCR Sample 2: reported drug use 'ever'

Prisoner survey	PsyMS²¹ (1997)	SPCR (2006/07)
Drug type (% reporting)		
Cannabis	74	70
Cocaine	37	47
Ecstasy	n/a	42
Amphetamines	46	38
Crack cocaine	29	32
Heroin	35	29
LSD	n/a	28
Unprescribed tranquilisers	27	23
Unprescribed methadone	21	15
None of these	23	21
Any illegal drug	77	79

Base sizes 1,705 and 2,163 respectively. Multiple responses possible for type of drug used.

²¹ Sentenced prisoners only.

In both surveys, cannabis was the most reported drug used 'ever'. Cannabis was also the most frequently reported drug used in custody in each of the 1997 PsyMS, the 2001 MDT Survey and SPCR (see Table A.1 in Annex A), with heroin second. However, heroin was the fourth most reported drug used 'ever' in the PsyMS and the sixth in SPCR (Table 3.4), demonstrating a change in patterns of drug use 'ever' and while in custody. This is likely to be due to a number of factors including drug evasion and detection rates, demand and supply, and the drug effects sought in the prison environment.²²

When SPCR prisoners were asked about their drug usage shortly before custody, the pattern of usage was different from usage 'ever', and more similar to use in custody (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: SPCR Sample 2: reported drug usage in the four weeks before custody

Drug type	Per cent reporting
Cannabis	41
Heroin	20
Crack cocaine	18
Cocaine	16
Unprescribed tranquilisers	11
Amphetamines	7
Ecstasy	7
Unprescribed methadone	5
LSD	1
None of these	43

Base size 2,171. Eight respondents did not answer the question but are included in the base size. Multiple responses possible for type of drug used.

The most frequent drug reported by SPCR prisoners in the four weeks before custody was cannabis (41%) and heroin was second (20%). Heroin use just before custody reflected more closely drug use while in custody than drug use 'ever' in terms of frequency of use relative to other drugs. This is similar to findings from the Arrestee Survey (Boreham *et al.*, 2007), which asked those arrested in police stations about drug usage in the month before arrest. In that survey, the most frequently reported drug taken was cannabis (41%), followed by heroin (13%) and cocaine (13%). It is possible that patterns of drug usage associated with contact with the criminal justice system, such as arrest or being taken into custody, differ from general (lifetime) use of drugs.

²² Research suggests cannabis and heroin are chosen for effects including relaxation, relieving boredom or reducing worries. Boys *et al.* (2002) argue that these effects are more conducive to coping within a prison environment. Stimulant drugs such as cocaine and amphetamines are more related to socialising and social activities, which are less suited to prison life (Boys *et al.*, 1999, Boys *et al.*, 2000, Boys *et al.*, 2001, Boys *et al.*, 2002).

Addressing offending behaviour (Sample 1 and Sample 2)

Just over one in three Sample 1 prisoners (34%²³) reported wanting help to address their offending behaviour on reception to custody. However, few prisoners reported attending offending behaviour programmes (OBP) in custody. Around five per cent attended an OBP to help them control anger or violent behaviour, and nine per cent attended a programme to help their thinking skills or understand their offending behaviour.

Levels of offending behaviour need were similar for Sample 2 prisoners (who had been sentenced to at least 18 months), with nearly one-third (32%²⁴) reporting on reception to prison that they needed help with their offending behaviour. Nine per cent of Sample 2 prisoners reported that they had attended an OBP to help them control anger or violent behaviour, with around one in four (24%) reporting that they had attended a programme to help their thinking skills or understand their offending behaviour. The survey suggests levels of unmet need: more than one-fifth (21%) of Sample 2 prisoners who did not attend an anger or violence programme, and more than two-fifths (41%) of Sample 2 prisoners who did not attend a thinking skills programme, said they would have liked the opportunity to attend a programme.

There is evidence to suggest that some offending behaviour programmes are associated with reduced re-offending for some prisoners (e.g. Sadler, 2010, Lösel, 2011).

