

“NOW ALL I CARE ABOUT
IS MY FUTURE”

SUPPORTING THE SHIFT

Framework for the effective resettlement
of young people leaving custody



“I used to run around the streets, acting like an idiot. **Now all I care about is my future.** Next I’m going to my Level 3 then university to do gas and oil management and accounting. My life is only just beginning. I’m moving through every page of every chapter of my book. Without [my project], I’d be doing nothing. Or I wouldn’t be alive.”

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Introduction

This document presents a new framework for understanding effective resettlement of young people. It has been produced as part of the Beyond Youth Custody (BYC) programme, funded under the Big Lottery Fund's Youth in Focus initiative. BYC has been designed to challenge, advance and promote better thinking in policy and practice for the effective and sustainable resettlement of young people after custody. The programme has published research reports, policy briefings and practitioner guidance on a number of key issues in resettlement including diversity, young people with background trauma, girls and young women, and engaging young people; all resources are available for download at www.beyondyouthcustody.net.

This new framework – which draws on findings from across the programme – proposes, for the first time internationally, a 'theory of change' for the sustainable re-entry of young people. This reconceptualisation of resettlement enables a better understanding of why practices previously shown by research to improve recidivism rates are effective. Consequently, the framework provides a new focus for resettlement services' aims and objectives, and may be particularly useful as a common language for the inter-agency working that we know is essential when supporting young people.

This framework has been designed as a resource for policymakers and decision makers, academics studying youth justice, and anyone working with young people leaving custody. A concise version of this document is also available at www.beyondyouthcustody.net.

The resettlement challenge

Reoffending rates among young people leaving custody remain stubbornly high. In its 2015 inspection of services for youth resettlement after custody, HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) described outcomes for young people leaving custody as "shocking". Noting BYC's review of the recognised principles of effective practice in resettlement support, Inspectors asked the question:

"So, even when we know the solution, and we know providing the solution is for the most part possible within current budgets, why on earth is it not being done?"

(HMIP, 2015:1)

At the end of BYC's six-year programme of learning and awareness work with service providers, we consider that this failure is primarily because the existing "solution" has been comprised of a disparate set of good practice principles without a unifying framework. Previously, it has been challenging to understand how these principles work together to effect desistance – the process of abstaining from crime among those who previously had engaged in a sustained pattern of offending – and how an individual's own work or that of different agencies fits with the process as a whole. Essentially, there has been no unifying aim for resettlement beyond effecting the outcome of preventing reoffending. It has been difficult for service providers to understand their aim because there has been no theory of change in resettlement.

Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that without such a theory of change, it has been difficult for practitioners to see the need for any 'key principles' of resettlement at all; that some see resettlement as essentially just about providing accommodation or education/employment. As such, there is no sense of how the quality of resettlement planning might work to reduce recidivism (Hazel and Hampson, 2015). This perhaps simply reflects the Youth Justice Board's 'seven pathways to resettlement' guidance, which lists required support in each area of a young person's life (Youth Justice Board, 2014), but without the context for how the sum might lead to social integration.

A framework for understanding and promoting effective resettlement

In this document, we set out a theory of change for understanding how effective resettlement works, which can guide future policy and practice development. This theory of change recognises that effective and sustainable resettlement facilitates a shift in the way that a young person sees themselves, from an identity that promotes offending to one that promotes positive contribution to society (Goodfellow et al, 2015).

The subsequent framework highlights how service providers should support the young person to develop a positive identity – a new narrative for how they relate to others. This involves guiding and enabling the young person – through personal and structural support respectively – to create new roles in their life story that foster and reinforce this positive identity that promotes wellbeing and desistance.

Within this framework, we can identify five key characteristics that research has shown are important for all resettlement support. These characteristics provide a reflective checklist for providers to evaluate and (if necessary) redesign their support in order to help young people achieve a positive identity that leads to sustainable resettlement.

How to use this document

The following pages explain BYC's theory of change. From this point, each section of the document will relate to, and explain, a specific part of the illustrated framework at the end of this document. You may find it useful to look at this first and refer back to as you read the following pages.

Section A

The theory of change in resettlement

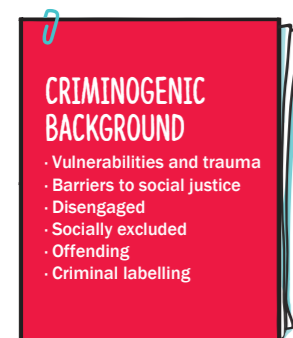
The young person's desistance journey

Effective and sustained resettlement involves the young person shifting their identity away from one that is conducive to offending to one that promotes a crime-free life and social inclusion. Such a change in the way that young people view themselves and their future life chances is central to the rehabilitative process. As such, effective and sustained resettlement can be reframed as:

“A journey for the young people in terms of how they perceive themselves from a socially marginalised offender to a socially included one... a process of transformation conducive to their fuller integration into mainstream society.”

(Bateman and Hazel 2013:29)

This transformation we have recognised in effective resettlement of young people after custody relates closely to recent explanations of offending desistance in criminological theory (e.g. Maruna, 2001). Existing 'secondary desistance theory' (albeit mainly with adults) notes that sustained cessation of offending involves a change in the way that an ex-offender sees him or herself, but that this is particularly difficult to achieve with persistent offenders (Maruna and Farrall, 2004; McNeill and Weaver, 2010).



The young person's criminogenic background

Young people entering custody have multiple and complex needs that are also criminogenic (i.e. needs which cause criminal behaviour) and should be addressed in resettlement. They are often vulnerable, with a history of victimisation and disempowerment that can act as barriers to making positive choices (Bateman et al, 2013; Bateman and Hazel, 2013b; Bateman and Hazel, 2014a). They are also more likely to have experienced previous traumatic events (Wright and Liddle, 2014).

Young people entering custody have often been subject to social injustice, disengaged from society, and excluded from social structures including education, training and employment (ETE). They often have entrenched patterns of offending and have accepted this behaviour as normal to them (Bateman et al, 2013). Research has consistently shown that, in addition, the adversities of imprisonment exacerbate vulnerabilities, making rehabilitation more difficult (Bateman et al, 2013; Kelly and Hazel, 2015; Bateman and Hazel, 2014b).

