



Home Office

# Factors associated with effective practice in Approved Premises

## A literature review

Ros Burnett  
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Home Office Online Report 65/04

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Home Office (nor do they reflect Government policy).

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# Glossary of abbreviations

1:1	Priestley One-to-One Programme
ACE	Assessment, Case-management and Evaluation system
ACOP	Association of Chief Officers of Probation
CARATS	Counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare service
DTTO	Drug Treatment and Testing Order
ETE	Education, training and employment
ETS	Enhanced Thinking Skills Programme
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LIHMO	Living Here, Moving On
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory-Revised
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MAPPPs	Multi-Agency Public Protection Panels
MDO	Mentally disordered offender
NESTS	National Estates Strategy
NPD	National Probation Directorate
NPS	National Probation Service
NTORS	National Treatment Outcome Research Study
OASys	Offender Assessment System
PCL-R	Psychopathy Check List-Revised
PDO	Potentially dangerous offender
PPU	Public Protection Unit, National Probation Directorate
PRES	Pre Release Employment Schemes
PSR	Pre-sentence report
PSM	Pro-social monitoring
R&R	Reasoning and Rehabilitation Programme
RRASOR	Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offence Recidivism
SACJ	Structured Anchored Clinical Judgement
SOTP	Sex Offender Treatment Programmes
STEP	Sex offender Treatment and Evaluation Programme

# Summary

## Introduction and context

Approved Premises in the UK criminal justice system – previously known as 'bail and probation hostels' – have had various functions during their history. They began by providing accommodation for young petty offenders to, at the present time, '*providing an enhanced level of residential supervision in the community as well as a supportive and structured environment*', normally aimed at '*cases assessed as medium or above risk of harm of reoffending*' (National Probation Service *Approved Premises Handbook*, 2002a, p.5 and p.51).

There are three main types of Approved Premises:

- *generalised premises* which accept all categories of offender, and include both bailees and convicted offenders. The majority of Approved Premises are of this type,
- *specialist premises* which take all categories of offenders but 'specialise' in particular subgroups e.g. mentally disordered offenders (MDOs); sex offenders; female offenders,
- *approved premises* which only accept particular types of offenders (e.g. MDOs).

The reorganisation of probation services into the National Probation Service (NPS) in April 2000, plus recent inspections and legislation, led to consideration of the effectiveness of Approved Premises. The *Approved Premises Pathfinder* was introduced in 2002 to explore and develop effective practice in Approved Premises and aimed to support programmes of work with offenders. The National Probation Directorate is developing a National Estates Strategy (NESTS), and Approved Premises are one element of the estate included in this strategy. Approved Premises are also delivery partners for the new statutory multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), aimed at co-ordinating activity with difficult and potentially dangerous offenders in the community. This literature review is intended to inform these various developments.

## The role of Approved Premises in reducing reoffending

There has been relatively little research to investigate whether Approved Premises are effective in reducing the likelihood of reoffending, over and above the programmes run in them and the mix of offenders resident. A landmark study (Sinclair, 1971) showed that Approved Premises regimes run by staff who were 'firm but kindly', and who were supportive but clear about the rules, had a marked influence on reconviction rates in the short term, though these positive effects generally did not continue beyond the period of residence in Approved Premises. In more recent research (Loney et al., 2000), a pro-social modelling approach was associated with improved staff–resident and staff–staff relationships, and with increased positive feedback and constructive criticism by staff in their communication with residents.

The wider research-base on 'what works' to reduce offending has given prominence to the relative merits of cognitive-behavioural programmes, especially if provided in a community setting rather than in custody (McGuire and Priestley, 1997; McGuire, 2002; Vennard and Hedderman, 1999). The great plus-factor which Approved Premises can offer, therefore, in supporting effective practice is the provision of a supervised environment *within the community*. Many residents remain in Approved Premises long enough for them to attend accredited cognitive programmes provided by probation areas as well as other accredited types of provision to tackle offending-related needs.

There have been periods when Approved Premises have been under-used for community penalties with a condition of residence, necessitating clearer guidelines to probation staff who

write pre-sentence reports (HMIP, 1993). The inspection of Approved Premises in 1998 by the Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP, 1998) found that most (97%) of those who had completed their term of residence had no further charges or reconvictions during their stay. Although these records, by definition, did not include unrecorded and undetected reoffending, they are indicative of a lower than expected reconviction rate for the period of time involved – although, it is possible that undetected reoffending would later have come to light after their stay.

The main role of Approved Premises is now to protect the public, not to meet accommodation needs arising from difficulties in the home environment or homelessness. Nevertheless, homelessness has been associated with recidivism, and therefore the risk of reoffending by someone without a suitable place to live may be reduced simply by his or her admission to Approved Premises. However, because they are usually a short-term intervention, Approved Premises can only provide transient support for homeless people and so, for to be effective in this way over the long-term, a strategy is necessary for ongoing accommodation and support for offenders after they leave the Approved Premises. The Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP, 1998; 2001) stressed the need for a national accommodation strategy linked to wider public protection policies, which would clarify the role of the voluntary sector (such as the Langley House Trust) in accommodating and supporting offenders once their statutory supervision has ended.

## The role of Approved Premises in risk-management and public protection

Interventions to reduce reoffending and protect the public are ‘two sides of the same coin’; and appropriate assessment, supervision planning and carrying out the work with residents are interdependent elements of these two areas of work. Approved Premises are beneficially placed within the criminal justice system to provide the continuing surveillance and monitoring that are a necessary part of risk management.

Research on evidence-based practice within the correctional services emphasises the importance of rigorous pre-entry assessment and then continuous review, in order to plan the most appropriate programme of intervention to address offending-related needs and determine the level of supervision and surveillance needed to protect the public (Raynor *et al.*, 2000; Kemshall, 1998; 2001). The introduction of a standardised assessment tool, OASys, and the arrangements for multi-agency public protection panels (MAPPPs) for potentially dangerous offenders, are helping this process (National Probation Service, 2003c).

Managers and staff of Approved Premises clearly face a challenging role given the continuous nature of their contact with offenders, particularly now that Approved Premises target higher risk of harm offenders. There is some anecdotal evidence from staff that the ‘manageability’ of Approved Premises populations and the completion rates are influenced by the mixture and balancing of different categories of residents. Recent qualitative research (Wincup, 2002) has suggested a need for residential staff to be given more support in their difficult role, including tighter arrangements for supervision and more opportunities for contact with staff in other Approved Premises and in the probation service more generally. Wincup argues there is scope for more training of staff to develop their proactive skills in preventing and responding to residents’ problems and incidents within Approved Premises.

## Working with different categories of residents

In addressing the question of ‘what works’ in Approved Premises practice to reduce reconviction rates, it is tempting to assume that the findings applicable to community penalties in general are equally applicable within an Approved Premises setting. There is indeed much transferability between good practice in the field and in Approved Premises. However, residence in Approved Premises throws up new and different factors which must be taken into account. In particular, there is the potential for counter-productive effects resulting from the loss of any beneficial factors

in their usual environment, and also possible adverse influences and risks posed by other residents. This is especially applicable now that Approved Premises are largely intended for medium and high risk of harm defendants and offenders and are considered to be '*normally inappropriate and a poor use of a scarce and expensive resource for those within low risk of harm or reoffending*' (National Probation Service *Approved Premises Handbook*, 2002a, p.51). The fact that many Approved Premises have a medium to high risk of harm resident population, and often one which mixes different categories of offenders, brings its own challenges, both from a management perspective and from the perspective of effective practice.

Approved Premises continue to play a vital role in providing accommodation for defendants remanded on bail who pose a risk to the public and would otherwise be remanded in custody, but the proportion of bailees remanded to Approved Premises has now declined (Foster, 2004). Studies in the past have raised concerns about potential 'net-widening' (i.e. bringing more people into the criminal justice process) or stigmatising effects when bailees, often unconvicted, were placed with more serious or persistent offenders (Pratt and Bray, 1985; Lewis and Mair, 1988). The primary focus should be on managing the risk that bailees present, but a continuing difficulty relating to practice with bailees is that they may spend shorter periods in residence, and their unconvicted status in many cases, may prevent offence-focussed work being undertaken with them. However, the *Approved Premises Handbook* encourages work with bailees to promote their community reintegration.

