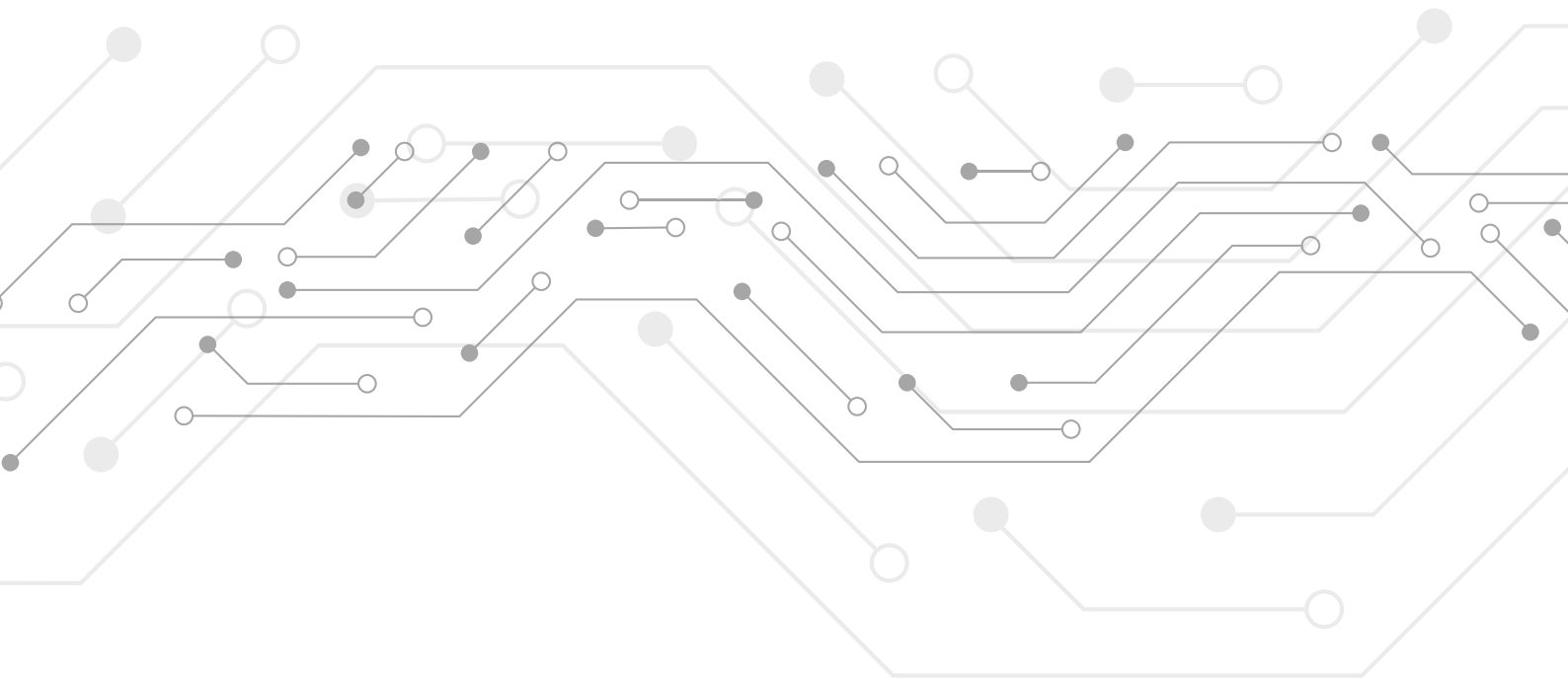


# Through-The-Gate Resettlement Evaluation

Community Rehabilitation  
Company Evaluation Series



November 2021

ingeus



Ingeus commissioned an independent, external consultant, Russell Webster, to undertake a series of evaluations of a range of interventions Ingeus delivered as the lead organisation in the Reducing Reoffending Partnership, RRP, alongside Change, Grow, Live and the St Giles Trust; which operated the Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland (DLNR) and Staffordshire & West Midlands (SWM) Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) between 2015 and 2021. This evaluation focuses on the enhanced Through-The-Gate (TTG) service which operated in both these CRC areas from April 2019.

Chapter 1 sets out the concept of TTG work designed by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). Chapter 2 describes the model of TTG work developed by Ingeus and its RRP partners and includes case studies of the service in operation. Chapter 3 sets out the activities and outcomes of the service and presents feedback from a range of professional stakeholders and official reports. Chapter 4 summarises the report and presents conclusions.

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# Executive Summary

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## Context

The re-organisation of the probation service under the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation programme established a new Through-The-Gate (TTG) service to improve resettlement support. Originally under-funded, the Ministry of Justice invested extra resources and specified an enhanced TTG service from April 2019. The Reducing Reoffending Partnership (RRP), led by Ingeus, were early adopters of the enhanced TTG approach.

## The service

Unlike some other Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) models where the TTG service was subcontracted to other providers, Ingeus directly employed the staff working in the resettlement service. As part of its volunteer and mentor strategy, Ingeus' partner, St Giles, trained prisoners to become peer advisers in their prison and their involvement in supporting people due to be released was key to the model. The key elements of the service were:

- A strong working relationship between the TTG teams and the Offender Management Units in each individual prison, ensuring good information exchange and effective joint working between prison and probation.
- Early identification of needs to ensure that housing and other issues were addressed in plenty of time prior to release.
- Each resettlement prison operated a specialist housing and welfare team to tackle the most important challenge of finding safe, stable housing for people being released from prison. These teams adopted a broad approach to tackling accommodation issues, developing partnerships with local authorities and many housing associations and housing advice services in every locality.
- A strategic approach to finance, benefits and debt issues ensured that people had ID and a bank account open prior to release and that any benefit claims were filed immediately on release.
- The TTG team developed partnerships with a number of local community partners and Jobcentre Plus Coaches to provide both individual information advice and guidance and regular workshops on interview and job search skills.
- The involvement of peer advisors meant that people waiting for release received additional support and the chance to learn a range of skills.