Around one-third of Sample 1 prisoners (31%) reported having contact with a probation officer²⁵ while in custody. Contact with a probation officer in custody may provide prisoners with greater continuity of supervision after release, for those conditionally released.²⁶

Other help in custody (Sample 1)

On reception to prison, nearly two in five Sample 1 prisoners (37%) reported that they needed help finding a place to live and around half (48%) reported that they needed help finding a job on release (Williams *et al.*, 2012b; Hopkins, 2012).

Around one in five prisoners (22%) received support or advice for housing problems while in custody. For those prisoners who did not receive support or advice for housing problems, 44% said they would have liked some help. Around one in five prisoners (19%) reported

²³ Base size 1,428.

²⁴ Base size 2,164.

²⁵ This may have been an external probation officer or a probation officer from the prison team.

²⁶ The Ministry of Justice's Transforming Rehabilitation programme will provide supervision for all prison-released offenders from 2015.

receiving help to look for a job, training or education on release. For those who did not receive help, half (50%) reported that they would have liked help.

Relationships between prisoners and prison staff (Sample 2)

Information on prisoner-staff relationships was available for longer-sentenced prisoners. Most prisoners (80%) reported that they got on well with the prison officers on their wing (i.e. those they were likely to have the most contact with) (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: SPCR Sample 2 prisoners: reported relationships with officers on their wing

I get on well with officers on my wing	% reporting
Agree	80
Neither agree nor disagree	14
Disagree	6
Total	100

Most (76%) agreed that, overall, they had been treated fairly and 71% felt they had been treated with humanity during their time in prison. Other research conducted in prisons in England and Wales has shown that staff-prisoner relationships are generally positive (White *et al.*, 1991; Relationships Foundation 1995; Liebling *et al.*, 1997).

Prisoners were also asked about the relationships in general between staff and prisoners in the prison (i.e. how good they thought other prisoners' relationships with staff were) (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: SPCR Sample 2: reported relationships between staff and prisoners in general

Relationships between staff and prisoners in this prison are good	% reporting
Agree	55
Neither agree nor disagree	26
Disagree	19
Total	100

Just over half (55%) of prisoners agreed that relationships between staff and prisoners in their prison were good. This was lower than the 80% of prisoners who reported that they got on well with the prison officers on their wing. This may reflect individual prisoners feeling less confident about commenting on other prisoners' relationships with staff. Furthermore, a small minority of prisoners having poor relationships with staff could affect other inmates' perceptions of relationships on the whole. (Moreover, the first question focused solely on staff on the prison wing while the second asked about relationships with prison staff more widely.)

Prisoners were asked whether they had been physically assaulted by another inmate during their sentence. Fourteen per cent of prisoners reported having been physically assaulted by another inmate. Around half of those assaulted (53%) reported the assault to a member of prison staff. This survey did not explore the reasons why many prisoners failed to report the assault.

Expectations on release – accommodation and employment (Sample 1)

SPCR prisoners were asked about their accommodation and employment arrangements. A minority of Sample 1 prisoners (15%) previously reported being homeless shortly before custody, and the majority (68%) reported being unemployed (Williams *et al.*, 2012a; Hopkins, 2012).

One in five prisoners (20%) reported not having accommodation, even temporary, to go to on release and over two-thirds (71%) reported that they did not have a job to go to.

For prisoners who said they had accommodation to go to, three-quarters reported that they were returning to the place they lived in before custody. When asked who they would be living with, most prisoners reported that they would be living with a partner or family members (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: SPCR Sample 1 prisoners: who they reported they would be living with after release, for those with an address to go to

Accommodation arrangements on release	%
Husband/wife/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend	35
Parents/in-laws	34
Dependent children (aged under 18)	23
Nobody – living alone	15
Other adult relations	14
With friends	9
Adult children (aged 18+)	5

Multiple responses possible.

3.2 Wave 3 – Prisoners’ outcomes in the months after release

The SPCR ex-prisoners were re-interviewed in the months²⁷ after release (in the community – or in prison for those who had returned) and asked about what had happened to them since leaving prison (see Cleary *et al.* (2013) for the methodology used and the Wave 3 questionnaire). The following findings relate to Sample 1 prisoners.

Around one-quarter of Sample 1 prisoners (23%) were released on Home Detention Curfew (tagging), and nearly half (46%) were released under the supervision of the Probation Service. Seventeen per cent of the sample was in prison again at the time of the Wave 3 (post-release) interviews. The following analysis refers to the whole of Sample 1 (both those in and not in prison at the point of Wave 3 interview), because all the prisoners interviewed had spent some time released into the community.