The experiences of girls and young women and members of minority ethnic groups can make these vulnerabilities worse. Girls are more likely to have experienced turbulent familial relationships, and have specific mental health, emotional and educational needs (Bateman and Hazel, 2014a). BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) young people can face more 'ingrained' pathways into the criminal justice system as a result of greater levels of disengagement and exclusion from school, and over-representation in the care system (Wright et al, 2015).

“Because of the help I got, I was able to find myself and what I wanted to be.”

25-year-old male political campaigner

The young person's pro-offending identity

Elements of a young person's criminogenic background can mean that they make sense of themselves within their life story (their 'narrative') in ways that promote criminal activity. This pro-criminal identity may also be shaped and reinforced by their interactions with others. In turn, this identity shapes the way the young people interact with others, including committing offences. This means that they will commit offences because it fits with their identity; it permits the offending, or even demands it for fulfilment. The offending part of their identity is often tied in to how they gain status or security, which can be related to masculinity and other cultural measures. Their identity may not be as 'a criminal' directly, but may contain characteristics that are conducive to criminality – such as 'tough', 'street-wise', 'a fighter', or 'a gangster' (Factor et al, 2015).

“My parents were both drug dealers and addicts... I don't think anyone expected that I wouldn't go to prison being from that background. I had a lot of issues with my self-esteem. When I came out of prison, I had nothing. I had to try to find myself as well. I didn't know who I was as a person because all my life all I knew was doing bad things to people.”

21-year-old construction worker

Interactions with justice professionals have underlined the young person's pro-offending identity by labelling them as criminal. Being placed in custody reinforces this pro-offending identity, making positive change in behaviour more difficult (Lockwood and Hazel, 2015b:12). Again, it is important to recognise diverse experiences; BAME young people have disproportionately negative experiences of imprisonment, with stereotyping and discrimination further damaging a negative identity (Wright et al, 2015).

“It's very difficult when you are from a marginalised background and you feel like you're on the periphery of society. Then you feel that there are only certain options open to you, and the main one is crime. And then what happens is you get marked as criminal, and so what they do subconsciously is say, 'That's how I am, so that's how I'm going to behave'.”

Resettlement practitioner



The process of change for each young person

This framework for resettlement identifies the young person as the central agent in their own rehabilitation, while recognising the complex needs that may act as a barrier to success. But what might the process of change look like for the young person? What steps might they need to take in order to make a cognitive shift that promotes a crime-free life and social inclusion?

In effective resettlement, the young person manages to shift their identity during and beyond the end of their custodial sentence. Informed by this, they inevitably change the way they interact with the world. They build a more positive identity in a more positive life story, and behave more positively as a result. This positive identity is fostered and reinforced through involvement in activities, adopting roles in everyday life and interacting with supportive others (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:30). These new roles and activities help the young person to produce a 'redemptive script' that sees them become a pro-social and responsible character in their life story (McKay et al, 2013, explored in Bateman and Hazel, 2014c; Hazel and Lockwood, 2016: 14).

“I’d always had intelligence and vocabulary to talk to people in a different way and portray myself in a different way, but before, I was ‘street’ and using slang. But it doesn’t get me far in life... If you conduct yourself in a good way... and portray myself in a good way, people will warm to me more... Everybody I know says I seem like a man now – I can’t go round talking like a child in a hoody.”

23-year-old male construction worker

This process of change for each young person will be as individual as their life story, and subject to diversity characteristics such as gender, race and age. However, it may reasonably include the following steps:

1. Identifying their existing strengths and future goals and using these to imagine a positive identity for their future narrative
2. Identifying pathways in order to achieve those goals, including structures that need to be in place in custody and in the community
3. Identifying and developing roles to foster and reinforce a positive identity
4. Developing engagement with services and the wider community
5. Involvement in activities that build and support their positive identity in a positive narrative
6. Developing supportive and empowering relationships
7. Constructive achievements

The journey for a young person is not usually linear or without problems. Changing the way a person thinks about themselves and behaves is challenging, and a criminal identity may be deepened further by the experience and label of being a prisoner or ‘con’. The additional prejudice and discrimination faced by young people from diverse groups can make it even harder to maintain belief in their positive identity (Wright et al, 2015:5). The journey may well involve relapses towards a negative narrative and a return to offending behaviour (Bateman et al, 2013). It is likely that they will need substantial support in order to stimulate and reinforce change, including acceptance of their new identity and redemptive script towards it by those around them (Wright and Liddle, 2014). It will require consistency, resilience and drive, not only on the part of the young person, but also from those working to support them.

“I just wanna be like a normal fella... People look at me like I’m crazy... I just tell ‘em, I say, ‘I’m not into that no more. I’m trying to get a job.’ And they all laugh. I’ve had to swallow a lot of pride. Everyone laughs at me, but I find it funny, ‘You can laugh, it’s alright.’ Once I actually get to where I wanna get to, the legit way... I’m not scared of hard work.”

25-year-old job-seeker

Towards a pro-social identity

A more positive, or pro-social, identity will provide a framework in which the young person is empowered to make the right choices in their behaviour and with wider life decisions, including relationships. The young person recognises that they can gain status and security from these positive choices. They are more future-oriented in their motivations and choices. The positive identity provides the potential for individuals to exercise agency over their future behaviour, notwithstanding the structural hardships and vulnerabilities of their past (Rajah et al, 2014; explored in Bateman and Hazel, 2014b).

“I can now think, that happened but because that happened I’m the person I am today. I now work in a residential home. I’ve gone from being a vulnerable young person to someone who is helping vulnerable old people.”

20-year-old female carer

Previous research has found that when a young person at risk of offending finds a new pro-social identity, it can replace the need to maintain status and peer respect through negative behaviour. For example, becoming ‘a construction worker’ through finding a labouring job may provide status and security that replaces the need for a young man to prove their masculinity by being ‘a tough street-fighter’ or a gangster (Hazel, 2010).



Sustainable positive outcomes

The standard binary measure in England and Wales of reconviction a year after release captures a relatively short-term symptom rather than an early indicator of desistance or a longer-term sustainable goal (Factor, 2016:6). If sustained resettlement can be understood in terms of effecting a shift in how young people construct their identity and how that is manifested in behaviour, it follows that existing indicators of success might not capture the complexity of the resettlement journey.