There are some challenges in providing the same scope and facilities for prospective residents who are numerically in a minority category. Various studies and reports point to the need for flexibility and cultural sensitivity in catering for residents who are in a minority. In the case of provision for women, the perennial dilemma has been whether their needs are best served by geographically remote women-only premises or by male dominated mixed-gender premises, since each has pros and cons. Research indicates that both options should be retained allowing prospective female residents to make the best choice for themselves (Wincup, 1996; 2002). Research focussed on improving Approved Premises provision for minority ethnic groups showed that the appointment of specialist staff, and concentrating referrals to one or two Approved Premises in the area so that a 'critical mass' was achieved, resulted in an increase in appropriate referrals and the improvement of specialist facilities (Kazi *et al.*, 2001). Approved Premises provision for disabled offenders is minimal but there is insufficient information available to assess the extent of unmet need. In line with equal opportunities policy, Approved Premises need to optimise their facilities for women, minority ethnic residents, and disabled residents.

The Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP, 1998) advised that there should be further consideration and evaluation of whether certain groups – such as sex offenders, drug misusers, mentally disordered offenders – should be dispersed across the estate or whether it is more effective for them to be accommodated in separate Approved Premises. Separate provision for mentally disordered offenders has been successful (e.g. Brown and Geelan, 1998), prompting the development of further specialist Approved Premises for MDOs. Sex offenders and substance misusers are typically dispersed. Specialist Prospects Premises will be piloted for prison leavers with a history of drug abuse who are motivated to stay drug-free. This will be the second phase of a three-stage intervention, starting with work in custody (phase 1), and continuing with move-on accommodation and support in the community (phase 3) after leaving the Prospect Premises (phase 2).

Various evaluative studies, and the HMIP inspection of Approved Premises in 1998, have provided encouraging evidence of appropriate use of Approved Premises for the enhanced supervision of more difficult and high risk categories of residents, including mentally disordered offenders, substance misusers and sex offenders. The importance of undertaking such work *in partnership* with field workers in the probation services with access to programmes, and in partnership with specialist services has been highlighted by research findings. For example, Approved Premises which hold mentally disordered offenders need good links with psychiatric services and access to health services. As well as bringing necessary specialist knowledge and

skill to bear on Approved Premise practice, such partnerships facilitate the continuation of work with offenders after residence in Approved Premises has expired.

## Conclusions

Approved Premises – or bail and probation hostels as they were previously known – are part of a wider endeavour in the present criminal justice system to reduce offending and increase public protection, but they have their own special functions and ‘added value’. As a service which is essentially linked with the criminal justice process, from arrest to resettlement following prison sentences, the practice in Approved Premises necessarily fits in with, and should conform to, ‘evidence-based’ practice more generally in working with offenders. It is now explicitly intended that Approved Premises play an integral role in risk management in the community.

Nevertheless, a conclusion to be drawn from this literature review is that Approved Premises are uniquely placed to move beyond simply being reflective of other criminal justice services. Because of the intensity of contact and oversight they afford, they are particularly well-suited to meet the dual objectives of reducing offending and increasing public protection in work with *‘some of the most difficult, damaged and potentially dangerous defendants and offenders’* (HMIP, 1998). The extended degree of contact, influence and supervision they can achieve in the lives of offenders who are still in the community puts them in a position to do more intensive, and sometimes innovative, work and to lead the way in demonstrating good practice.

# 1. Introduction and context

## Purpose and scope of this review

In recent years, the function of Approved Premises has moved away from providing temporary accommodation for petty offenders to providing environments and supervision for offenders posing a higher risk of harm in order to support the National Probation Service's aims of protecting the public and reducing the likelihood of reoffending. The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the most relevant research and other literature relating to bail and probation hostels, as they were previously known. It is intended to inform recent developments to revise and make more consistent the contribution of Approved Premises, including the *Approved Premises Pathfinder* which seeks to advance effective practice in Approved Premises.

The literature review is organised into four sections:

- Introduction and context
- The role of Approved Premises in reducing reoffending
- The role of Approved Premises in risk management and public protection,
- Working with different categories of residents in Approved Premises.

Following a brief overview of hostels past and present within the criminal justice system in England and Wales, two chapters deal in turn with the twin aims of '*reducing the likelihood of reoffending*' and '*protecting the public*', as specified in the *National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders in the Community* (Home Office, 2002). These aims are interlinked and therefore, inevitably, many of the issues discussed in chapters 2 and 3 are of overlapping relevance. The literature on working with different categories of Approved Premises residents, summarised in the final chapter, is pertinent to both 'reducing reoffending' and 'public protection' but has been separated for convenience. Approved Premises were previously known as bail and probation hostels, and are collectively referred to as the 'Approved Premises System'. It should be noted that much of the research mentioned in this review pre-dates the routine use of this label; however, except in the historical sections of this review, the term 'Approved Premises' is used throughout for consistency.

## Brief historical overview

The purpose of Approved Premises has fluctuated since they first came into existence. They have served as '*temporary homes, short-term training institutions, therapeutic communities and families*' (Sinclair, 1971, p.13). At different periods in their history they have been regarded as rehabilitative (Home Office, 1962) while at others as alternatives to custody (Home Office, 1970; ACOP, 1985). The label 'halfway houses' – occasionally applied in the past to Approved Premises in the UK, and still in use in the US and Canada – implied that they provided a place to help ex-offenders in the transition from custody to the community. Halfway houses are still in use in Canada to provide services for released offenders or as minimum-security 'correctional centres' (White, 2003), but in the UK the usage of Approved Premises has been more variable. Here, they were sometimes utilised as makeshift homes for petty offenders who were at no risk of a custodial sentence but who were in conflict with their families or had accommodation problems (Sinclair, 1971), or for offenders who were suffering from mental illness, drug addiction or alcoholism (Andrews, 1979).

The foundation of a hostel system in criminal justice in England and Wales dates back to the *Criminal Justice Administration Act, 1914* which allowed for a residence requirement to be included in a Probation Order. The *1927 Departmental Committee on the Treatment of Young Offenders* introduced a system of Home Office inspection of hostels, and it recommended that

hostels should be used for homeless young people or those in difficult environmental circumstances, in contrast to approved schools and borstals which should be used for the 'character training' of young offenders. The *Approved Probation Hostel and Home Rules 1949* switched the function of Approved Premises up a gear by requiring Approved Premises to provide training schemes. This introduction of training '*moved hostels away from being simply a stable alternative to family accommodation to becoming much more organised institutions with the potential for significant intrusions into the lives of residents*' (Barry, 1991, p.19). Nevertheless, the 1949 Rules allowed wardens and hostel committees considerable latitude in the arrangements they made, and the regime adopted tended to change with each incoming warden. Thus, one warden might '*see his role as primarily that of providing a stable and pleasant shelter, another as conferring the benefits of discipline, another as that of offering open-air adventure with a view to character-training*' (Monger, 1972, p.168).

Approved Premises targeted young offenders rather than adults for the first half of the century. The *Departmental Committee on the Probation Service*, that is, the Morison Committee (Home Office, 1962) argued that there was not enough justification for Approved Premises for adults but suggested that the position should be kept under review. It was not until 1970, with the *Report of the Advisory Committee on the Penal System*, that Approved Premises for adults were opened with the idea of using Approved Premises as an alternative to custodial sentences. However, the availability of Approved Premises accommodating adults continued to be limited because of local opposition to them. The *Criminal Justice Act 1972* gave Probation Committees the power to establish bail and probation hostels. Before then, hostels had been provided exclusively by voluntary organisations.

The number of Approved Premises expanded during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, prompted by overcrowding in prisons and police cells (HMIP, 1998). Section 27 of the *Probation Services Act 1993* provided for statutory provision of Approved Premises and Approved Premises rules to address the regulation, management and inspection of Approved Premises. During the early 1990s there was a slow reduction in the number of Approved Premises with some closing because they were failing to reach occupancy rates or were not cost-effective. An inspection of Approved Premises by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in 1993 reported that Approved Premises, at that time, were being under-used. There was a climate of purposelessness and boredom and, in general, Approved Premises had not successfully integrated their work into mainstream community supervision (HMIP, 1993).

## Approved Premises in the current criminal justice system

Approved Premises regimes became more standardised following the implementation of the *National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders in the Community*, first introduced in 1992. The latest revision of the *National Standards* specifies that: '*The purpose of Approved Premises is to provide an enhanced level of residential supervision with the aim of protecting the public by reducing the likelihood of offending*' (Home Office, 2002, *National Standards*, F1).

In order to enhance supervision towards these aims, Approved Premises are required to:

*'impose a supervised night time curfew which can be extended to other times of the day (e.g. as required by a court order or licence condition); provide 24-hour staff oversight; undertake ongoing assessment of attitudes and behaviour; require compliance with clearly stated house rules which are rigorously enforced; provide a programme of regular supervision, support and daily monitoring that tackles offending behaviour and reduces risks'* (Home Office, 2002, *National Standards*, F2).