Accommodation

Around one in six (15%) of all Wave 3 Sample 1 prisoners reported that they were homeless (sleeping rough, in a hostel or in temporary or other accommodation) at the time of the interview: similar to the proportion which reported homelessness before custody. This was slightly lower than the proportion of those who reported, while still in prison, that they did not have accommodation (even temporary) to go to on release (20%). Sixty-three per cent of prisoners agreed that having a place to live was important in stopping them re-offending. This is similar to the 60% who agreed with this statement when asked on reception to prison (Williams *et al.*, 2012b).

Employment

Nearly one-third (32%) of prisoners reported having a job in the four weeks before custody, and around two-thirds of these prisoners (63%) reported that they would be returning to this job (Hopkins, 2012). When asked at interview in the months after release, over one-quarter of prisoners (28%) reported that they were either working or had been in paid work (excluding casual or cash-in-hand work) since leaving prison. This was similar to the proportion who reported having a job to go to on release (29%). The majority of prisoners (70%) reported that having a job was important in stopping them re-offend in the future, and this was similar to the 68% who reported the same on reception to prison (Hopkins, 2012).

²⁷ Wave 3 interviews were planned to take place around one to two months after a prisoner’s release. In practice 53% of interviews took place within 14 weeks of release; 20% between 14 and 20 weeks; and 27% more than 20 weeks after release. See Cleary *et al.* (2014) for details.

Of the prisoners who had been in paid work since leaving custody, three-quarters (75%) were still in a job at the time of interview, meaning that around one in five prisoners (21%) were in a job at the point of interview, compared to 32% who had a job shortly before custody.

Initial findings from the offending, employment and benefits data share between the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (MoJ & DWP, 2011) show that five per cent of all prisoners released in 2008 were in some form of P45²⁸ employment a few weeks after release from prison.²⁹ This figure does not include self-employment or earnings under the taxable threshold, which may explain the difference in figures. Both figures demonstrate that a minority of prisoners are employed shortly after release.

A longitudinal analysis of the factors before, during and after prison, which were associated with Sample 2 (longer-sentenced) prisoners finding employment on release, is detailed in Brunton-Smith & Hopkins (2014).

Health and substance misuse

Most prisoners (88%) reported being registered with a GP/family doctor after prison, and just under one-third (31%) reported that they had been treated for a medical problem since leaving custody.

Over half (54%) of prisoners reported using drugs since leaving prison (Table 3.9). This was lower than the 64% who reported having used drugs in the four weeks before custody (MoJ, 2010a; Light *et al.*, 2013).

²⁸ Based on P45 forms sent to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs by employers. P45 employment spells do not usually record employment paid at levels below tax thresholds, or self-employment or cash-in-hand work.

²⁹ The proportion in P45 employment increased to 15 per cent of offenders in P45 employment two years following release from prison. The proportion of prisoners recorded as starting a period of formal employment at some point in the two years after release was 36% for those released in 2010/11 (MoJ & DWP, 2014). The 2011 and 2014 figures are not directly comparable however: the 2011 figures excludes employment spells that were recorded as being 'open' throughout the prison sentence as it was assumed that these spells ended upon the offender entering prison. The 2014 figures include these employment spells as more recent research suggests these 'open' spells are likely to be genuine (for example short prison sentences where the individual went back to their previous job).

Table 3.9: SPCR Sample 1: reported drug usage after release from custody

Drug used	Per cent reporting
Cannabis	39
Heroin	23
Crack cocaine	19
Cocaine	15
Amphetamines/ecstasy/LSD	12
Unprescribed tranquilisers/methadone	11
None of the above	46

Multiple responses possible for drug type used.

Cannabis and heroin were the most frequently reported drugs used since release from prison (by 39% and 23% of prisoners respectively). This was followed by crack cocaine (19%), cocaine (15%) and amphetamines, ecstasy and LSD (12% combined). Around one in ten prisoners (11%) reported using unprescribed tranquilisers and unprescribed methadone.

Thirteen per cent of prisoners reported having injected drugs since release from prison. Nearly one in five (18%) reported having received treatment for a drug problem.