“I see my future as very bright. My life is only just beginning. I’m moving through every page of every chapter of my book.”

21-year-old male interested in travel

The expected positive outcomes for resettlement to be sustainable should be the antithesis of a criminogenic background. They would include social inclusion, constructive engagement with others, desistance from offending and a lifestyle that promotes wellbeing (Goodfellow et al, 2015).

“I want to be successful and not living off the government. I don’t want to end up a homeless druggie person. At one point I thought I was going to be that, but now I see I’m not. My resettlement project helped me see a different path... Every day I’m smiling, I’m happy, whereas before I was always grumpy, upset, crying nearly every day... I feel happy, I feel like I’m going somewhere.”

20-year-old female carer

Section B

THE ROLE OF ALL SERVICES: SUPPORTING THE SHIFT IN IDENTITY

The aim of resettlement planning, provision and service providers should be to facilitate the young person's identity shift (Bateman and Hazel, 2013).

"I'd always known I wanted to be a joiner, but I never thought I would make it. Every teacher would tell me I wasn't going to make it with my grades. That didn't make me feel uplifted. As soon as I told my project worker that I wanted to be a joiner, he said, 'OK, you will be'. I made it. I'm now a full-time apprentice and I love it. I've matured a lot – I used to run around the streets, acting like an idiot but now all I care about is my future."

21-year-old apprentice joiner

Seeing resettlement as a shift within a young person, rather than something that is done to them means that they are central to their rehabilitative process. It is therefore crucial that resettlement services involve young people as the primary agents in their own resettlement, rather than defining problems or solutions on their behalf (Batman and Hazel, 2013:30). Facilitating the shift in identity involves service providers both directly guiding the young person on their journey (personal support) but also working on the structural barriers that will indirectly enable them to make the shift (structural support).

"The practitioners showed me, 'You're a very creative young person, you've got a lot going for you, the only person that will ever hold you back is yourself.' That made me think about it even more so when I came out I knew 100% that I don't want that life no more. I don't need it. I just need to do me."

23-year-old creative male

As we have noted, this shift is neither easy nor instant, but involves a journey for the young person. Consequently, resettlement is not simply about providing a temporary solution at the moment of release but supporting a longer-term process (Goodfellow et al, 2015).

Adopting BYC's conceptualisation of resettlement as a process of shifting identity has already proved useful for helping service providers to better understand the facilitative role of support services. It has been employed in training sessions with a number of youth offending teams (YOTs) in the Youth Justice Board's North Wales Resettlement Consortium, with the intention of rolling out the approach across the region. The process of shifting identity is being used there to explain the reason why the key characteristics of good resettlement practice are so important for practitioners to promote (Hazel and Hampson, 2015:19-20, 90).

PERSONAL SUPPORT: GUIDING THE SHIFT

The primary job of resettlement services is to guide the young person on their journey to shift their identity – the way they see themselves, their relationship with others and their life story, and how they behave accordingly. Only providing structural help like accommodation or a college placement is unlikely to work without this primary function of helping the young person see the way forward and how those opportunities fit into that.

Practitioners need to provide personal help in recognising both a more positive identity and the pathways towards its development. Support services can guide the young person's shift by providing support at a personal level that promotes a healthy self-belief, stimulating and reinforcing positive change in the way they young person views themselves within their wider narrative (Rajah et al, 2014; Bateman and Hazel, 2014b).

"They need someone out there helping them out, asking them what they can see themselves doing, what they want to do."

22-year-old professional sportsman

HMIP, noting BYC's research in this area, has recognised that shifting the way that young people see themselves and their future must be central to the work of all service providers working with young people in custody and beyond.

"This aspect of work, helping to see themselves differently, should involve all adults working with the child at every interaction, believing in them and reinforcing to them that life can be different."

(HMIP, 2015:15).

Recognising barriers

Direct support involves recognising the young person's vulnerabilities and the social injustices that they face, and working with the young person to promote hope and belief in change, motivating them and reinforcing positive changes in their identity. Service providers' understanding of personal experiences of prejudice and social injustice is crucial in order to build trust and develop meaningful interventions (Wright et al, 2015b).

"Another key aspect is that the worker has a level of understanding of key issues facing this user and be able to relate to the lifestyle/barriers affecting them."

Resettlement project worker

It is important for practitioners to acknowledge previous hardship or victimisation suffered by the young person. Within our framework, practitioners need to understand how the young person makes sense of their life and their place within it, including perceptions of social injustices (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:26). They need to consider the ways in which individual, cultural, procedural and structural factors mesh to impact upon engagement and outcomes (Wright et al, 2015:5). It is vital that practitioners are able to show their empathy, demonstrating to the young person that they recognise their starting point.

This means focusing interventions less on addressing what the young person has done previously and more on the person themselves, their present difficulties and overcoming them for the future (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:27-28).

Sustaining and reinforcing the shift

Sustaining the young person's motivation to change is also an important part of resettlement support, helping them to keep focusing on the constructive roles they are playing, developments in their identity and their future (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:19). Building up self-esteem is an important element of the empowerment process, recognising their strengths, the worth of their roles and the constructive nature of their character. It also reinforces the young person's determination and capacity to change (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:20).

"We tell them, 'Actually, you are a stakeholder in society... there is a place for you where you can become a positive contributor. Come on that journey with us.' We keep affirming them... to the point where they begin to understand, 'This is something that I can do'."

Resettlement project worker

Conversely, discussions and exercises around 'addressing offending' – and this may include mediation and reparation – may be less helpful because they do not necessarily lead to emotional or cognitive engagement or future-focused change (Hazel et al, 2002a; cited Bateman and Hazel, 2013:19).

The use of informal support

Research shows that, when appropriate, families and friends are an important source of support for young people on their resettlement journey. As part of a coordinated package of personal support, the family can help to reinforce each stage of the resettlement process. Providing that the family has been involved in planning and understands the goals and identity that the young person is working towards, they can consistently reinforce the key aspects of these (Hazel et al, 2016). HMIP has recommended that service providers develop provision for informal supporters both in custody and in the community (for example, hosting family visits in prison) (HMIP, 2015:9).