Importantly, the following specifications and guidance make it clear that normally only *higher risk*

offenders and defendants are to be targeted:

*'Approved Premises are for bailees, those subject to community sentences with a condition of residence in the Approved Premises, and post custody licencees where their risk of causing serious harm to the public or other likelihood of reoffending means that no other form of accommodation in the community would be suitable. Exceptionally, voluntary residents may be accommodated...so long as...residence is necessary for the protection of the public...'* (Home Office, 2002, *National Standards*, F1).

*'Approved Premises are normally only suitable for cases assessed as medium or above risk of harm or reoffending. It is normally inappropriate and a poor use of a scarce and expensive resource for those within low risk of harm or re-offending.'* (National Probation Service *Approved Premises Handbook*, 2002, p.51).

The establishment of the National Probation Service (NPS) in 2001, combined with the second thematic inspection of Approved Premises by the Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP, 1998) and new legislation, prompted a fresh look at the management of the Approved Premises estate and the balance of responsibilities between the NPS, Approved Premises managers and probation areas. The *Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000* transferred the ownership of the probation premises, including probation-run Approved Premises, to the Secretary of State for the Home Office, so that all lands and buildings became Crown properties. The National Probation Directorate is now developing a National Estates Strategy (NESTS) which aims to achieve an efficient estate that is 'fit for purpose' and supports the aims of the NPS. A key part of the strategy, that is now being 'rolled out', is the outsourcing of estates management (e.g. acquisition, planning, property management) and facilities/ service management (such as catering, building maintenance, health and safety checks). Approved Premises are, of course, just one element of the estate covered by NESTS (National Probation Service, 2003).

The inspection of Approved Premises by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in 1998, entitled *Delivering an Enhanced Level of Community Supervision*, noted significant progress made by Approved Premises since the 1993 inspection (HMIP, 1998) but identified the need for strategic issues to be addressed to ensure that best use is made of valuable Approved Premises resources. It recommended a review of the approved estate to address the key issues raised by the inspection.

In accordance with the HMIP recommendation and as part of the development of evidence-based practice in the National Probation Service, an *Approved Premises Pathfinder* was introduced. The Pathfinder commenced in October 2002 and is being evaluated by a team of researchers at the Kent Criminal Justice Centre, University of Kent, led by Dr. Emma Wincup. The aims of the evaluation are to:

- identify the most effective ways of introducing new regimes in Approved Premises and to develop lessons for good practice,
- evaluate the effectiveness of the Pathfinder regimes and assess their 'added value',
- evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the new regimes in terms of promoting successful completion of residence, community rehabilitation orders, drug treatment and testing orders and licences, and in reducing further offending.

Eight Approved Premises, representative of different types of Approved Premises, were selected in which to run the Pathfinder. Staff have been trained in the use of the OASys assessment system, pro-social modelling (PSM) introduced by Trotter (1999; 2000), a group-work programme called 'Living Here Moving On' (LiHMO) and cognitive motivational work. The Pathfinder targets licencees and those on community orders but not bailees. (More details about PSM and cognitive motivational/behavioural approaches are supplied in chapter 2). The Pathfinder was intended to run for two years (NPS, 2002b) and finished in August 2004.

## Approved Premises statistics: a snapshot survey in March 2003

The National Probation Directorate (NPD) asked all Approved Premises in England and Wales (total 100) to complete a 'snapshot survey' on two occasions in March 2003. The response rate was very high: 100 per cent returned questionnaires in the first sweep and 96 per cent returned questionnaires in the second sweep. When the two data-sets were compared there were no statistically significant differences between them, and therefore the findings from the first, more comprehensive, data-set provided the basis of reported findings (Foster 2004) which are summarised below. Given the 'fluid' nature of the Approved Premises resident population, its composition is subject to variation but this survey provided a useful profile of the Approved Premises residents population at the beginning of 2003.

### *Number of places*

- There were 100 Approved Premises in England and Wales, together providing a total of 2,249 beds.
- The total number of beds per Approved Premises ranged from 10 to 44.
- There were 88 probation-run Approved Premises (providing 1,986 beds / 88% of all Approved Premises places) and 12 voluntary-run Approved Premises (providing 263 beds / 12% of Approved Premises places).
- A total of 89 per cent of beds were occupied in early March 2003. (Note that this applies only to one month, whereas the 90 per cent occupancy target set for 2003 to 2004 is based on a 12-month period.)

### *Places for whom?*

- There were 67 male-only Approved Premises (1,505 places), five women-only Approved Premises (99 places) and 28 mixed Approved Premises (645 places). These added up to 2,025 (90%) beds for men and 224 (10%) for women.
- About nine in ten of all residents were white (87%), while seven per cent were black and three per cent were Asian. The male-female breakdowns and the probation-run/voluntary-run breakdowns were all very similar in this respect.
- The breakdown of the Approved Premises population according to type of order they were subject to is shown in Figure 1. Far fewer of the female residents were subject to prison release licence.
- Over half of the residents were aged 22 to 41 years. The age profile of female residents was younger than that of males. Over 60 per cent of the female residents were under age 32 and only three per cent were over age 51. In comparison 38 per cent of the male residents were under age 32 and 18 per cent were over age 51.

### *Risk categories*

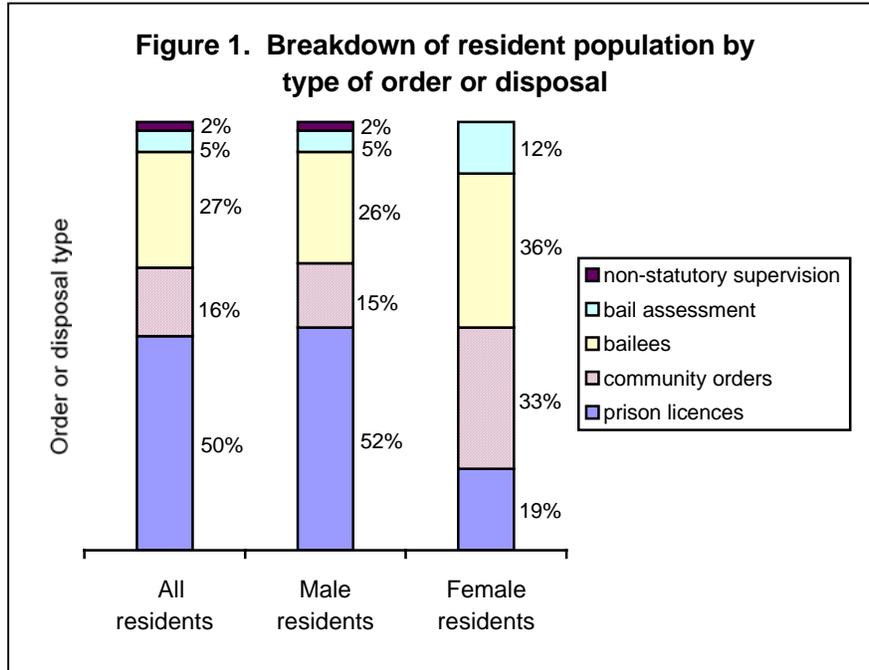
- A third of the Approved Premises population fell in the high 'risk of harm' category and around a quarter were low risk while four per cent were not assessed.<sup>1</sup>
- Two in five (42%) of the male residents had been charged with or convicted of a sexual offence, and the majority of these (84%) were schedule 1 offenders.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Risk of harm' as reported by Approved Premises staff.

- Overall, ten per cent of Approved Premises residents were mentally disordered offenders, specifically 17 per cent of the women and nine per cent of the men.

While the provision of Approved Premises places for the some of the above-mentioned risk categories may raise concerns, these Approved Premises placements provide more public protection than would be achieved if they were accommodated in the community.



## 2. The role of Approved Premises in reducing offending

Very few studies have been carried out which have addressed whether residence in Approved Premises can contribute to, or detract from, effective practice in reducing the likelihood of reoffending. This may at least partly be related to methodological difficulties in separating out the contribution of Approved Premises from the effects of other interventions. While there is a growing body of research on 'what works' in reducing reconviction rates, which has provided the foundation for the establishment of accredited programmes in the probation service (McGuire and Priestley, 1997; Goldblatt and Lewis, 1999; Lösel, 2001; McGuire, 2002), there are limits to the applicability of these findings to Approved Premises. That is, while there is much transferability between good practice in both field and Approved Premises settings, Approved Premises bring different variables into the 'what works' equation. For example, Approved Premises bring together different categories of offenders as well as unconvicted defendants. They therefore carry the risk of 'net-widening' (Cohen, 1985) – that is, bringing more people than intended into the net of criminal justice controls – because relatively low-risk offenders may be stigmatised and treated more harshly, or may be negatively influenced by others as a result of their stay in Approved Premises. Another potential 'Approved Premises effect', in the opposite direction, is that the provision of shelter for someone who was homeless, or the provision of an alternative to custody for someone who was facing imprisonment, are life-changing events, which could in themselves promote desistance over and above the effects of any interventions they may receive during their stay at the Approved Premises. A further complication in summarising the literature is that the aims of Approved Premises in working with different categories of residents – bailees, probationers, post-release prisoners – have varying implications for what is meant by 'effectiveness'.