- The TTG team held regular Resettlement Fairs at which groups of 50 prisoners met with a range of community partners who provide accommodation, employment, substance misuse and other services, enabling people in prison to access help directly, making arrangements for support in the community much more robust.
- The team established Departure Lounges where prisoners could access immediate practical and emotional support on release.
- People that needed additional support were met at the point of release by RRP community support workers to help them access services in the community at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Outcomes

Ingeus maintained detailed monitoring information on the outcomes of its TTG activity with more than 30,000 people released from prison in the three key domains of housing, employment and finance, benefit and debt. The main outcomes are set out below:

- Six out of seven people leaving prison had secure housing to go to.
- More than eight out of ten people (24,486, 80.9%) received advice and support on how to disclose their criminal convictions to prospective employers.
- More than two thousand individuals (2,067, 6.8%) were referred directly to a range of employment and training services with several hundred going straight into work or training on release.
- More than three quarters were given help to ensure that they had a valid form of identification on their release.
- 3,260 were helped to establish a bank account for the first time.

The performance of the TTG services in both CRCs was rated “outstanding” by probation inspectors.

## Going Forward

Ingeus has developed considerable learning from its successful delivery of resettlement services across the Midlands. In addition to a well-designed model of intervention, it is clear that the most important driver in achieving this level of excellence was an organisational culture committed to the wellbeing of service users. This culture can be seen across the Ingeus organisation:

- In the leadership praised by HMI Probation and evidenced in the desire to challenge and change intransigent problems such as housing shortages.
- In the willingness to focus on achieving the end goal of an effective resettlement service rather than being restricted by contractual limitations.
- The willingness of front-line staff to consistently go the extra mile, seen in the way they retained released prisoners on their caseload until they were safely engaged in supportive services in the community.

In summary, this high level of service delivery can be attributed to an organisational culture which focuses on people and purpose, rather than contractual targets alone.

# Chapter 1: Through-The-Gate

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## Overview

One of the key drivers of the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) initiative was the desire to cut reoffending among the large numbers of people caught up in the revolving door of (relatively) low level crime resulting in frequent short prison sentences.

Until 2014, probation services in England and Wales were delivered by local Probation Trusts. Prisoners who received sentences of a year or more were supervised on release by probation staff, but those receiving shorter sentences were not supervised or offered assistance after their release.

Reoffending rates for released prisoners were high. It was recognised that issues including homelessness, unemployment, mental health and substance misuse lead to reoffending. Reoffending rates were highest for those serving short custodial sentences, and in 2014 the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) introduced new arrangements to support their rehabilitation. The Offender Rehabilitation Act of that year provided for a minimum of 12 months statutory supervision for all released prisoners sentenced to more than one day in prison – some 50,000 people each year, and an estimated 25% increase in the number in receipt of probation services annually.

To facilitate a more effective rehabilitation service, the prison estate was re-organised in November 2014, with 89 of the 120 prisons (including all female prisons) in England and Wales designated as resettlement prisons. The aim was for 80% of prisoners to be moved to a resettlement prison local to their home area at least three months before release. Prison staff were expected to screen all new prisoners for their resettlement needs within 72 hours of being received into custody, wherever they were placed. The Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) were made responsible for Through-the-Gate (TTG) services within designated resettlement prisons from the time a prisoner was received into prison.

Transforming Rehabilitation provided for a nationwide 'through the prison gate' resettlement service. Most offenders were to be given continuous support by a single provider (the local CRC) from custody into the

<sup>5</sup> The seven pathways were subsequently expanded to include two women-specific pathways.

community. The key tasks for the CRCs delivering resettlement services were to:

- Prepare a resettlement plan, within five working days of the screening being completed by prison staff.
- Help prisoners to find accommodation.
- Help prisoners retain employment held pre-custody and gain employment or training opportunities post-release.
- Provide help with finance, benefits and debt.
- Provide support for victims of domestic abuse and sex workers.
- Undertake pre-release coordination.

## Implementation difficulties

The TTG services proved difficult to implement in practice within the funding available to CRCs. The prison and probation inspectorates' first examination of TTG provision<sup>1</sup> exposed a number of structural faults including the fact that the absence of common resettlement targets for prisons, CRCs and the National Probation Service (NPS) meant that the envisaged 'whole system approach' to the resettlement of offenders was unviable. The inspection identified a number of core failings across the country including:

- The needs of individual prisoners were not properly identified and planned for.
- Not enough was being done to help prisoners to get ready for release or to manage risks.
- There was no outcome information about the impact of TTG work.

The poor state of TTG work was summed up by the inspectors:

*“Overall, many responsible officers conveyed a lack of hope and an almost fatalistic acceptance of the likelihood of failure. This did not bode well for the released prisoner or the wider community.”*

The under-performance of the TTG service in particular and the TR project overall was also highlighted by a number of other key reports by the National Audit Office<sup>2</sup> and House of Commons select committees<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (2016) An Inspection of Through the Gate Resettlement Services for Short-Term Prisoners: A joint inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons

<sup>2</sup> National Audit Office (2016) Transforming Rehabilitation HC 951 SESSION 2015–2016

<sup>3</sup> House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2016) Transforming rehabilitation Seventeenth Report of Session 2016–17



## New enhanced model

These reports led to an acknowledgement by the Government that the CRCs were under funded and an agreement by the MoJ to invest additional funding including £22 million per year specifically to improve TTG services, known as “enhanced through-the-gate”. The new enhanced TTG model introduced a new system to ensure that people in prison were assessed for their level of need against four key areas of need:

1. Accommodation
2. Employment, Training and Education
3. Finance, Benefits and Debt
4. Personal, Relationships and Community.