Cultural identity can be an important factor in a narrative, particularly for young people from BAME and faith groups. Interventions need to actively support individuals to engage confidently with their cultures. Where applicable, representatives from each young person's local community should be involved in planning and implementing their resettlement package, with a specific responsibility for helping them to build good personal and community relationships that reflect and reinforce a positive identity (Wright et al, 2015).

Ways that services can help guide the shift

INTO CUSTODY

Explore pro-social strengths and goals

The starting point for helping a young person to build a positive identity and wider narrative is to focus on their existing strengths and future goals, even if those have been previously used in a negative way (e.g. physical strength used in violence or people skills used in drug dealing) (Burnett and Maruna, 2006; Wright and Liddle, 2014).

“The resettlement project didn't ask me what you did, they already knew. Other people try to force you to answer questions, but here they asked me, 'What do you want in life, what do you want to achieve and what will make you happy?' At other places, they'd say, 'With your record, we don't think you can do this or that.' At least here, they let me look for something I would like to do and didn't try to push me into my 'only option'.”

20-year-old mother

Identifying and building on pro-social strengths is consistent with national standards for youth justice that state that a sentence plan should build on strengths (Youth Justice Board, 2013). It is also very much in line with the introduction of AssetPlus, the Youth Justice Board approved assessment tool (Youth Justice Board, 2014b).

Establish support relationships

Relationships lie at the heart of successful engagement and, by extension, successful resettlement (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:30). Supportive interactions are crucial not just for practical and emotional support (Wright and Liddle, 2014) but for defining and reinforcing roles within a positive narrative.

“Before the project, I'd never had anyone older and wiser than me that understood me. I needed that, someone to tell me that wasn't the way forward in life. He told me, 'You want more from life than what offending can bring you'. You have a bond, someone who wants to understand you and wants to give you that opportunity to interact together and talk so you can get somewhere together.”

21-year-old apprentice joiner

This involves not only interpersonal relations between staff and young people, but also their relationships with family, peers and wider society. As such, a focus on developing such relationships, rather than on participation in intervention activities per se, provides the best prospect for effecting change for the young person (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:30).

Support relationships can require a substantial period of time to develop, but the majority of practitioners and young people agree that nearly all service users could be engaged if staff were sufficiently persistent (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:25). For this to happen, engagement work needs to start early – preferably before or at the start of the custodial sentence (Bateman et al, 2013b). Informed by our research, HMIP has recommended that all community agencies ensure work is started proactively early in the custodial phase through more purposeful visits to institutions (HMIP, 2015:10).

Focus on pathways (roles and activities)

Resettlement plans should identify the pathways needed for the young person to develop their personal identity (Hazel and Hampson, 2015). The pathways should build on recognised strengths and prioritise interventions that help the young person make achievable steps towards their goals (Factor et al, 2015). This is achieved by identifying and facilitating activities and (associated) roles for the young person that will foster and reinforce their specific positive identity and wider narrative.

“We provide a voluntary intervention where young people identify their own aspirations as part of their plan. As project workers, we have to take an active part in guiding and assisting young people to recognise what is a priority for them to achieve these.”

Resettlement project worker

Research has indicated that various activities in custody can help people explore and construct more positive identities, including prison arts projects (McNeill et al, 2011; Lockwood and Hazel, 2014b), theatre work (Davey et al, 2015) and sports (Meek and Lewis, 2014; cited Bateman and Hazel, 2014b). However, HMIP noted the lack of emphasis on constructive leisure activities for young people leaving custody and recommended greater planning and promotion for their use (HMIP, 2015:11). Such activities are crucial in developing both self-esteem and roles for the young person, allowing them to attach a particular positive skill or interest to their identity (e.g. 'good athlete' or 'dancer').

Prepare for release disorientation

BYC has outlined the disorientation and stress that young people can suffer following release, and the quick breakdown in compliance to licence conditions that can follow (Hazel and Bateman, 2015). Physical stress symptoms can include shaking and nausea, while emotional breakdown can see the young person becoming withdrawn and scared to interact with others. Essentially, they are overwhelmed by the sudden change in their life regime, following the previous major life event of imprisonment. Life outside custody can be less structured and sedentary, elements may have changed while they were inside, and relationships may need to be renegotiated. This (often unexpected) disorientation can derail positive progress towards the intended identity development by undermining relationships, plans for roles and activities.

Informed by our research, HMIP has instructed all YOTs and custodial institutions to help young people, their carers and victims anticipate and managed these difficulties (HMIP 2015:9). Similarly, recent research reports have recommended that young people are prepared through a compulsory pre-release course, 'day of release plans' confirmed at least two weeks before leaving custody, release on temporary licence and a plan of intensive but flexible support for the first days after release (Hazel and Hampson, 2015:107; Hazel and Bateman, 2015).

INTO THE COMMUNITY

Facilitate engagement

The young person's full engagement, both in relation to individual activities and their overall plan, is important to the resettlement process. With full engagement, each new interaction and activity becomes an opportunity to develop and shape their identity (Bateman and Hazel, 2013). For example, full engagement with a catering course may allow a young person to establish their role as 'a student' and a 'future chef', identifying with the skills and values of the profession and providing a professional character with which to interact with employers and others. This kind of full engagement comprises more than just attendance, it helps to guide a shift in narrative because it involves an emotional engagement and a new way of thinking and behaving.

“Going to the theatre with a practitioner that day, it hit me that this is what I want to do. I would never have thought I could see myself on a stage or trying to help young people. No one would have looked at me and given me that opportunity; I would just be looked over. But my resettlement project gave me something that I didn’t know I had. It’s bettered me as a person. I’m a completely different person. How I’ve changed my life around, I doubt I could have done it by myself. It would never have happened. I would never have thought, ‘I can be an actor and I can stand up in front of all these young people.’ I’ve done that and bought the t-shirt.”

23-year-old creative male

Below we have created a three-step model to illustrate what full engagement with services looks like (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:29).

Step 1: The service engages with the young person

This step sees the service making contact, motivating the young person enough to ensure participation. This equates to the usual measure of engagement equating to attendance.