### The importance of regimes

The rare studies that have been conducted into Approved Premises have generally drawn attention to Approved Premises 'regimes' as a critical variable. In its broadest sense, 'regime' refers to a number of factors, including the general principles on which the Approved Premises is run, its purpose and ethos, its procedures and methods for working with residents, and the rules which govern its running. Narrower definitions refer more specifically to the Approved Premises rules and the strictness versus flexibility with which those rules are applied (Barry, 1991). Examples of regime styles include 'authoritarian' (Fisher and Wilson, 1982), 'liberal' (Palmer, 1979) and – as currently promoted in the *Approved Premises Handbook* (NPS, 2002a, p.9 and p.24) – regimes based on a 'pro-social modelling' approach.

Approximations of a 'pro-social' regime, though not labelled as such until more recently, have a long history in Approved Premises. The Morison Report (Home Office, 1962) saw Approved Premises as providing: '*training...above all, in living acceptably with contemporaries and older people*' (Home Office, 1962, p.7). Similarly, the Scottish Probation Advisory and Training Council in 1996, influenced by the report of an experimental Approved Premises for ex-borstal boys (Miller, 1964) saw Approved Premises as opportunities for the residents to develop through relationships.

A detailed study of Approved Premises carried out by Sinclair (1971) revealed wide variations in types of Approved Premises regime linked to the leadership style of the wardens. (This finding needs to be regarded with caution. In the contemporary system of Approved Premises, managers

do not have the same latitude to impose regimes through their style of leadership.) There were striking differences in the outcomes associated with these different regimes and it is therefore worth revisiting the findings of this landmark study. The 'failure rate' (that is, percentage of residents leaving the Approved Premises as a result of absconding or further offending) correlated highly with the proportion reconvicted within one year of entering the Approved Premises. Sinclair's analysis revealed that staff personalities and the associated styles of leadership, support and control were crucial – although circumstances beyond their control could also be in their favour or against them. The five regimes that had 'failure rates' below 20 per cent were described as 'paternalistic'. The wardens and other staff combined emotional warmth and a willingness to discuss residents' problems with a clear definition of what was expected of them and an ability to be firm and controlling when necessary (p.119-20). The 11 regimes with the highest failure rates were the reverse of this paternalistic pattern: the discipline was ineffective or harsh, the warden maintained a disinterested distance from the residents, and the matron or other staff were unsupportive. Sinclair concluded that a successful Approved Premises regime had to satisfy two requirements: (1) allow feelings and problems to come out into the open, and (2) ensure that the residents know what is required of them (p.119). Following earlier findings by Davies (1969) that fathers who are 'firm but kindly' seemed best able to discourage delinquency, Sinclair stressed that *'strict but kindly wardens seem likely to achieve the best results'* (p.137), especially if they are supported by their staff.

The different Approved Premises regimes appeared to be associated with such large differences in failure rates that Sinclair felt able to claim that background factors including criminal record were *less* significant than the Approved Premises attended in predicting reconviction rates within the first year: *'Indeed with these boys, it seemed that 17 years previous experience counted as little in comparison with the immediate impact of the hostel environment while the boys were in it'* (p.78). However – and very importantly – this difference was only applicable while they resided at the Approved Premises and was not sustained after they left. Only one of the regimes showed a lasting effect on the reconviction rate: that is, only 20 per cent were reconvicted after two years compared to 51 per cent who were reconvicted following residence in the other four Approved Premises with a low failure rate in the first year.

Fisher and Wilson (1982) compared two quite distinct Approved Premises regimes; one was described as 'liberal' and the other as 'authoritarian'. The liberal Approved Premises had few rules apart from those associated with the conditions of the probation order such as residing in the Approved Premises for a specified period, obtaining employment and keeping appointments. Conversely, within the authoritarian regime, there was rigid adherence to strict rules and breach actions were frequent. A high percentage of offenders successfully completed their term of residence at the liberal Approved Premises, while the Approved Premises with an authoritarian regime had a low rate of completion, largely due to absconding.

The regime described in Sinclair's (1971) study has some characteristics in parallel with the pro-social modelling approach (PSM), although the two cannot be fully equated. There is some evidence that supervision based on PSM enhances effective probation practice. In an Australian study conducted by Trotter (1999; 2000), he compared groups of offenders supervised by probation officers that had been trained to use pro-social techniques, with those that had not. Pro-social techniques included building a caring staff-offender relationship, reinforced by reflective listening and paying specific attention to solving social problems that incline the offender to pro-criminal attitudes and behaviour. Trotter reported that the reoffending rates were significantly lower for the 'treatment group' than for the 'comparison group' over a four-year follow-up period. In another study, Trotter (1999) compared the rate of imprisonment of offenders who had been supervised by probation staff trained in PSM techniques with the rate of imprisonment for a control group. After a one-year follow up the overall percentage of those with probation orders subsequently given prison sentences was 21 per cent for those offenders who had been supervised by PSM-trained staff compared with 12 per cent for those who had not. After a four-year follow up the comparative figures were 26 per cent vs. 39 per cent in favour of offenders who had been supervised by PSM-trained staff.

While the above-mentioned studies of PSM were not specifically concerned with Approved Premises work, pro-social modelling was introduced in 1999 to Approved Premises across Yorkshire and Humberside Probation Services via a one-day training event. The initial outcomes and perspectives of staff were evaluated via interviews and a questionnaire survey (Loney *et al.*, 2000) and the findings were positive. However, nearly half (43) of the 90 staff who attended the training did not return questionnaires sent out for evaluation purposes and therefore the findings must be viewed with caution. The majority of the sample who did return their questionnaires noted a beneficial impact on the way they related to residents. They reported they were more likely to:

- reward desirable behaviour by residents (76%)
- give positive feedback (72%)
- comment on effort and achievement (67%)
- demonstrate desirable behaviour (63%)
- give constructive criticism (61%)
- establish a rapport with residents (57%).

Interestingly, 36 per cent reported that they were less likely than before to give negative feedback, but nearly half noted that they had greater 'confidence in expressing disapproval of residents' undesirable behaviour' (46%) and half stated that they were more likely to 'package disapproval with positive feedback' (50%).

Around half noted some improvements in the quality of their relationships with other colleagues, especially 'those doing a different job' (48%) and more than half noted an improvement in 'communication within the team' (54%). Just over half said they would be more likely to 'give positive feedback to colleagues' (51%).

Analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that staff with less than two years experience were more consistently positive in their responses than some of the more experienced staff. Open-ended responses and subsequent interviews revealed that some of the more experienced staff were sceptical, suggesting that PSM was 'commonsense' or not very different from existing good practice – though a number of them added that it had been useful in reinforcing good practice.

The PSM approach requires that the member of staff acts as a role model by exhibiting pro-social behaviour and encouraging offenders to behave similarly. Staff exhibit pro-social behaviour, for example, by showing empathy and consideration for the needs and interests of others, by treating others with respect and courtesy, and by being punctual and reliable. From the perspective of the offenders such staff-resident relationships help to legitimise the requirements and restrictions imposed on them, thus making them more likely to comply to such authority. Rex describes pro-social modelling as '*not an alternative to programmatic work with offenders, but a set of underpinning attitudes and behaviour that are part of effective delivery*' (Rex, 2001, p.74).

## Providing an enhanced level of supervision

The previous section has been concerned with whether Approved Premises can be effective in reducing offending *in their own right*. Approved Premises, of course, do not operate in a criminal justice vacuum and other studies plus recent policy have emphasised their potential for *supporting effective practice* in liaison with other probation staff and in partnership with other services. The *Approved Premises Handbook* summarises how Approved Premises provide enhanced supervision which supports other work being undertaken:

*'Approved Premises offer a level of contact, support and supervision that exists nowhere else in the probation service. Residents are seen on a daily basis and staff become involved in the resident's life to a very high degree: giving advice, offering support and exercising control and supervision, and liaising with the rest of the service and a wide*

*range of agencies.*' (National Probation Service, 2002a).

The HMIP thematic review of Approved Premises in 1998 distinguished the following ways in which 'enhanced supervision' was being achieved:

- high levels of contact between staff and residents as part of a 24-hour supervised regime
- daily/weekly meetings for residents
- programmes and facilities to address offending and offending-related needs
- formal and informal supervision from key workers
- constructive activities to promote socially acceptable behaviour
- engagement with community resources, such as drug facilities and education, training and employment (ETE) programmes
- enforcement of Approved Premises rules and conditions of court orders or licences
- use of closed circuit television
- regular liaison with statutory and voluntary services

Because of these features, Approved Premises were described by the Inspectorate as providing a level of supervision and surveillance which was in between that provided by custodial institutions and the oversight provided by other forms of community supervision (HMIP, 1998). This clearly links Approved Premises with international designations of Approved Premises as 'halfway houses' (Canadian Training Institute, 2002; White, 2003).