There was an expectation that a service would be delivered to the right intensity to meet that need for different individuals. There were three levels:

- Level 1 – This applied to all regardless of need and focused around assessment, resettlement planning and signposting. It was assumed that everyone would receive all aspects of level 1 services.
- Level 2 – This applied to anyone with an identified need. Not all activity in level 2 would apply to everyone. For example, in respect of accommodation needs, it included assisting those on short sentences to retain a tenancy, and those on longer sentences to close a tenancy.
- Level 3 – This applied to anyone with an identified need(s) and additional complexity or vulnerability. Depending on the individual, this included activities for women, foreign nationals, young men, those who commit sexual offences and those identified as otherwise vulnerable or complex (e.g. those with learning difficulties and disabilities).

An official MoJ process evaluation<sup>4</sup> of the new enhanced specification published in 2020 found improved performance but continuing challenges. The researchers highlighted the following key findings:

- Overall, interviewees felt that the enhanced specification had delivered positive changes compared to the previous specification.
- The most cited change with enhanced TTG was the increase in resources, specifically the number of staff. Interviewees generally felt that the benefits of more staff included: more manageable caseloads, more time for multi-agency working, and more one-to-one time with service users. This, in turn, improved service delivery.

<sup>4</sup> Katriona Fahy and Ahmet Enginsoy (2020) A Process Evaluation of the Enhanced Through the Gate Specification Final Report. Ministry of Justice Analytical Series.

- Remaining challenges included: working with individuals serving short sentences, improving the communication between TTG and NPS staff, and easing the transition from prison to the community.
- Co-location of TTG teams with other teams (i.e. Offender Management teams) was found to improve communication.
- The ability to offer service users access to mentoring after release was praised by TTG teams.
- TTG staff reported that some cohorts (e.g. Home Detention Curfew and other early releases, prisoners on short-term sentences) remain disadvantaged in the provision of enhanced TTG services due to their short time in custody.

This chapter has set out the challenging context in which Ingeus and its partners delivered its TTG service. The next chapter describes that model in detail.

# Chapter 2: The work delivered

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## Overview

Ingeus and its partners in both Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland (DLNR) and Staffordshire & West Midlands (SWM) Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) were early adopters of the enhanced Through-the-Gate (TTG) approach. The organisation did not fundamentally change its previous approach but used the extra funding provided by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to recruit and train additional staff. Unlike some other CRC models where the TTG service was sub-contracted to other providers, Ingeus directly employed the staff working in the resettlement service. Teams comprised resettlement workers, housing advisers, education, training and employment staff, and administrators; supported by a management structure which made one senior manager responsible for TTG services across both CRC areas. As part of its volunteer and mentor strategy, St Giles Trust also trained prisoners to become peer advisers in their prison and their involvement in supporting people due to be released was key to the model.

Most resettlement staff were located at a specific prison, but were enabled to deliver services to other prisons supported by the CRC.

The key elements of the service were:

- A strong working relationship between the TTG teams and the Offender Management Units in each individual prison. This ensured good information exchange and effective joint working between prison and probation.
- Early identification of needs to ensure that housing and other issues were addressed in plenty of time prior to release. Ingeus accommodation specialists participated in induction processes to ensure that prisoners who had no home to go to on release were identified as early as possible to give maximum time to arrange accommodation on discharge, including those on remand.
- Within the broader resettlement team, each resettlement prison operated a specialist housing and welfare team who were able to develop the detailed and advanced knowledge needed to be able to tackle the most important and intransigent challenge of finding safe and stable housing for people being released from prison.

- These teams adopted a broad approach to tackling accommodation issues, developing partnerships with local authorities and many housing associations and housing advice services in every locality.
- A strategic approach to finance, benefits and debt (FBD) issues ensured that people had ID and a bank account open prior to release and that any benefit claims were filed immediately on release. In addition, FBD specialists negotiated with creditors from within prison and offered a range of money management and budgeting courses.
- The TTG team developed partnerships with a number of local community partners and Jobcentre Plus Coaches to provide both individual information advice and guidance and regular workshops on interview and job search skills.
- The involvement of peer advisors (trained by Ingeus' partner St Giles) meant that people waiting for release received additional support and the chance to learn a range of skills.
- The TTG team held regular (quarterly) Resettlement Fairs at which groups of around 50 prisoners within 12 weeks of release met with a very wide range of community partners who provide accommodation, employment, substance misuse and other services. This enabled people in prison to access help directly, making arrangements for support in the community much more robust.
- The team established Departure Lounges (e.g. Next Steps at HMP Nottingham) where prisoners could access immediate practical and emotional support on release. People could get a hot drink and something to eat after being discharged and ask any final questions they had about how to get to their appointments, charge mobile phones or obtain advice. The lounge provided toiletries, food parcels and clothing. Citizens Advice staff also attended every Friday so prisoners could start universal credit applications to speed up the process of securing a regular income stream. These "departure lounges" proved invaluable in assisting peoples release from prison throughout the coronavirus pandemic.
- People that need additional support were met at the point of release by Reducing Reoffending Partnership (RRP) community support workers to help them access services in the community at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Benefits of the model

Interviews with resettlement managers helped identify the advantages of this Ingeus model. By having all resettlement staff as part of one team, all of whom were radio trained and key-holders, the organisation was able to develop a proactive, "can-do" culture. Resettlement staff generally worked on the wings, engaging with prisoners on a daily basis and forging positive working relationships with many prison officers. The fact that all staff worked for Ingeus brought a number of advantages with shared understanding of roles and flexibility in work patterns and allocations with individual workers shifting role to cover vacancies in key areas such as housing advice.