Most prisoners (80%) reported having drunk alcohol since their release. Seven per cent reported having received treatment or counselling for an alcohol problem since release from prison.

Benefits and debt

Nearly three-quarters of the sample (73%) reported claiming benefits since leaving prison, more than the 64% who reported claiming benefits in the year before custody (Hopkins, 2012). These prisoners reported claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (68%), Income Support (24%), Sickness/incapacity benefit (18%), Housing Benefit (15%), Council Tax Benefit (12%) and other benefits (5%).

Just over half of Sample 1 prisoners (53%) reported having a bank account. This is less than the general population, where 98% of adults reported having a bank account.³⁰ Just under half of Sample 1 prisoners (43%) reported being in debt.

³⁰ HM Treasury Financial Inclusion Taskforce (2009) *Fourth Annual Report on Progress Towards the Shared Goal for Banking*, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/fourth_annual_banking_report.pdf

Re-offending in the one and two years after release

Proven re-offending analysis showed that 54% of Sample 1 prisoners had been reconvicted or cautioned for at least one offence within one year, and 68% within two years of release (Boorman and Hopkins, 2012). A longitudinal analysis of the factors before, during and after prison, which were associated with proven re-offending, is detailed in Brunton-Smith & Hopkins (2013).

4. Conclusion and implications

These findings provide detailed information about experiences of prison and outcomes on release as reported by large representative samples of prisoners in England and Wales. This information will be useful to inform the development of rehabilitation activities and services during and after custody to reduce re-offending among ex-prisoners.

Prisoners reported spending most of their time in their cells. Time out of cell is associated with better immediate outcomes including prisoner well-being, and may be indicative of time available for rehabilitative programmes, education and for prisoners to earn a wage and improve their employability.

Most prisoners were in touch with families and friends while in custody, but a proportion of prisoners reported no visits. Family visits have been associated with reduced re-offending on release (May *et al.*, 2008) and are associated with reporting having a job to go to on release among longer-sentenced prisoners (Brunton-Smith & Hopkins, 2014). Family visits in custody are likely to be associated with the maintenance of family relationships, improving the prisoners' experience of custody and resettlement outcomes including desistance from crime (Mills & Codd, 2008; Lösel *et al.*, 2011).

Around half of prisoners reported participating in paid work in prison. The nature of the work was often unskilled: the most frequently reported job was cleaning. There is scope, therefore, to increase the numbers of prisoners participating in paid work and to examine the range of skills offered by prison work. This may help improve the employability of prisoners after custody. Increasing the employment rates of prisoners is a key Government objective. The importance of regular working hours, vocational training and effective skills provision was emphasised in the green paper *Breaking the cycle: effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders* (MoJ, 2010b) and the consultation paper *Making prisons work: skills for rehabilitation* (DIUS & MoJ, 2011). More recently, in 2012, the National Offender Management Service pledged to increase working hours in prisons to 40 per week.³¹

Most prisoners were assessed for education needs on reception to prison, and around one-quarter reported attending an education course in custody. Levels of qualifications reported by prisoners are lower than in the general population (Hopkins, 2012).

³¹ See MoJ Working Prisons: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/noms/working-prisons>

Most prisoners had substance misuse problems on entry to custody. Somewhat fewer prisoners reported using drugs shortly after custody (54%) than just before custody (64%). Drugs were also reportedly taken by a large minority (30%) of longer-sentenced prisoners while they were in prison. There is evidence that drug use in prison may have declined between 1997 and 2008, when self-reported and MDT results are compared. Other SPCR research (Light *et al.*, 2013) suggests that first time use of heroin use prison may also have declined over the same period. Random Mandatory Drug Testing results also suggest that drug use in prison has decreased since 1997.

Although most prisoners were assessed for substance misuse problems on reception to prison, the proportion reporting attending treatment or counselling for a drug problem in custody was around one-quarter. Most prisoners also reported using drugs after release from prison, suggesting that addressing substance misuse remains an important priority for rehabilitation.

Around one-third of prisoners reported wanting help to address their offending behaviour during their first interview in custody. One in 20 reported attending offending behaviour programmes (OBP) to address anger or violent behaviour, while fewer than one in ten reported attending a programme to help their thinking skills or understand their offending behaviour. Longer-sentenced prisoners had more access to offending behaviour programmes than shorter-sentenced prisoners.