The reconviction and residence completion figures available to the 1998 inspection were encouraging. An average of 67 per cent of residents completed successfully their period of residence in 1996/97 (compared to 54% in 1991/92). A selective examination of records indicated that less than four per cent of residents had been charged or convicted during their period of residence (though 35% of admissions had been breached at some point). However, these figures almost certainly underestimated the level of reoffending because they do not include offences committed by those who absconded and some offending goes undetected. Also, the inspection report noted that Approved Premises staff 'could take considerable satisfaction from such a low percentage of known reoffending among residents', especially given that over half of the residents had been either charged with or convicted of offences in 'high seriousness categories' (HMIP, 1998, p.36). While 'high seriousness' cannot be straightforwardly equated with a high risk of reoffending, all factors which help to minimise the possible repetition of serious offences are to be welcomed.

The 1998 inspection was critical of some aspects of practice, detracting from Approved Premises' role in providing enhanced supervision. In particular, the inspection found that there was often a complete lack of co-ordination between Approved Premises staff and fieldworkers in the supervision of residents. In only 54 per cent of cases was there sufficient liaison between the Approved Premises key worker and the external supervising officer, and it was exceptional for Approved Premises staff to be included in supervision planning reviews undertaken by field-based officers. Indeed, it was unusual for Approved Premises staff to even receive copies of supervision plans and reviews. In contrast, there were some examples of good collaborative practice and three-way meetings including the resident.

The capacity which Approved Premises have to provide enhanced supervision, as outlined above, makes it all the more important for them to draw on and link-up with the most effective interventions aimed at the reduction of offending. Surveys and meta-analyses of the research exploring the effectiveness of interventions have consistently associated cognitive-behavioural approaches with the most promising outcomes in reducing offending (McGuire, 2002; Vennard and Hedderman, 1999). Such programmes assume a link between thought processes, deficits in social skills and offending behaviour. They aim to break such patterns by teaching problem-solving, perspective-taking, moral reasoning and social skills. The best results have been obtained when programmes have been: (1) run in the community, (2) in group work settings, and (3) applied to those at higher risk of reoffending (McGuire and Priestley, 1997; McGuire 2002; Vennard and Hedderman, 1999). Providing certain conditions have been met – including

appropriate selection of offenders, appropriate setting, the quality and style of delivery of the programmes, supervision in general and the dosage of treatment – such programmes have been found to reduce reoffending by up to 35 per cent (Lipsey, 1992).

In accordance with these very positive findings, cognitive-behavioural group programmes have been subjected to accreditation procedures and have been 'rolled out' across most probation areas in England and Wales (Hollin *et al.*, 2002), including:

- Think First – for those at medium risk of reoffending,
- Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R & R) – for those at high risk of reoffending,
- Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) – for those at high risk of reoffending,
- Priestley One-to-One (1:1) – for those at high risk of reoffending.

An implication of the 'what works' findings is that Approved Premises can offer a 'value-added' factor to such programmes delivered to residents, because they provide that important *community* context for the delivery of programmes and, moreover, the programmes can target defendants at higher risk of re-offending and offenders who would otherwise be more likely to end up in custody.

There are obvious issues around whether bailees should be required to attend such programmes: apart from the fact that most such programmes are too long for most bailees, they may not be appropriate if they have not yet been convicted. But such accredited programmes are likely to be suitable for convicted residents, and could be considered for bailees who have been convicted but are awaiting sentence. Some of the programmes are long and intensive but there is some flexibility around the number of sessions which can be attended each week and therefore they can be completed at either a faster or slower pace. However, research indicates that 'dosage' of treatment is relevant to the efficacy of cognitive behavioural programmes in reducing reoffending (McGuire, 1997), and that learning may be more effective if extended over a longer time period. Those at higher risk of reoffending may require a minimum of nine months intervention, while programmes for certain categories of offenders, such as sex offenders, are more effective when run over an even longer time period of up to two years intervention.

There have been other developments to take advantage of the 'enhanced supervision' opportunities afforded by Approved Premises. For example a small number of new hostels, known as Prospects premises are being introduced. They will provide strict but supportive regimes to help the resettlement of prisoners with a history of drug abuse and persistent offending (see section 2.4).

Despite the advances that have been made in developing suitable interventions for offenders, it is appropriate to sound a note of caution more generally about the present knowledge-base for effective practice to reduce reoffending. Leading experts point out that many questions yet remain unanswered and there is still very little known about the effectiveness of specific programmes for specific categories of offenders (Lösel, 2001; McGuire, 2002). The results of the evaluation of the *Approved Premises Pathfinder* project will therefore provide a much needed contribution to evidence-based practice in Approved Premises.

## An alternative to custody

The question of whether Approved Premises contribute to effective practice in reducing reoffending is less directly applicable to Approved Premises in their function as bail hostels. However, as pointed out by Wincup (2002) the few previous studies that have been carried out on Approved Premises have tended to be concerned with their role as an alternative to custody rather than a resource in the criminal justice system to promote desistance from crime.

The findings on whether Approved Premises have helped divert defendants away from custody are contradictory. White and Brody (1980) found that Approved Premises on the whole were

succeeding in accommodating defendants who would otherwise have been remanded in custody (though more than a third of the sample broke bail). In contrast, an analysis by Pratt and Bray (1985) suggested that Approved Premises were being used for lower risk offenders who would otherwise have been bailed in the community. This use of Approved Premises raised the prospect of them having 'net-widening' effects by unnecessarily using Approved Premises for petty offenders and unconvicted bailees, including some 'not guilty', with possible damaging results (for example, negative peer pressure, and stigmatising effects). Also these low risk bailees were taking up places which might have been used for others who were continuing to be remanded into custody.

Lewis and Mair (1988) investigated the policy and practice of Approved Premises in Inner London, particularly with regards to bail, to find out how Approved Premises were being used. This study raised questions about the appropriate use of Approved Premises accommodation for bailees. It found that *hostels were dealing with 'a wide array of defendants on bail, from those who lack what is perceived as a stable address to those who have been charged with a serious offence and have a lengthy criminal record'* (Lewis and Mair, p. 32).

One suggestion made by Lewis and Mair (1988) was that courts would be more likely to remand defendants to Approved Premises if they were perceived as controlling environments with some similarities to custody, and conversely would not make use of Approved Premises perceived to be lacking supervision and control. Barry (1991) carried out a study to explore this hypothesis. Independent coders classified 21 Approved Premises into one of three regime types according to the number and strictness of their rules: eight Approved Premises were categorised as 'liberal', ten as 'middle of the road', and four as 'restrictive'. He analysed the criminal history and characteristics of 564 cases which had resulted in an Approved Premises placement. In every case, the Approved Premises place had already been secured and therefore the courts were presented with a choice not between Approved Premises but between an Approved Premises placement or an alternative sentence. Thus, he concluded that restrictive Approved Premises were no more effective in diverting offenders from custody than liberal ones.

## Resettlement and beyond

The 1998 thematic inspection reported that, although the potential of Approved Premises was being increasingly recognised, there was an unwillingness among many field staff to propose Approved Premises residence in their pre-sentence reports (PSRs), reflecting a lingering perception that *'hostels were still peripheral to community supervision [and] perpetuating a service culture that equated hostels with homelessness'* (HMIP, 1998, p.14). While it is important that Approved Premises are not simply perceived as being there to meet such needs (because of their 'added value' for the enhanced supervision of offenders who pose a high risk of harm, it remains the case that Approved Premises may impact on reconviction rates purely by providing the shelter and security of accommodation, a place to be and community of people with whom to live.

Homelessness and accommodation problems are strongly correlated with offending and recidivism (May, 1999; Paylor, 1995; Ramsay, 1986). The link between accommodation problems and offending may have been exacerbated by the almost relentless rise in the prison population since 1975 (Cavadino and Dignan, 2002), with custodial sentences and accommodation issues locked in a circular causal relationship. Of nearly 600 men who were followed up over a two-year period after their release from prison, 30 per cent of those who had homes to go to were reconvicted in comparison to 69 per cent of those who did not (Ramsey, 1986). Apart from homelessness as such, having accommodation which is unsatisfactory, for example because of conditions endangering health or overcrowding, has been linked to reconviction following community sentences (May, 1999). According to the report of the Social Exclusion Unit (2002), *Reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners*, some housing providers had a blanket ban on all ex-offenders until implementation of the Homelessness Act 2002. Given that Approved Premises are

now intended for higher risk of harm offenders, the majority of prisoners who have accommodation problems following release do not meet the admission criteria.