The fact that resettlement staff were integrated into the wider prison staff team meant that they were more able to facilitate work by community agencies. Staff teams developed partnerships with community providers of housing, employment, finance, benefit and debts and substance misuse treatment and helped organise a range of workshops in different prisons, both meeting the needs of prisoners and enabling them to build working relationships with local organisations who would be able to support them on release.

The team also developed an entrepreneurial and creative culture which enabled them to develop partnerships with community organisations of all types and sizes. In addition to provision on the key resettlement objectives, there were many other examples including a range of provision run jointly with the Princes Trust at HMP Nottingham including a very well received football coaching course.

The joint work with the prison peers trained by Ingeus' partner the St Giles Trust also had a significant impact, particularly in engaging other prisoners in resettlement work early in their sentence to ensure that issues could be tackled promptly and thoroughly in advance of an individual's release date.

Ingeus also invested heavily in resettlement at a senior management level. One example is that the head of resettlement chaired and co-ordinated the West Midlands Regional Accommodation forum for the Resettlement of Offenders. One of the key priorities of this forum was to address a Birmingham-specific problem where a change in homeless commissioning had led to a number of "rogue" landlords exploiting the housing of vulnerable people for profit, providing sub-standard housing. The forum succeeded in working with the local authority, West Midlands Police and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to make significant progress on this issue, helping to secure safe and suitable accommodation for those leaving prison.

## Continuity of care

The main challenge of TTG work has always been that of ensuring that the work done prior in custody is effectively continued on release. A range of inspection reports and other official research has highlighted the lack of continuity of care as a key issue. Ingeus constructed a model to overcome this challenge. The fact that the resettlement service was delivered in-house enabled good and timely communication between in-prison services and services in the community, both supervising probation staff and partner organisations. This overall model was supported by a range of initiatives designed to support continuity of care.

One such key model was the prison in-reach ETE team. Ingeus appointed a number of ETE advisors who were integrated into the resettlement teams but also based in the community. This in-reach service provided intensive support to people being released from prison starting from 12 weeks pre-release. The model had three major advantages.

Firstly, being integrated into the resettlement teams meant that referrals were picked up as early as possible and advisors (who were radio trained and carried keys) were able to access service users on the wings and be adaptable to prison regime changes.

Secondly, being based in the community enabled advisors to build a wide range of partnerships with employers and training and education providers.

Thirdly, the in-reach role meant that Ingeus was able to offer a continuity of service through-the-gate, in-reach employment advisors were able to develop an action plan with an individual service user, set up appointments on release and the community-based employment advisors were able to continue with the plan seamlessly.

Ingeus evaluated this approach and found that people in prison who accessed in-reach advisers were much more likely to engage with community employment advisors on release.

The in-reach team were also able to facilitate access to a range of employment and training opportunities offered by the different prisons in the Midlands area including getting CSCS cards before release to enable people to start employment on construction sites immediately on returning to the community.

Similar approaches to continuity of care were offered to ensure that work to help people in prison access housing and FBD services with integration between in-prison and community services often achieved by the same organisation delivering both.

The FBD services offered both in-house in the DLNR CRC area and by Birmingham Settlement in the SWM CRC both offered follow up services on release to ensure that, for example, anyone unable to open a bank account in prison was enabled to do so on release.

## Flexibility

Ingeus was also committed to ensure that resettlement support was available at every prison. One example was the work done in partnership with HMP Stafford which had very limited resettlement services because it was not designated a resettlement prison even though it released hundreds of (mainly high risk) prisoners directly into the community every year.

An interview with the governor at HMP Stafford revealed that Ingeus was happy to develop a different model to meet the prison's resettlement needs, seconding existing specialist accommodation staff into Ingeus to ensure continued funding and investing in a range of services which fitted the specialist needs of the prisoners served by that establishment.

## The resettlement service in action

This section includes a number of short case studies to demonstrate the range and effectiveness of work undertaken by the Ingeus TTG service. Although the focus was on resettlement, the team also took responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of people in prison from the moment of their first reception (all names have been changed).

### Safeguarding Carl

Carl received his first prison sentence in September 2019 when he was 20 years old although the offence had taken place three years earlier. This was Carl's first involvement with the criminal justice system, and he was traumatised and frightened by the experience. On arrival at the prison following sentencing, Carl was extremely distressed. An Ingeus resettlement worker was on her way home when she observed that he was having a nosebleed and immediately arranged to see him away from the other service users who had also arrived at the prison.

The worker calmed Carl down and explained the process of prison induction and what to expect. Carl was concerned about his parents and especially his mother who had severe mental health problems. As it would be a few days before he would be allowed to call his parents the worker agreed to call them to inform that he was okay.

With permission from the prison and Carl, the case worker called his parents that evening to let them know that he was alright. The worker kept in touch with the parents until Carl was allocated his telephone pin number and was able to make touch directly himself (in this case it was several days before Carl got his telephone pin).