Step 2: The young person engages with the service

This step sees the development of the relationship with the service and staff, with the young person adopting its objectives and becoming involved in a meaningful way. This allows new roles for the young person and contributes to their formation of a positive identity. The service provider needs to deliver activities in a manner that sustains and deepens the young person’s commitment to the project.

Step 3: The young person engages with wider society

This step sees the young person using the roles established through service engagement to become further involved with a broader range of agencies and wider society. They will eventually exit the original intervention. The young person will be able to transfer the identity developments from the initial engagements and use them within their wider pro-social narrative, promoting desistance. The service provider can help the young person to identify wider opportunities and roles that will build on their established relationship and further their integration into society.

Our research report and practitioner’s guide ‘Engaging young people in resettlement’ (Hazel and Bateman, 2013; Wright et al, 2013) provides further details on principles for effective engagement.

Develop empowering relationships

Helping the young person to manage various relationships is a key aspect to guiding the shift, including relating to both doubters and supporters. Particularly noted for girls, positive and supportive future relationships that emphasise empowerment (including in formal supervision) are key to promoting positive identities for future desistance (Bateman and Hazel, 2014a).

Family relationships can also play an important part in empowering the young person. Not only can family members directly praise the young person’s strengths, but they can assign them to particular roles or duties that reinforce and encourage their positive identity. For instance, even something as simple as asking they young person to put up a picture can reinforce that they are the practical family member and an expert with their hands (Hazel et al, 2016).

INTO THE FUTURE

Help relapse recovery

Moving on from crime is not always a straightforward journey and we must acknowledge that it may involve relapses as well as progress. At these points, a young person may not have built sufficient resilience to make positive choices. These are critical times because relapses may further shake personal belief that desistance is possible and may actually reinforce a pro-criminal identity. It is important that supporters encourage young people to see any setbacks as temporary rather than evidence of an intractable pro-offending narrative (Wright et al, 2015:5).

Policymakers should be wary of insisting that service providers are firm or inflexible when enforcing statutory requirements. Such strictness, encouraged by national standards in the past, may result in reinforcing young person’s resistance, underlining their negative identity and narrative about the world (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:27). Punitive or reactive responses can entrench problematic behaviour rather than address it, whereas support to build optimism, confidence and commitment can be more effective (Wright and Liddle, 2014).

Informal supporters are in a particularly good place to emphasise to young people that relapse is part of the ‘old self’. They can empathise and make it clear that any destructive behaviour does not fit with how they think of the young person now, showing faith in what they are capable of in the future (Hazel et al, 2016).

Intermediate outcomes for success in personal support

There are early indicators that personal support is effectively facilitating a young person’s shift in narrative. These can be described as the intermediate outcomes for a pro-social narrative. Several of these (in black) have been shown in existing research studies to be statistically related to less or no offending. Those in red have been developed in accordance with the BYC framework.

- Clear future goals on release
- Clear about roles on release
- Young person feels pathway plan is own
- Non-criminal self-identity following release
- Appropriate self-esteem at end
- Associates self with constructive activity/roles
- Continued engagement with ETE

STRUCTURAL SUPPORT: ENABLING THE SHIFT

The secondary task of resettlement services, after guiding the narrative shift, is to facilitate the structural changes necessary to allow the young person to follow the pathway that they have identified. Support services play a critical role in facilitating a young person’s shift in identity by providing support at a structural level that prepares the home environment, addresses barriers to change and provides access to services that address multiple and complex problems.

If pro-social redemption narratives are to be sustained, a comprehensive structural after-care provision is necessary post-release to address the real barriers confronting the young person (Rajah et al, 2014; Bateman and Hazel, 2014b). Areas that usually require structural support include accommodation, ETE and constructive leisure activity (Bateman et al, 2013).

Young people are also more likely to engage with an activity, including education and employment, if it is clear how it will underline a pathway to their positive identity. As such, it is important that any educational or training courses have a tangible outcome related to their identified pathways and goals, ideally achievable through small, manageable steps (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:20-21).

INTO CUSTODY

Coordinate planning from start

Case managers should assess the network of possible supporters, including informal supporters. Dedicated resettlement workers should develop a catalogue of local service providers, from multiple sectors, which are available for resettlement support. Such coordination does not happen naturally and must be regarded as a priority by those responsible for resettlement (Bateman et al, 2013).

Family members can be encouraged to act as champions for the young people, helping to ensure that all parties commit to support needed to both guide and enable change (Hazel et al, 2016).

Focus custody services on release

The primary aim of custodial institutions should be preparation for resettlement. Training plans should take a long-term view rather than simply emphasising what programmes will be undertaken within the institution and how behaviour might best be managed in the present (Bateman et al, 2013). HMIP has recommended that the standards and guidance for custody are amended to strengthen the focus on early preparation for resettlement (HMIP, 2015:9). BYC has recommended to policymakers that Detention and Training Order meetings are renamed Resettlement Meetings and that associated forms are forward-looking, preparing pathways to future roles.

Temporary release can help to ensure that arrangements are in place for the young person's return to the community, allowing for a graduated return to family life and limiting worst effects of disorientation and trauma (Goodfellow et al, 2015). HMIP recommends that temporary release is a routine part of custody and resettlement (HMIP, 2015:8); there should be a presumption as such in each case unless there are clear reasons for not allowing it.

A primary focus on resettlement also requires custodial institutions to guard against any practices that could harden feelings of social exclusion, resistance to support and a pro-criminal identity. This would include differential treatment and bleak expectations for BAME young people (Wright et al, 2015: 3-4).

Confirm community services before release

In order to limit the risk of disorientation, young people need to be prepared for release as soon as they enter custody, not just in the weeks prior to release. Research has shown that, even once identified, engaging the service providers necessary to support effective resettlement can take time (Bateman and Hazel, 2013). It is imperative that the community-based opportunities available to the young person are identified early (Goodfellow et al, 2015). Informed by BYC research, HMIP has recommended that criminal justice and partner agencies confirm well in advance of release that they can provide appropriate and timely structural support, including accommodation, ETE and health and social care (HMIP, 2015:9).