Relationships between prisoners and staff were reportedly good overall. Around half of prisoners who reported being physically assaulted by another inmate did not report this to prison staff.

Most prisoners were unemployed shortly before custody and more were unemployed on release. The majority reported claiming benefits shortly after release from custody, more than the proportion who reported claiming benefits in the year before custody. The same proportion of prisoners was homeless after custody compared with shortly beforehand (15%). Recent MoJ research demonstrated that ex-prisoners who enter employment are less likely to re-offend after release than similar prisoners who do not find work (MoJ, 2013).

Accommodation, employment and re-offending among ex-prisoners have been shown to be associated elsewhere (e.g. May *et al.*, 2008, Brunton-Smith & Hopkins, 2013). This implies that successful interventions to reduce re-offending among ex-prisoners are likely to be those that provide them with stable accommodation and significantly improve their employment chances, such as training and education, job placements or employment schemes.

Overall, there was evidence of unmet need in custody at the time of this survey, with more prisoners saying they would like help with offending behaviour, substance misuse, accommodation and employment than reported receiving it.

Seventeen per cent of prisoners were in prison again at the time of the post-release interviews, and more than two-thirds had re-offended in the two years after release from prison.

Overall, the research demonstrates that prisoners have complex problems both before and after release, and that there is scope to examine the amount and quality of in-custody activity and community interventions in order to address these.

The need for effective 'through the gate' services is recognised in the UK Government's *Transforming Rehabilitation Strategy* (MoJ, 2013). Future plans include extending resettlement services to ensure that prisoners' outcomes on release from prison (particularly employment, accommodation, and substance misuse) are managed to improve their lives and reduce re-offending.

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Annex A

Drug use in prisons over time: surveys and random Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT)

Self-reported drug use in custody by SPCR Sample 2 prisoners was compared with self-reported drug use in the 1997 Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (PSyMS) (Singleton *et al.*, 1998) and self-reported drug use in the 2001 Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) Survey (Singleton, 2005) (Table A.1). This allowed patterns in self-reported drug usage over time to be explored.

Table A.1: 1997 PsyMS, 2001 MDT Survey, 2006/08 SPCR Sample 2: reported use of drugs in prison

Drug type	Report type	1997 PsyMS	2001 MDT Survey	2006/08 SPCR Sample 2	1997/8 to 2007/08
Any	% self-reporting	43% ³²	39%	30%	-13pp ³³
Cannabis	% self-reporting	41% ³⁴	32%	22%	-19pp
Heroin	% self-reporting	19% ³⁵	21%	14%	-5pp

Base sizes 1,700, 2,266 and 2,168 respectively. Multiple responses possible for type of drug used.

Forty-three per cent of prisoners in the 1997 Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (PsyMS) reported that they had used illegal drugs during their sentence (Singleton *et al.*, 1998). Thirty-nine per cent of prisoners in the 2001 Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) Survey said they had used illegal drugs in prison (Singleton *et al.*, 2005). Between 1997 and 2006/08 (when the interviews were conducted among SPCR prisoners), the proportion of prisoners who reported using any illegal drugs during their prison sentence decreased by 13 percentage points. Similarly, reported levels of cannabis use decreased by 19 percentage points and heroin by five percentage points.

Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) is used by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to detect illegal drug usage in prisons, and can also provide information on changes in drug use over time. Mandatory Drug Testing³⁶ (MDT) data from similar reference periods to the self-report surveys is shown in Table A.2.

³² Calculated using a weighted average of 52% of 1,119 male sentenced prisoners and 66% of 581 female sentenced prisoners.

³³ Percentage points.

³⁴ Calculated using a weighted average of 46% of 1,119 male sentenced prisoners and 31% of 581 female sentenced prisoners.

³⁵ Calculated using a weighted average of 19% of 1,119 male sentenced prisoners and 20% of 581 female sentenced prisoners.

³⁶ Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) is conducted randomly among prisoners. Official MDT performance statistics provided by NOMS.