The worker also contacted the prison Chaplaincy service before leaving the prison and arranged for a Chaplain to visit Carl to check on his wellbeing and offer support.

In some instances, resettlement work required a significant investment in time and effort and a dogged determination to get results. The next case study was included in an official HMPPS TTG newsletter (it is reproduced here with the person's name changed to preserve confidentiality)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Issue 44

### **Securing a home on release**

An Ingeus resettlement worker at HMP Stocken was allocated Denzel only weeks before he was due to be released with no home to go to. Denzel was 25 years old with a history of being in care; he had only been in the community for a total of 4 months in the previous eleven years. The caseworker made “duty of care” referrals to a number of local authorities, all of which were rejected with claims that Denzel did not have an established local connection. Denzel was released on a Friday and travelled to Northampton where the local authority did not provide housing, he eventually stayed with his brother over the weekend.

The worker spent the following week advocating for Denzel and Northampton council finally agreed to offer him his own flat. However, by this time Denzel had turned 26 years old and was no longer eligible for a leaving care grant. Again, the Ingeus caseworker entered into a lengthy advocacy process on his behalf and was finally able to secure an exemption so that Denzel would be able to furnish his new flat.

The caseworker remained in touch with Denzel for several weeks following his release; he had settled into his new home and complying with all his licence conditions. Denzel told her that he had never had anyone fight so hard on his behalf and he was determined to fight equally hard to stay out of prison and build a new life for himself.

As we have seen, one of the keys to effective resettlement work is the willingness to be proactive and go beyond the prescribed minimum service which is required to be delivered. The following case study, also featured in an official HMPPS TTG newsletter<sup>6</sup>, shows that determined and persistent action is sometimes required to help people break a cycle of offending and repeated imprisonment.

### **Arranging Supported Accommodation for a Home Detention Curfew**

Kylie was caught in a revolving door of drug dependency, related crime and imprisonment and was back in custody at HMP Drake Hall for another sentence. Through-the-Gate

<sup>6</sup> Issue 46



services are not normally involved in Home Detention Curfew arrangements with HDC tasks normally undertaken by the prison probation department. However, the Ingeus resettlement worker knew Kylie from before and was aware that she had applied for HDC, but that the accommodation to which she was going was unlikely to offer enough support to help break away from her former lifestyle. The resettlement worker knew that Kylie had a good relationship with her community Probation Officer, and the two Ingeus staff worked closely with Kylie to plan a more supportive resettlement approach.

The Ingeus resettlement worker referred Kylie to a specialist women's housing and support service, Goddess Living, and coached her through the interview process. There were several complications and challenges for Kylie's release which took place during a COVID lockdown. Nevertheless, the worker was able to provide Kylie with a mobile phone and food vouchers and to arrange for her to be met at the gate and taken straight to the Goddess Living project.

The resettlement worker has kept in touch and Kylie has now been living at the project for some months, she remains drug free and has re-established contact with her son.

Debt negotiation was a key part of the resettlement service provided and detailed records were kept about the levels of debts which were re-scheduled (with a substantial proportion written off), full details are provided in the next chapter but the case study below describes a typical intervention.

### **Debt Negotiation Case Study**

Trevor was recalled to prison for breach of his licence conditions which he attributed to the severe financial difficulties he was experiencing. Assessment by the Ingeus FBD resettlement service found that he had debts totalling over £10,000. The assessment found that Trevor was prioritising his non-priority creditors over his priority ones, in particular the bank who held the mortgage on his home, an account in which he was in arrears of £4,698.83.

The service helped Trevor with information, understanding and preparation of Financial Capability and Money Management with a focus on identifying and explaining the difference

between his priority and non-priority creditors. The service then contacted Trevor's creditors, explained the situation, and re-negotiated his debts to make them manageable. Trevor's non-priority creditors were happy to freeze interest and charges whilst he was in custody and look to review the case a month after his release for a reduced and more manageable payment plan. His mortgage provider was also happy to hold all legal action until after Trevor's release and to agree a new repayment plan.

Shortly after Trevor's release, he was able to return to his employment and secure a financial income. The Ingeus FBD service continued to support Trevor to keep his finances on track, completing a Financial Statement and negotiating contractual mortgage amounts, setting monthly repayment plans towards the mortgage arrears and making token offers towards his non-priority creditors for 6 months with an option to review if his financial position improves.

The FBD support that Ingeus resettlement team was able to offer to Trevor was the most important element in him starting his desistance journey and moving away from a life of crime.