The Prisons-Probation review on *Joining Forces to Protect the Public* (Home Office, 1999) identified Pre-release Employment Scheme (PRES) hostels, which have now ceased to exist, as making an important contribution to the goals of protecting the public and reducing reoffending and identified the need for more joint working between the Probation and Prison Services in order to maximise the effectiveness of Approved Premises.

The *Prospects* pilots (referred to earlier) will explore the potential role of Approved Premises further. They will provide strict but supportive regimes to help the resettlement of prisoners with a history of drug abuse and persistent offending, released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months. The programme provides a 'seamless' approach by engaging the prisoners with the counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare service (CARATS) during their sentence (phase 1) and then, once they have served their sentences, providing them with enhanced support and relapse prevention and life skills during a 12-week stay in a Prospects Premises (phase 2). The third phase will provide them with six months tenancy in suitable move-on accommodation, with support to adjust to a drug free lifestyle. The Prospects projects will be managed by service providers from both private and voluntary sectors, and sites have been selected which are in close proximity to the referring prisons. In order to qualify for referral to the programme the prisoners have to be tested as drug-free during their sentence and they must demonstrate a strong motivation to stay off drugs (Home Office, 2003).

For Approved Premises to be effective over the long-term, a strategy for ongoing accommodation support for offenders after they leave the Approved Premises is necessary. One of the key recommendations made in the 1998 inspection of Approved Premises was that the Probation Service should devise a strategy for accommodation linked to a wider public protection strategy. Towards this end, the *Approved Premises Pathfinder* is exploring a programme which incorporates post-Approved Premises plans called 'Living Here, Moving On' (LiHMO).

The HMIP also recommended that this new strategy should include plans to make best use of the provision in the voluntary sector. An HMIP inspection of the work by the Langley House Trust Fresh Start Projects suggested that the valuable work of this charitable trust in providing accommodation and support for offenders was not always recognised by probation areas (HMIP, 2001). The report stated that the Fresh Start Projects were a valuable resource, contributing to the resettlement of offenders and to public protection. It identified that '*a particular strength was the ability of staff to provide longer-term care and support to residents than was possible by their colleagues in the approved sector. This included continuing to work with offenders well beyond the end of their licence or court order*' (p.13). The recommendations included suggestions for greater integration between the work of the Trust and Probation Service practice, and linkages with probation areas' local accommodation strategies. The Inspectorate stressed the need for an NPD accommodation strategy, linked to a wider public protection strategy, and clarifying the role of the voluntary sector in accommodating and supporting offenders in the community once their statutory supervision has ended. Such a strategy should also be linked with the Home Office *Supporting People* programme which came on stream in April 2003 to provide housing-related support services for vulnerable people, including those leaving prison or a Approved Premises.

The Carter Review (Carter, 2004) made recommendations on reforming the correctional services in order to reduce re-offending and protect the public through a National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Although the Review did not explicitly refer to Approved Premises, NPD's national accommodation strategy for Approved Premises (NPD, 2004a) emphasised their central role in public protection. This set out the strategic plan to provide national direction on the purpose and role of Approved Premises. It complimented work being undertaken on the National Rehabilitation Action Plan.

### 3. The role of Approved Premises in risk management and public protection

Interventions to reduce reoffending and public protection are 'two sides of the same coin', encapsulated in the term 'risk management'. The various elements involved – assessment, appropriate referral, supervision and case-management supervision planning and carrying out the work with residents – are interdependent. Risk management is a necessary precondition of effective practice, and this applies particularly to Approved Premises now that their resources are targeted at offenders posing a high risk of harm (Wincup, 2002; National Probation Service, 2002a).

Previous analytical breakdowns of Approved Premises populations have shown that a high proportion tend to be potentially dangerous offenders (PDOs). For example, of a sample of 188 offenders in Northumbrian Approved Premises, 72 per cent had been charged or convicted of serious offences, and approximately 60 per cent of the overall sample had been charged or convicted of violent and sexual offences including murder (Roberts and Haslewood-Pöcsik, 2000). The Inner London Probation Service Annual Report (2000) showed that over 50 per cent of residents in the eight Approved Premises in the Inner London area had been charged or convicted of serious offences. The 'risk of harm' profile in the March 2003 snapshot (Foster 2004) showed that a third of residents were 'high risk'. Furthermore, one third of the total male population in the 100 Approved Premises were schedule 1 sex offenders (that is, they had been charged or convicted of offences against children).

Approved Premises offer great advantages over other types of accommodation if surveillance or enforcement procedures are needed. Indeed, it has been argued that: *'Compared with other community disposals, hostels – by virtue of the residency requirements – are uniquely well placed to deliver on the other components intrinsic to effective public protection, namely continuing assessment, surveillance, curfew and developing pro-social attitudes/behaviour'* (Thurston, 2003, p.209).

#### The importance of assessment

Research on evidence-based practice emphasises the importance of rigorous pre-entry assessment and then continuous review in order to plan the most appropriate programme of intervention to address offending-related needs and to determine the level of supervision and the appropriate programmes and resources to be used (Raynor *et al.*, 2000; Kemshall, 1998; 2001). Likewise, rigorous assessment underpins risk management.

While risk assessment is obviously appropriate for public protection, it is also needed for the care of residents, some of whom may be at risk of self-harm. Studies have found that mentally disordered offenders are particularly vulnerable to self-harm (Geelan *et al.*, 2000). The Public Protection Unit of the National Probation Service recently carried out a survey of resident deaths while they were staying at Approved Premises. Between 1 January 1998 and 30 September 2002 there were 87 deaths of residents in Approved Premises. Half were the result of an overdose and a quarter were the result of suicide (National Probation Service, 2003b).

The inspection of Approved Premises in 1993 (HMIP, 1993) found that insufficient attention was given by Approved Premises staff to risk management of residents. While the later inspection (HMIP, 1998) identified that improvements had been made, there was still little evidence of

written pre-admission risk assessments being undertaken. In some cases this was attributed to pressure to meet the then titled Key Performance Indicator 7 (namely: reaching the target occupancy rate) with the result that Approved Premises were more ready to accept a referral without enough information to make a risk assessment (HMIP, 1998).

Probation services have been increasingly required to undertake assessments of risk and need as part of the development of evidence-based practice and to support their public protection function (Kemshall, 1998; 2001). Referral and admission to Approved Premises should be based on a systematic assessment of the individual's risk of further offending, the level of risk to others, and 'criminogenic factors' (that is, the factors related to his or her offending that should be addressed in interventions). Validated assessment tools and procedures should be applied (Raynor *et al.*, 2000).

The approved assessment tool for use with adult offenders in England and Wales is now the Offender Assessment System (OASys). Detailed guidance on its use was agreed between the Prison Service and the National Probation Service and it has now been rolled out in both services, replacing ACE and LSI-R, two other validated tools which have been used in probation services. OASys is a comprehensive assessment tool for use with all offenders in preliminary assessment and periodic review during periods of supervision. As well as assisting in the preliminary identification of static and dynamic risk factors associated with offending, it is used to place offenders into one of the following levels of risk (with both risk of reconviction and risk of harm being considered): 'low', 'medium', 'high', 'very high'. Use of OASys within the Probation Service and Prison Service should help to ensure consistency and accuracy in the targeting and referral of offenders and bailees to appropriate Approved Premises and/or other resources.

OASys is not intended for in-depth assessment of specialist areas of risk and need – relating to, for example, sex offending, basic skills, mental health, drugs and alcohol – and for these purposes other specialist tools are in use. The Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offence Recidivism (RRASOR) and the Structured Anchored Clinical Judgement (SACJ) are frequently-used methods for predicting sex offence recidivism, though the latter has been refined into the Risk Matrix 2000 which is increasingly in use in the UK (Kemshall, 2001; National Probation Service, 2003c). Assessment of violent offenders is complicated by their heterogeneity as a group and various tools are in use. The Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG) is the most widely used tool for predicting the risk of violent offence recidivism and has established a reputation for predictive accuracy. The Psychopathy Check List-Revised (PCL-R) is used to identify the personality disorder of psychopathy and has proved useful in the prediction of predatory violence (Hare, 1998). These specialist tools can generally only be applied by chartered forensic clinical psychologists, psychiatrists or those specifically trained in their use. It should be noted that, in the developing area of risk assessment, instruments are constantly being refined and likely to be replaced (Kemshall, 2001).