Table A.2: Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) results: Prisons in England and Wales, Performance Results for Financial Years 1997/8, 2000/1, and 2007/8

Drug type	Report type	1997/8 MDT	2000/1 MDT	2007/08 MDT	1997/8 to 2007/08
Any	% MDT detected	21%	12%	9%	-12pp ³⁷
Cannabis	% MDT detected	17%	8%	4%	-13pp
Heroin	% MDT (opiates) detected	4%	5%	4%	0pp

Overall, Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) positive rates have also declined since 1997. Positive detection rates in 1997 of any drug were 21%, cannabis 17% and opiates (which includes heroin, but also opiates such as codeine and dihydrocodeine) 4%. In 2007/08, they were 9%, 4% and 4% respectively, indicating reductions of 12 percentage points for any drug use, 13 for cannabis, and no change for opiates between 1997 and 2007/08.

Differences between the rates of self-reported drug usage and drug usage detected by MDT give an indication of the ‘multiplier’ that can be applied to MDT results to calculate self-reported usage (which is likely to be closer to actual usage). Table A.3 shows the multiplier for each reference period.

Table A.3: Difference (multiplier) between self-reported drug use and Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) detected drug use, 1997 to 2008

Drug type	1997 PsyMS and 1997/8 MDT	2001 MDT Survey and 2000/1 MDT	2006/08 SPCR Sample 2 and 2007/08 MDT
Any	2.0	3.3	3.3
Cannabis	2.4	4.0	5.5
Heroin	4.8	4.2	3.5

The difference between levels of drug use detected by MDT and self-reported levels of drug use (between around two and six times higher) occurs at least partly because MDT detects recent use of drugs, generally over a number of days. The self-reported figures show use of drugs *at any time* (a cumulative measure) during a prison sentence, which may last for months or years. Variations in difference between MDT rates and self-report use of drugs may change because of changes in the frequency of drug use among prisoners, with the greatest difference likely to be due to lower frequency of drug use.

The apparently faster decline in use of cannabis in prison compared with heroin, as recorded by self-report surveys and by MDT (see Tables A.1 and A.2), is difficult to explain. The majority of prisoners (70%) reported in the MDT survey that the main risk of using cannabis

³⁷ Percentage points.

in prison was being caught and subsequently punished (Singleton *et al.*, 2005). For heroin, nearly two in five prisoners (36%) identified being caught and punished as the main risk.

Comparability of Prisoner Surveys

Prisoner characteristics differ according to prisoners' offence types, sentence length and other factors. This may affect the comparability of different surveys. A summary of the similarities and differences between SPCR, the 1997 Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (PsyMS) and the 2001 Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) Survey is provided below. Differences in the characteristics of prisoner surveys are frequently due to sampling methods. SPCR sampled prisoners on reception to prison (the flow into prison) and did not sample any prisoners sentenced to more than four years (as these prisoners would take too long to follow until after release). In contrast, the PsyMS and the MDT Survey sampled prisoners during their sentences (the 'stock' of prisoners). The flows into and out of prison are mostly shorter-sentenced prisoners, while the stock of prisoners are mostly longer-sentenced prisoners. Detailed characteristics of the prisoners in each survey are available in the relevant publications (see references).

Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) Samples 1 & 2 (2005–2010)

SPCR Sample 1 is representative of the flow of prisoners sentenced to between one month and four years into prison (and is mostly of prisoners sentenced to less than one year). A second sample (Sample 2) is representative of the flow of longer-sentenced (to between 18 months and four years in prison) prisoners, with the exception of a boosted sample of women.

The 1997 Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (PsyMS)

The Psychiatric Morbidity Survey was conducted to collect baseline data on the mental health of prisoners. PsyMS survey prisoners were older on average than SPCR Sample 1 prisoners. Sixty-six per cent of the PsyMS sample were over 30 years of age compared with just over half (56%) of SPCR Sample 1. There were more longer-sentenced prisoners in the PsyMS: 40 per cent had been sentenced to four years or more and 10 per cent had been sentenced to 10 years or more. To increase comparability with SPCR, only results of sentenced prisoners in the PsyMS were used in the SPCR analyses (those on remand were excluded).

The 2001 Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) Survey

This survey focused on prisoners' self-reported drug use in prisons and their experience of the Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) programme. A survey of over 2,200 prisoners was carried out in two waves between September 2001 and January 2002 from a representative sample of prisons.