# Chapter 3: Outcomes and Feedback

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## Introduction

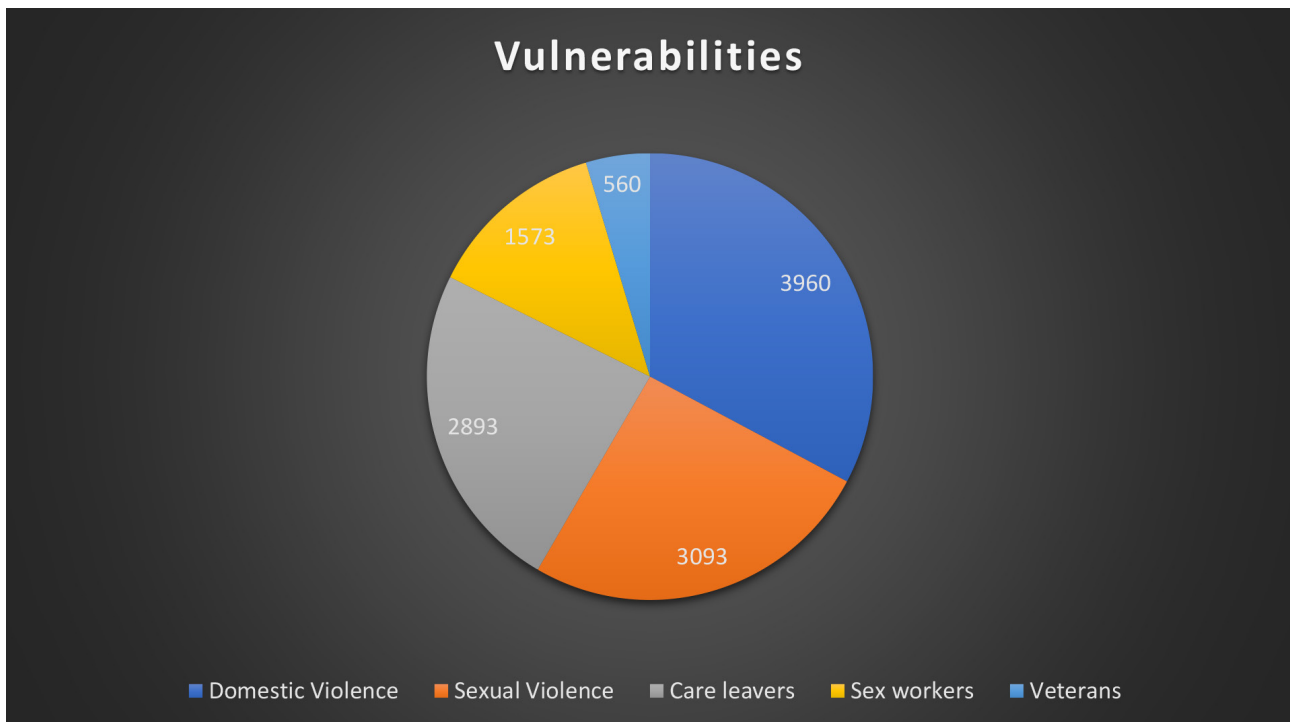
The Ingeus Through-The-Gate (TTG) service operated on a very large scale across 16 prisons, this chapter sets out the range of activities delivered and the outcomes achieved before moving on to share official feedback on the quality of the service delivered.

## Activities

The scale of the TTG service is clear; a total of 30,266 individuals were released from prisons in the DLNR CRC and SWM CRC areas over the three-year period from April 2018 to March 2021 all of whom were offered resettlement support via the Enhanced TTG service.

## Vulnerabilities

A significant proportion of the people released from prison during this period were particularly vulnerable. We know that official prison statistics tends to under-estimate levels of need, nevertheless more than one person in eight had experience of domestic violence (3960, 13%); one in ten (3093, 10.2%) had experience of sexual violence, the same proportion had been in care (2893, 9.6%) and more than one in twenty (1573, 5.2%) were sex workers. Almost one in fifty (560, 1.9%) were officially recorded as having been in the armed forces.



## Interventions

The TTG service offered a wide range of co-ordinated interventions to give people in prison the best chance to reintegrate successfully into their communities and to start and sustain their desistance journeys. In addition to the specific support around accommodation, employment and finance, benefit and debt (the outcomes from these interventions are set out in detail later in this chapter), Ingeus also provided a range of other support services. One tenth (2960, 9.8%) of people in prison during this three-year time period received Ingeus' pre-release programme which was designed to support motivation and resilience prior to release as well as providing information about a wide range of community resources.

People who were trapped in a revolving door of crime and repeat imprisonment were offered additional resources and support to help them make positive change. A total of 520 people (1.7% of all people released from prison) were provided with a "Meet At The Gate" service to enable them to manage the actual release process safely and to ensure that they arrived at the supportive service organised for them.

People who faced multiple barriers including those with drug and/or alcohol dependency issues also received intensive support commissioned by Ingeus from Change, Grow, Live via the Foundations of Rehabilitation programme which was delivered to more than 200 individuals in a custodial setting (and many more following release) over the same three-year period.

## Outcomes

Ingeus maintained detailed monitoring information on the outcomes of its activity within the three key domains of housing, employment and finance, benefit and debt, these outcomes are described below.

### Accommodation

Perhaps the most important component of the TTG service was the accommodation support. Ingeus was able to track whether people leaving prison had accommodation to go to on release for the vast majority (29,279, 96.7%) of prison leavers. The service was successful in ensuring that six out of seven people leaving prison (24,706/29,279, 84.4%) had secure housing to go to. The lack of (particularly single person) accommodation available across the Midlands area prevented a higher level of success.

### Employment

Ingeus provided a wide range of services to help people find work, training or education on release with very successful outcomes:

- More than eight out of ten people (24,486, 80.9%) received advice and support on how to disclose their criminal convictions to prospective employers.
- More than two thousand individuals (2,067, 6.8%) were referred directly to a range of employment and training services with several hundred going straight into work or training on release.

### Finance, Benefit and Debt

The success of the finance, benefit and debt (FBD) intervention offered as part of the TTG service is evidenced by the high numbers of people receiving the intervention and the significant outcomes.

Although the model of intervention differed in each CRC, both areas used an Ingeus-wide dashboard to report data in the same format.

- More than half this cohort (16,920, 56%) received a direct FBD intervention with information, advice and support on how to manage their finances successfully.
- More than three quarters of these people in prison (23,933, 79%) were given help to ensure that they had a valid form of identification on their release to facilitate opening bank accounts, claiming benefits and other official administrative tasks.
- Almost one in nine (3,260, 11%) were helped to establish a bank account for the first time.