## Referrals and admissions

The Approved Premises inspection in 1998 found that, although occupancy rates had increased, low use was made of Approved Premises for offenders subject to probation orders with a condition of residence and the majority of residents were remanded on bail. The picture regarding bailees was very different, however, by the time of the snapshot survey in March 2003 (Foster, 2004) which revealed that half of all residents were subject to prison release licence while just over a quarter (27%) were on bail (although, 37% of the female residents were bailees). But, in common with the 1998 inspection, a minority of residents (16%) were subject to community orders with a condition of residence; though a third of the female residents were on community orders. The inspection report pointed out that many judges and magistrates '*rarely saw a proposal for such a probation order in PSRs...[and] some offenders may have been seriously considered for a hostel disposal rather than receiving a custodial sentence, had that option been*

addressed in a PSR' (HMIP, 1998, p.32). Only 0.8 per cent of PSRs prepared during 1996/97 contained such a proposal. At that time, most probation services did not have specific criteria by which PSR writers could determine the suitability of an offender for a condition of residence in Approved Premises and where such guidelines existed they did not help PSR writers to identify suitable Approved Premises for the assessed needs of the offender. However, the Inspectorate's report concluded that the low use of Approved Premises for community orders with a condition of residence was partly because:

*'Some field-based probation officers appeared determined to perpetuate a view that equated hostels with homelessness rather than developing a culture which emphasised [hostels'] ability to provide reliable and effective enhanced levels of community supervision' (p.32).*

While it is clearly important that PSR writers do not 'miss' appropriate referrals, it is equally important that referral criteria and admissions policies exclude those who are unsuitable – or at least, those who are unsuitable given the present balance of numbers in categories of residents. The HMIP's 1998 inspection report observed that there was wide variation across Approved Premises in the proportion of refusals. The main reason given was that there was 'no bed available', but in the case of other refusals there was a lack of consistency in the criteria imposed. The Inspectorate therefore recommended that the criteria for refusal, as well as for admission, should be clarified. Thurston pointed out that, given that they cannot provide the totally supervised environment of prisons, managers of Approved Premises face 'a professional conundrum: hostels are best suited for the high-risk case, but some of those pose too much of a risk for hostels to manage' (2002, p.209). He recommended that to some extent this problem might be resolved by providing additional funding for the employment of additional staff to manage difficult cases more safely.

At a time when there is a pressing need to reduce the prison population and recognition that the most effective interventions are provided in the community, Approved Premises are needed more than ever to provide a structured and supportive environment for community alternatives to a prison sentence and also for suitable prisoners following release from prison. The joint thematic inspection by the Prison and Probation Inspectorates *Through the Prison Gate* reported that, at the time of review, nine of the 54 probation areas did not have an Approved Premises in their area, and some 'hard to place' and potentially dangerous offenders had been accommodated in Approved Premises in the voluntary sector (HMIP and HM Prison Service, 2001).

There have been encouraging findings on the completion rates of sex offenders residing at Approved Premises and on the effectiveness of community based programmes (Hedderman and Sugg, 1996). One study carried out in Canada (Watson, 1994) investigated the relationship between residents' offending profiles and the short-term outcomes of 'success' or 'failure' of residents in Approved Premises. Failures generally included behaviours that would lead to a breach in England and Wales, including breaking curfews, reoffending and violent behaviour. Out of a sample of 100 bailees, none of the sample that were charged with sexual offences were among the failure group. Violent offenders, however, were disproportionately represented amongst the failure group. An analysis of Approved Premises data collected by the Inner London Probation Service (2000) revealed that sex offenders were among those least likely to be accepted by Approved Premises but proportionally more of sex offender residents completed their period of residence compared to other categories of offenders.

The study by Lewis and Mair (1988) found that Approved Premises wardens took account of the combination of residents in the Approved Premises at any one time when considering whether or not to accept a referral, and that this 'mix' was just as important as the characteristics of the referral. For example, they preferred a mixture of ages to having a large number of young offenders, and they might be wary about taking a substance misuser if they already had other residents who had been experimenting with drugs. They were generally reluctant to admit arsonists, hard drug users and, especially, people with backgrounds of unpredictable violence. In refusing admission to such categories of offenders, their concern was for safety and the general

manageability of the Approved Premises as a whole rather than with the specific problems presented by the resident concerned. Indeed, Lewis and Mair suggested that 'manageability' was the crucial concept for understanding the operation and organisation of Approved Premises. However, given the changing profile of residents noted earlier, it is plausible that risk of harm may have overtaken manageability in determining admission.

## Supervision and surveillance

The 1998 inspection praised Approved Premises for their demonstrated '*ability to accommodate and work successfully with some of the most difficult, damaged and potentially dangerous defendants and offenders within the criminal justice system, in a manner which gave due regard to public safety*' (HMIP, 1998, p.13). Successful risk management is determined by a range of factors including many which have already been mentioned: assessment, the manageability of the residents admitted, the level of supervision and surveillance, the nature of the regime and the quality and abilities of the staff.

Whereas Approved Premises are obviously not able to select residents who will be the easiest to manage, there are several ways in which the manageability of Approved Premises can be increased. The size of the Approved Premises population and the age of residents may be critical. A questionnaire survey by Bruce, Cower and Whyms (1982) identified that the smaller the Approved Premises and the older the residents, the less damage and violence was caused. Keeping the numbers of residents down to no more than 15 was also identified as helpful. There were fewer incidences of violence in Approved Premises where the number of residents was kept to 15 or fewer. Wardens reported that they were able to decrease the potential for violence by ensuring access to psychiatric help, by increasing staff numbers and by controlling the level of alcohol consumption.

The use of curfews, electronic tagging and closed circuit television are among more recent methods used to increase surveillance (Dodgson *et al.*, 2001). The 1998 inspection noted that the enforcement practice by Approved Premises staff compared favourably with practice by probation colleagues in the field, and was closer to the specifications in the *National Standards* (HMIP, 1998, p. 13).

Another way in which manageability may be supported is by tapping into residents' own powers of observation and concern for each other. The important role which other residents can play in foreseeing potential problems and 'nipping them in the bud' was highlighted in an evaluation of successful Approved Premises work with mentally disordered residents, but has broader applicability for Approved Premises. Residents were encouraged to recognise the difficulties and problems of others and to inform staff or to intervene appropriately. Staff described this as a '*communal recognition among residents that the hostel exists to care as well as to control*' (Brown and Geelan, 1998, p.13).

New statutory public protection arrangements were introduced in April 2001. Sections 67 and 68 of the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000* imposed duties on the police and probation services to establish multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). Public safety is increasingly a consideration in sentencing and sentence planning by practitioners in the criminal justice system and MAPPA facilitate the integration of the work of various agencies (including police, youth justice and probation) and services (including housing, social services, health) aimed at reducing the risk of further offending and minimising harm to the public. Emphasis is placed on face-to-face meetings, sharing of information, a victim focus and systematic co-ordination of activity (National Probation Service, 2003c).

## Supporting Approved Premises staff

In a much-needed in-depth qualitative study of Approved Premises, Wincup (2002) reported that there was a consensus among Approved Premises staff that their work was difficult and demanding. Beyond the undoubted demands of shift work including regular evening, night and weekend duties, two key sources of stress were the unpredictable nature of residents' behaviour and the need to involve themselves in residents' often complex, problems. Following Payne and Scott (1982), Wincup observed that residential staff '*have to operate within the primary life space of their clients*' and the role is intensive and engages them in '*emotion work*' because they are '*relating to residents not just as professionals but as empathetic individuals*' (p.97).

Although there is now a policy of double cover at all times so that staff on duty are not alone, Approved Premises staff in Wincup's study admitted to feeling vulnerable at times. They became sensitised to situations that could lead to violence, and developed a 'sixth sense' about appropriate ways to respond even though they could not necessarily articulate why. Quoting Schon (1983), Wincup names this 'sixth sense' as 'tacit knowledge in action'. For example, they made judgements about whether a situation was one which they would be able to handle or whether they would need assistance or should call the police. The 1998 inspection report recommended the formalisation of procedures in dealing with incidents in Approved Premises. Wincup suggested training to develop staff skills in taking a proactive role to prevent incidents arising, in addition to training on best practice in responding to incidents.

The difficulties of being a residential worker were exacerbated by feelings of being marginalised from the Probation Service more generally. In parallel with the HMIP inspection of 1998, Wincup found that arrangements for staff supervision varied considerably and that supervision meetings were frequently cancelled. Based on the detailed accounts of 20 Approved Premises workers, she recommended that, in addition to high quality and regular formal support, managers should facilitate informal support, while '*the Probation Service as a whole needs to think about the support it offers to those who occupy managerial decisions*' (p.106). This research also found that residential workers were unaware of, but curious about, what happened in other Approved Premises, indicating a need for mutual support and communication forums.