Family members may well possess knowledge and insight regarding potential local service providers that are not obvious to case managers. They may also help in engaging local partners (Hazel, 2016:8).

Arrange contingency planning

Lack of contingency planning has been an increasingly prominent theme in recent research and inspection reports on youth resettlement. If plans fall through, the consequence is invariably firefighting rather than purposeful support that can help enable a shift in narrative. It has been recommended that sentence plans should include recorded contingency planning for at least accommodation, education and health (Hazel and Hampson, 2015; HMIP, 2015).

INTO THE COMMUNITY

Ensure flexible and prompt support on release

The period immediately following release has been identified as a window of opportunity during which young people may be particularly motivated to give up offending and take up a new narrative (Hazel et al, 2002; Bateman and Hazel, 2013:14). Service providers should look to create traction during this period by ensuring that activities, in accordance with an identified pathway towards their positive identity, are available as soon as the young person is released.

However, this transition from custody to community presents particular risks both for the young person and support provision, so providers should plan for enhanced but flexible support (Hazel and Bateman, 2015). Susceptibility to the disorientation that can follow release may explain why younger people tend to fail to comply with all the terms of their order faster than adults. This further demonstrates the need for non-enforceable support in the first few days after release (Bateman et al, 2013a; Hazel and Hampson, 2015). Imposing rigid requirements on young people at the point of transition is likely to undermine engagement and may be counterproductive, therefore expectations of the individual should be graduated over time (Hazel and Bateman, 2015; Factor et al, 2015).

Consideration must be given to practical support that might minimise the trauma of transition, including funding to buy clothes and other items that will make the young person feel more comfortable in an unfamiliar environment. Arrangements for the day of release and the period directly after should always be carried out as planned with the young person, but remain flexible and adaptable to the individual. Young people should be met at the gate by someone they know and trust, who understands their vulnerabilities, goals and pathways to positive identity development (Goodfellow et al, 2015).

Early exit planning

Disengagement is an integral part of the resettlement process and requires management by service providers (Bateman and Hazel, 2013). There is a crucial need to plan for the support needs of the young person after the end of any contracted support period with any one agency. The withdrawal of informal support should also be considered and planned for.

INTO THE FUTURE

Continue support post-sentence

The most obvious of these exit transitions is the withdrawal of formal supervision by the responsible criminal justice agency, usually at the end of a statutory period. Resettlement provision should accordingly include making arrangements for continued support in required areas of the young person's life once the statutory involvement has come to an end (Hazel, 2004). How will a new identity continue to be reinforced?

The family can remain a source of support long after the end of formal service involvement. Such informal supporters should be included in any exit strategy and primed to continue supporting a young person through any later relapses in identity, wider narrative or symptomatic behaviour (Hazel et al, 2016). A young person will also be in a much stronger position to disengage from formal support services if they are motivated and have developed self-esteem and wider relationship skills (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:30).

Early indicators for structural support

In order to have the best chance of getting the young person on their identified path to a new identity, service providers should ensure that certain structural support is in place. While the below are not outcomes for the young person directly, they underpin the personal support and have all been shown to be statistically related to less or no offending in the long term.

- Activity programme arranged
- All necessary partners engaged in planning
- Full information on custody work received by outside agency
- ETE activity shortly after release
- Suitable accommodation confirmed before release
- Accommodation maintained
- Exit plan in place at sentence end

Section C

THE HOW: 5 KEY CHARACTERISTICS FOR SUPPORT

There are characteristics of all resettlement support, covering both personal and structural processes, which research has consistently shown are key to effectiveness and sustainability. The effectiveness of resettlement support is not just dependent on what steps providers take at different stages of the sentence, but how they take them. If interventions demonstrate these key characteristics, they are more likely to be able to promote a young person's shift in identity and their wider narrative. As such, the likely effectiveness of each package of support overall, and its constituent parts, can be judged in terms of whether it demonstrates all of these five key characteristics.

1

CONSTRUCTIVE

Centred on identity shift, future-oriented, motivating, strengths-based, empowering

Centred on exploring, building and reinforcing a positive identity

The central task of resettlement services should be providing personal and structural support to guide and enable a young person's shift in identity. Therefore, the first and foremost characteristic for any package of support is that all intervention activities are designed to illuminate and facilitate pathways for the desistance journey. This journey for the young person should be always be the focus for any planning and thinking around the support.

Interventions should select activities, roles and structural support specifically to build and reinforce the identified positive identity and pathways to it (Bateman and Hazel, 2013). Service providers should reflect on whether this is the case for each element of their existing resettlement support. Elements of support (like education and training), while perhaps intrinsically beneficial, should never "become ends in themselves" (HMIP, 2015:22); they are only likely to lead to sustained engagement and desistance if actively related to the young person's identified pathway for identity shift.

Future-focused and strengths-based

It is particularly important that interventions avoid any underlining of the previous pro-criminal identity that could lead to recidivism (Hazel et al, 2015). Although custody itself reinforces that negative labelling, resettlement interventions need to reinforce the alternative positive identity and wider narrative for the future.

"In the resettlement project I would make my goals and feel happy with myself. It led me to where I am now."

21-year-old apprentice plumber

Interventions should focus less on addressing what the young person has done previously and more on the person themselves, their present difficulties and overcoming them for the future. This means building on the strengths of the young person for them to take into their future (Bateman and Hazel, 2014a). It also means avoiding interventions, including the custodial element, that are concentrated on containing or managing current behaviour. HMIP agrees that interventions inside and outside custody should be focused on longer-term objectives towards desistance (HMIP, 2015:22&27).

Empowering and motivating

Interventions should ensure that they help to build self-esteem in the young person. This helps to combat the vulnerabilities and disempowerment that often characterise young people in custody, and helps to sustain their motivation to change. Empowerment, which is interrelated with a developing positive identity, will help the young person make constructive choices in relation to their behaviour, recognise their strengths and the worth of their roles (Bateman and Hazel, 2014a).

However, practitioners should be aware that failure to fulfil promises of support can derail the shift in identity by undermining the young person's confidence in a new narrative. Failure to provide support – particularly structural support for identified pathways – can introduce demotivation and disillusionment in the change process for a young person and lead to relapses and reoffending (Hagell et al, 2000).