- The level of debt negotiation provided to this client group was also on a colossal scale with a total of 12,873 creditors contacted in relation to debts of almost £15 million<sup>7</sup> re-negotiated, or in any many cases, written off.

## Professional feedback

The resettlement work delivered by Ingeus was commended by a range of official sources. The positive findings of this evaluation match the views of the detailed investigations of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) through their formal area inspection process.

Throughout the period of time covered by this evaluation, HMI Probation revised their rating of the DLNR CRC resettlement service, upgrading it from "Good" to their highest level of "Outstanding". Inspectors identified several key strengths to the TTG service<sup>8</sup>:

- Strategic working relationships are strong, and these are supported by prison partnership plans with each resettlement prison.
- Good examples of leadership and innovation, supported by enthusiastic staff and providers who are committed to providing effective services to prepare people for release from prison.
- Working relationships between TTG staff and key partner agencies and providers are effective, which encourages collaboration and good communication.
- The St Giles Trust peer adviser model provides prisoners with opportunities to learn new skills and offer support to others pre-release.
- Community support workers can meet individuals at the point of release and support them to access services in the community.
- The TTG teams work flexibly to support service delivery.
- High quality resettlement plans involving the prisoner, taking good account of individual needs and drawing upon relevant information.

The inspectors specifically noted that:

*"In both the previous and current inspections of DLNR CRC, practice to support access to resettlement services was notably better than the aggregate for the CRCs across the first year of inspections".*

<sup>7</sup> £14,910,178

<sup>8</sup> Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (2020) An inspection of probation services in: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland Community Rehabilitation Company

The inspectorate also increased their rating of the SWM CRC resettlement service from the bottom ranking of “Inadequate” to the top ranking of “Outstanding”<sup>9</sup>. Inspectors again identified several key strengths to the TTG service:

- The TTG service is a well-led and well-managed scheme, which is highly regarded by prison managers.
- The use of nDelius in the prison setting is providing an essential aid to the coordination of work with community responsible officers.
- Senior leadership of the scheme is driving the development of a high-quality service.
- Staff are supervised by competent and credible resettlement unit managers.
- There are well-trained and committed resettlement teams in each of the prisons
- An excellent level of individual prisoners’ meaningful involvement in the planning process
- Resettlement plans identify strengths in individuals’ lives and seek to build on them.

To put these findings into context, the final inspectorate ratings for all 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies in relation to their provision of TTG services via individual area reports were:

- Eight CRCs were rated Outstanding
- Six were rated Good
- Four were rated as Requiring Improvement
- Three were rated Inadequate

The high quality of the Ingeus TTG service was also highlighted in a number of reports by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Independent Monitoring Boards. Four examples are reproduced below.

Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Nottingham by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons January 2020:

*“Practical post-release support was good and better than we usually see. Continuing support for more complex or vulnerable prisoners was available through CRC community support workers and a new ‘prison navigator’ scheme provided by the council, which involved staff seconded from the CRC attending appointments with prisoners on their release. This work continued to be supported through the impressive Next Steps Lounge, where prisoners could access immediate practical and emotional support on release. They could get a hot drink and something to eat after being discharged and ask any final questions they had about how to get to their appointments, charge mobile phones or obtain advice. The lounge provided toiletries, food parcels and clothing. Citizens Advice staff also attended every Friday so prisoners could start universal credit applications to speed up the process”.*

<sup>9</sup> Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (2020) An inspection of probation services in: Staffordshire and West Midlands Community Rehabilitation Company

Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Leicester by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons May 2018:

*“The CRC and OMU worked well together and communicated well. There were more probation officers in post than at the time of the previous inspection. All prisoners were allocated a caseworker from the CRC, and sentenced prisoners had an allocated offender supervisor, either a prison officer or probation officer, depending on risk level. Information sharing was good. In the cases we examined, we found that all new arrivals had been seen promptly and their resettlement needs identified by CRC caseworkers. This model worked well, providing good support, with little delay.*

*Financial advice and support was provided by a specialist CRC worker, who helped prisoners to contact creditors where appropriate. He also provided an advice workshop in the community which prisoners could continue to use if released locally. Advice on benefits, setting up appointments and referral to work experience was provided by Jobcentre Plus. A one-day money management course was provided every two months and prisoners could open bank accounts if there was sufficient time before release. They were also provided with identification to open an account with the local Credit Union.*

*CRC caseworkers undertook assessments and prepared a resettlement plan for all prisoners, including those on remand, shortly after their arrival. The achievement of targets was reviewed before release, and steps were taken to ensure that this work was completed. Links with case managers in the community, social workers and accommodation providers were good. Prisoners due for release were put in touch with support groups in the community where appropriate. Before prisoners' release, caseworkers explained licence requirements to them, and reception staff provided travel tickets, adequate clothing and licence documents, and returned their property.”*

Independent Monitoring Board 2020 report on HMP Nottingham:

*“During the reporting period, the CRC, with support from the prison, set up a ‘next steps’ lounge adjacent to the visitors centre, just outside the prison. This gives prisoners the chance to get a meal and clothing, charge mobile phones and just rest a while upon release. The CRC has worked with local retailers and voluntary sector organisations to provision a food, toiletries and clothes bank. This is popular with those newly released, and we commend the initiative.”*

Independent Monitoring Board 2020 report on HMP Birmingham:

*“The CRC made steady progress in improving attendance at pre-release courses in the early part of the reporting period by amending course dates and times, and by establishing separate monthly meetings for VPs. Residents, when asked, responded positively about all programmes and interventions, finding them both helpful and well delivered. The Board considers that a recent and commendable initiative is the provision of a mobile phone with credit to any man on release who has no other means of staying in touch with his probation officer. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all pre-release, money management and foundation for rehabilitation courses were suspended. Under the lockdown conditions, the CRC continued to work in the prison. The Board commends the prison for the support it has provided for residents due to be released during the COVID-19 restrictions.”*



# Chapter 4: Conclusions

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## Overview

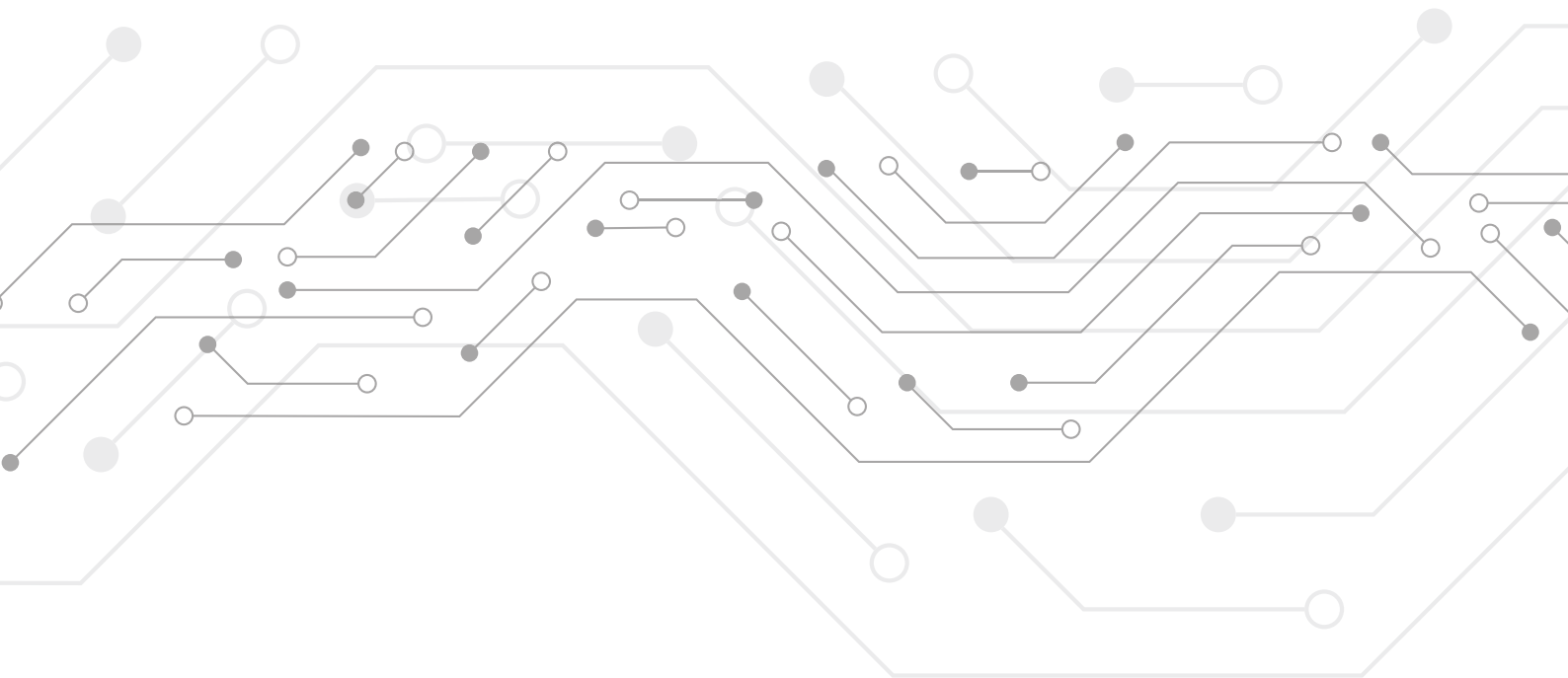
This evaluation has shared the early trials and tribulations faced by all 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies in trying to establish a more comprehensive and higher quality resettlement service in England and Wales with sufficient resources. The additional funding eventually provided for the enhanced Through-The-Gate (TTG) service was key to Ingeus success in developing and maintain a field-leading service consistently praised by inspections at both a local and national level. The evaluation has already identified several critical success factors of their approach:

- The decision to employ an in-house team, rather than try to manage a complex supply chain.
- The consequential ability to deliver services promptly and directly to people in prison on induction and on prison wings.
- The flexibility to constantly re-allocate resources to ensure a consistent service.
- The focus on continuity of care combining in-reach teams and consistency of delivery by the same organisation in prison and the community.

However, in addition to these key features of a well-designed model of intervention, the most important driver in achieving this level of excellence was an organisational culture committed to the wellbeing of the users of the enhanced TTG service. This culture can be seen across the Ingeus organisation:

- In the leadership praised by HMI Probation and evidenced in the desire to challenge and change intransigent problems like the corrupt private rented sector in Birmingham.
- In the willingness to focus on achieving the end goal of an effective resettlement service rather than being restricted by contractual limitations – evidenced by Ingeus' willingness to invest funds in high-performing services delivered by other providers in HMP Stafford.
- The willingness of front-line staff to consistently go the extra mile, seen in the way they retained released prisoners on their caseload until they were safely engaged in supportive services in the community.

In summary, this high level of service delivery can be attributed to an organisational culture which focuses on people and purpose, rather than contractual targets alone.



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