2 CO-CREATED

Inclusive of the young person and their supporters

Young person as central

The shift in identity is a journey taken by the young person themselves and is dependent on their agency. Their engagement is crucial (Bateman et al, 2013; Bateman and Hazel, 2013). As such, the resettlement work should be responsive to opportunities, difficulties and barriers identified by the young person (Bateman and Hazel, 2013:21). Active participation can also be part of the process of empowerment – making positive choices, developing trust with service providers and helping to build self-esteem and a positive identity (Wright et al, 2014).

Developing plans with the young person concerned means that they have a stake in their own future and are more likely to comply with their licence after release (Factor et al, 2015). A young person's active involvement in their resettlement leads to better outcomes for them, greater job satisfaction for staff and more effective services (Wright et al, 2014).

“If you can show them that the programme is about them and they are the focus and their thoughts and hopes are part of it, they will respond well. They need to be the ones creating the plan, with them in the driving seat. Without the young people deciding things and making it their own, it would be difficult to keep them focused. Their dreams have to be their own.”

Resettlement project worker

Involving informal supporters

Research shows that, when appropriate, families and friends are an important source of support for young people on their resettlement journey. As part of a coordinated package of personal support, the family can help to reinforce each stage of the resettlement process. Providing that the family has been involved in planning and understands the goals and identity that the young person is working towards, they can consistently reinforce the key aspects of these.

Cultural identity can be an important factor in a narrative, especially for young people from particular BAME and faith groups. Interventions need to actively support individuals to engage confidently with their cultures. Where applicable, representatives from each young person's local community should be involved in planning and implementing their resettlement package, with a specific responsibility for helping them to build good personal and community relationships that reflect and reinforce a positive identity. However, it is recognised that there are often barriers to the engagement of family and other informal supporters, which practitioners should address as a priority (Hazel et al, 2016).

“I think support from a trusted person to the young person really helps, I was lucky I had family but a lot of young people don't. If someone from their life is there for them every step of the way it would help greatly for the person and give them a reason to stay out. Because if the young person went back to prison they would feel like they are letting this person down who believes in them and is able to show it.”

26-year-old Young Advisor

Informed by BYC research, HMIP recommended to service providers inside and out of custody that they establish and embed full involvement of young people and family members in planning and decision making (HMIP, 2015:9).

3 CUSTOMISED

Individual and diverse wraparound support

Recognising barriers and responding to diversity

Resettlement planning needs to acknowledge the huge range of diversity in young people's support needs, including the impacts of previous trauma, and the part it plays in their narrative about their place in the world. Tailored interventions should be responsive to each of these needs, which include ethnic, cultural and gender differences. Young people from particularly disadvantaged or discriminated against groups, including girls and those from BAME backgrounds, are likely to need a particular emphasis on empowerment (Bateman and Hazel, 2014a; Wright et al, 2015; Wright et al, 2015b; Factor et al, 2016).

In order to build trust and develop meaningful interventions, practitioners need to understand how the young person makes sense of their life and their place within it, including vulnerabilities and perceptions of social injustices which can act as a barrier to the shift in identity. They need to consider the ways in which individual, cultural, procedural and structural factors mesh to impact upon engagement and outcomes. It is vital that practitioners are able to show their empathy, demonstrating to the young person that they recognise their starting point.

“I think understanding the lives these young people have led is key. Understanding they have rarely been given clear boundaries, they have often been neglected and may feel uncared for and that nobody listens to them. It is important to be persistent in our approach, give them ownership of the work and really show care and understanding. This will assist in making the young person feel worthwhile and will encourage them to engage.”

Individual wraparound support

Each young person's resettlement journey is different and entails a unique mix of circumstances and vulnerabilities. They will also have different strengths and goals to inform their shift in identity. This means that service providers are required to create an individualised wraparound package of support that facilitates their particular process of narrative shift (Bateman et al, 2013).

4 CONSISTENT

Resettlement focus from the start, seamless, enhanced at transitions, stable relationships

Support runs throughout the resettlement journey

It is important that resettlement is recognised as a long-term journey for the young person rather than just the act of release from custody. Therefore, any shift in identity requires support at all stages of a sentence and beyond. Resettlement work should not be restricted to the time of release or immediately prior to it.

It is necessary to begin the resettlement process at the beginning of the sentence, if not before, in order to provide time to identify and facilitate pathways prior to release. The support must also continue after the end of sentence in order to sustain and reinforce progress (Bateman et al, 2013).

All service providers focus on resettlement

It is crucial that all service providers prioritise the personal and structural support required to facilitate the shift in identity. Custody, and custodial services, need to focus on preparation for what will happen in the community (Bateman et al, 2013). HMIP agrees that if young people are to resettle successfully, providers need to move away from working primarily on completing a set of processes focused on detention towards focusing on resettlement needs (HMIP, 2015:32).

By the same token, community-based services need to engage with the young person during the custodial stage and help them to prepare for release. Community services should to be arranged well before release in order to prepare the young person and help them engage with a practical pathway for change (Bateman et al, 2013).

Seamless programme

The resettlement process should be a seamless one that bridges the divide between custody and community, working cohesively towards the same shift in identity. This requires supporters from different agencies working together and exchanging information (Bateman et al, 2013). HMIP has recognised that improved resettlement outcomes require closer working and better information sharing between custodial institutions, YOTs and other service providers. In doing so, they can also better hold each other to account in providing agreed services (HMIP, 2015:9).

Matched aims, targets and training can encourage such joint working (Hazel et al, 2013; Hazel and Hampson, 2015). The concept of resettlement as guiding and enabling a shift in identity provides a shared framework on which to focus and a common language.

“I had someone... and they left! They keep leaving... why am I going to make the effort with a new person when they keep going?”

Consistent formal support relationships

Stable support relationships are important to trust and engagement, requiring early formation and consistency where possible (Bateman et al, 2013; Bateman and Hazel, 2014). Where those support relationships are with institutions staff, trust and engagement are protected by not moving young people between custodial institutions (Factor et al, 2015).

5 COORDINATED

Managed widespread partnership across sectors

Requiring partners across sectors

The complex and multiple nature of young people’s needs means that they are likely to require support from multiple agencies. The wraparound package of support needed to both guide and enable a shift in identity cannot be achieved by one agency, but requires partnership across sectors, including voluntary agencies and employers in the private sector (Hazel et al, 2002; Bateman et al, 2013).

Some elements of support are dependent on others, such as an education placement being dependent on where the young person will be living. The importance of coordination and information sharing is key.

Arranging partnership working and healthy relationships with community representatives can help young people to cultivate a sense of belonging and develop effective strategies for dealing with potential future discrimination (Wright et al, 2015; Wright et al, 2015b).

“There needs to be a better degree of communication and connection between the different groups involved in the varying phases of the release process.”

Brokering partnerships

Such a widespread partnership requires coordination at a management as well as case level in order to map and maintain a menu of support available locally. Successful resettlement programmes require dedicated resettlement staff to broker the engagement of partners across sectors, involving high-level buy-in, joint planning and information sharing (Bateman et al, 2013; Hazel et al, 2013). This can result in a more streamlined and focused resettlement practice, and an understanding across partners of roles and responsibilities for delivery.

Conclusion

The BYC programme has challenged existing thinking and practice nationally and internationally around re-entry of young people after custody in order to try to unpack why reoffending rates remain stubbornly high. It is clear that the symptom-focused aim of preventing offending has not been sufficient nor appropriate to guide resettlement practice. There has been an absence of a theory of change to understand the rehabilitation of young people after custody. Based on evidence from both existing studies and BYC research, this document introduces a framework for understanding how resettlement can be effective and sustained. The framework provides a new focus for resettlement services' aims and objectives which may be particularly useful as a common language for the inter-agency working that we know is essential when supporting young people.

Successful resettlement involves a young person shifting their identity away from one that is conducive to offending to one that promotes a crime-free life, social inclusion and wellbeing. They must develop a more constructive identity, which is fostered and reinforced by identified pathways of activities, roles and interactions with supportive others. This builds a 'redemptive script' for their desistance journey towards a pro-social identity, and empowers them to make positive choices in behaviour.

The aim of resettlement services should be to facilitate this shift in identity. Primarily, services can directly engage and guide the young person in developing their positive identity, identifying pathways for change, and building resilience (personal support). Secondly, services can help enable these identified pathways, addressing practical barriers and coordinating necessary interventions (structural support).

Reframing effective resettlement as involving a shift in identity should lead to a thorough re-assessment of policy and practice. We invite service providers to reflect on whether and how each element of their interventions actively facilitates this change in a young person's narrative. In order to help aid that critical reflection, we have highlighted five key characteristics of support packages that have been shown to make a significant difference to wellbeing and offending outcomes. These characteristics provide a reflective checklist for providers to ensure that their services help young people achieve a positive identity that leads to sustainable resettlement beyond youth custody. Further guidance can be found in BYC policy briefings and practitioner guides.



BYC publications

RESEARCH REPORTS

- Custody to community: how young people cope with release
- Engaging young people in resettlement
- Gang-involved young people: custody and beyond
- Lessons from Youth in Focus
- Resettlement of girls and young women
- Resettlement of young people leaving custody
- Trauma and young offenders
- Supporting the shift: framework for the effective resettlement of young people leaving custody

PRACTITIONER GUIDES

- Custody to community: supporting young people to cope with release
- Developing trauma-informed resettlement for young custody leavers
- Engaging young people in resettlement
- Ethnicity, faith and culture in resettlement
- Gang-involved young people: custody and beyond
- Participatory approaches for young people in resettlement
- Recognising diversity in resettlement
- Resettlement of girls and young women
- The role of family support in resettlement
- Young offenders and trauma: experience and impact



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A FRAMEWORK FOR RESETTLEMENT SERVICES

CRIMINOGENIC BACKGROUND

- Vulnerabilities and trauma
- Barriers to social justice
- Disengaged
- Socially excluded
- Offending
- Criminal labelling

THE AIM: SHIFT IN IDENTITY

PRO-OFFENDING IDENTITY

- Disempowerment leads to negative choices
- Status/security from self-defeating choices
- Destructive roles/activities
- Short-term motivations

PRO-SOCIAL IDENTITY

- Empowerment leads to positive choices
- Status/security from positive choices
- Engaged with constructive roles/activities
- Future-oriented

SUSTAINABLE POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Desistance
- Wellbeing and security
- Engaged with wider society
- Socially included
- Contributing
- Constructive achievements

← DESISTANCE JOURNEY MAY INVOLVE RELAPSE

THE ROLE OF ALL SERVICES: SUPPORTING THE SHIFT IN IDENTITY

PERSONAL SUPPORT: GUIDING THE SHIFT

INTO CUSTODY

- Explore pro-social strengths and goals
- Establish support relationships
- Focus on pathways (roles and activities)
- Prepare for release disorientation

INTO THE COMMUNITY

- Facilitate engagement
- Develop empowering relationships

INTO THE FUTURE

- Help relapse recovery

IDENTIFY PATHWAYS

PREPARE THE YOUNG PERSON

STRUCTURAL SUPPORT: ENABLING THE SHIFT

INTO CUSTODY

- Coordinate planning from start
- Focus custody services on release
- Confirm community services before release
- Arrange contingency planning

INTO THE COMMUNITY

- Ensure flexible and prompt support on release
- Early exit planning

INTO THE FUTURE

- Continue support post-sentence

ADDRESS PATHWAY BARRIERS

PREPARE HOME AND PARTNERS



THE HOW: 5 KEY CHARACTERISTICS FOR SUPPORT

1 CONSTRUCTIVE

Centred on identity shift, future-oriented, motivating, strengths-based, empowering

2 CO-CREATED

Inclusive of the young person and their supporters

3 CUSTOMISED

Individual and diverse wraparound support

4 CONSISTENT

Resettlement focus from the start, seamless, enhanced at transitions, stable relationships

5 COORDINATED

Managed widespread partnership across sectors

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Authors: Neal Hazel, with Pippa Goodfellow, Mark Liddle, Tim Bateman and John Pitts.

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Website: www.beyondyouthcustody.net
Email: beyondyouthcustody@nacro.org.uk
Twitter: @BYCustody