## 4. Working with different categories of residents

A complicating factor for the work in Approved Premises, of relevance to the aims of both reducing reoffending and public protection, is the potential mix of resident population. They cater for people at different stages in the criminal justice system, from bail (possibly for first-time offenders who may subsequently be found 'not guilty') to the post-release settlement of ex-prisoners (who may have served lengthy terms of imprisonment for serious crimes). And they cater for both male and female residents, often in mixed-sex Approved Premises. There are three main types of Approved Premises with regard to intake-policy:

- *generalised Approved Premises* which accept all categories of offender, and include both bailees and convicted offenders. The majority of Approved Premises are of this type.
- *specialist Approved Premises* which will take all categories of offenders but 'specialise' in particular subgroups e.g. mentally disordered offenders (MDOs) or sex offenders. Again, they usually take both bailees and convicted offenders.
- *Approved Premises* which only accept particular types of offenders (e.g. MDOs).

The various categories and combinations of residents present Approved Premises with exceptional challenges. The HMIP report in 1998 commented that the question of whether to provide separate facilities for categories of bailees and convicted offenders remained a matter for debate. The following selectively considers research and reports with some bearing on Approved Premises provision for specific groups.

### Bailees

There has been considerable debate about the relative merits and disadvantages of housing bailees and convicted offenders in the same Approved Premises and about the appropriateness of subjecting bailees to the same activities as convicted offenders. The second point applies equally for 'bail only' Approved Premises. Apart from the obvious time limitations against carrying out offence-focused work with bailees, the unconvicted status of some bailees presents ethical constraints against including them in such interventions. During the 1993 inspection by HMIP many Approved Premises staff argued persuasively that the advantages of accommodating unconvicted and convicted offenders together outweighed the disadvantages, but debate on this matter was still ongoing when the 1998 inspection was carried out. The 1998 report therefore advised that national guidance should be provided regarding what distinctions should apply when providing offending behaviour work, particularly regarding '*whether offence focussed work should be undertaken with bailees and, if so, the consequences of failure to comply*' (HMIP, 1998, p.57).

Some clarification is provided by the *Approved Premises Handbook* which points out that requiring unconvicted people to participate in programmes regarded as punishment might contravene the Human Rights Act, and so the agreement of unconvicted bailees must be sought in order to carry out offending-related work. However, it is suggested that motivational work such as developing a 'life plan' and programmes of relevance to social reintegration would be appropriate (NPS, 2002a).

The recent survey of deaths of residents in Approved Premises carried out by the Public Protection Unit of the National Probation Service highlighted the exceptional vulnerability of bailees. A quarter of all deaths reported in the survey were found to be the result of suicide. The majority (88%, i.e. 16) of the 18 residents who had committed suicide during a four year period were bailees. Half of all the deaths that had occurred were the result of an overdose, and bailees accounted for more than half (58%) of these drug overdose deaths. The survey observed that a

key risk time was during the first three weeks after admission to Approved Premises, and it noted that quality time spent with residents can be just as effective in preventing suicide as 15 minute checks (National Probation Service, 2003b). There may be lessons that the Approved Premises Estate can gain from experience in the Prison Service, which has taken steps to address the high suicide rate in prisons, especially among bailees (HMIP, 1999; Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2002). NPD (2004b) have since introduced a strategy for preventing sudden deaths in Approved Premises.

## Diversity: gender, ethnicity, disability

### Female residents

In the snapshot survey taken in March 2003 (Foster, 2004), there were five women-only and 28 mixed-gender Approved Premises. A study of mixed gender Approved Premises carried out in the mid-1990s (Wincup, 1996) noted that such Approved Premises were primarily male-occupied and accommodated just a small number of women (up to about seven, but more usually around two or three). Given the shortage of women-only Approved Premises, these were sometimes surprisingly under-occupied, reflecting in part a reluctance by courts to use Approved Premises for women (Wincup, 1996; 2002). Formerly, two of the women's Approved Premises and a few of the mixed Approved Premises accommodated women with their children and the HMIP's 1998 Approved Premises inspection identified provision for children as a key factor in improving the effectiveness of work with these women. However, the present policy for Approved Premises discourages admission of women with children, given the potential risk to children from other occupants and the inappropriateness of housing children in institutional settings.

Given the much smaller number of female than male offenders, the perennial dilemma for Approved Premises policy is whether it is better to provide numerous mixed Approved Premises of relatively close proximity for the women or whether to concentrate on having a few specialist Approved Premises for women in far spread locales. In a briefing paper by the East Midlands branch of the National Association of Probation Officers (1986) a case was made in favour of women-only provision in Approved Premises on the basis that: (1) a high proportion of women in Approved Premises have suffered physical and sexual abuse by men and thus may feel afraid in a mixed residence; (2) some minority ethnic women need single-sex provision because of cultural prohibitions against contact with men; (3) lesbian and black women may suffer additional harassment; and (4) research in the education field suggests mixed Approved Premises would not facilitate learning, particularly in a mixed group programme focussed on offending behaviour.

The 1998 inspection reported that field and Approved Premises staff were divided on whether women are better served in women-only Approved Premises or in mixed-sex Approved Premises. The difficulties of residing in mixed Approved Premises identified by female residents and staff included:

- male-oriented programmes, facilities and activities,
- sleeping accommodation in close proximity to that of the males,
- feelings of apprehension about personal safety,
- the pressure of being the only woman (or one of a few) in a male-dominated community.

Similar challenges for female residents and staff were identified in the qualitative research carried out by Wincup (1996). However, two advantages of mixed Approved Premises over women-only residencies which were acknowledged were the relative ease of keeping in touch with family and the more naturalistic setting. Interviews of staff in women-only Approved Premises revealed, not surprisingly, that more appropriate programmes and activities for women were more readily available: for example, coping with domestic violence and assertiveness training. Given the lack of an ideal solution to meet the female residents' needs, Wincup proposed the appropriateness of a more flexible system in which female offenders have some choice as to whether they are referred to mixed or women-only Approved Premises. More recently, the NPD accommodation

strategy for Approved Premises recommended that regions reconfigure resources to 'end mixed provision and create an estate of facilities with single sex admission only' (NPD, 2004a).

### Minority ethnic residents

The HMIP's 1993 thematic inspection on Approved Premises found that hardly any black people had been referred to Approved Premises and there was a general lack of awareness and provision for people from minority ethnic communities. A project by researchers at the University of Manchester, and sponsored by the Greater Manchester Probation Service, examined why there were so few people from ethnic minorities housed in Approved Premises in this region, and found that staff had not received anti-racist training and seemed wary of addressing race issues. The researcher concluded that for the probation service to be more culturally sensitive, attention needed to be given to, for example, referral systems, staff training issues, increasing the employment of minority ethnic staff, and making links with minority ethnic agencies (Todd, 1996).

The consultants, Tuklo Orenda Associates (1999), introduced a useful model to explain how misperceptions can be perpetuated in a self-fulfilling 'cycle of complacency'. An absence of appropriate provision for minority ethnic residents means that there will be fewer referrals; and then when occasional referrals are made the outcome may be disappointing partly because of the lack of provision for minority ethnic needs. A track record of 'failure' with the few who have been referred will deter subsequent referrals being made, and the lack of referrals will lead to the perception that 'we don't have much call for it here'. Faced with a very low referral rate of minority ethnic bailees and offenders to Approved Premises despite relatively high proportions dealt with by the service, West Yorkshire Probation Area commissioned research from the University of Huddersfield to investigate practice in referral of minority ethnic groups to six Approved Premises in the region. A minority ethnic support worker was funded with the aim of increasing the admission rate and developing best practice. Two of the Approved Premises were designated as semi-specialist minority ethnic facilities with the objective of establishing a 'critical mass' of Black/Asian residents so that they would not feel isolated. Provision was made to meet cultural preferences of minority ethnic residents including diet and reading material. This policy appeared to have an impact: it was found that minority ethnic admissions doubled within the first year (Kazi *et al.*, 2001).

The second thematic inspection of Approved Premises noted that: '*Progress had been made in many hostels towards achieving a more culturally sensitive environment for minority ethnic residents*' (HMIP, 1998, p.16). A sample of residents analysed for the 1998 inspection showed that 10 per cent were from minority ethnic groups and, like the rest of the Approved Premises population at that time, the majority were bailees. The 1998 inspection observed that the number of minority ethnic staff was still disproportionately low and that, in general, much more would need to be done to provide assurance that arrangements in Approved Premises meet the needs of minority ethnic residents. In the snapshot survey conducted in March 2003 13 per cent of residents were listed as from minority ethnic groups.

### Disabled residents

Provision for disabled residents in Approved Premises is under-researched and relatively neglected in policy and practice. The Inspectorate's report on Approved Premises in 1998 commented on the fact that many of the hostel buildings had been inherited and were not suitable for wheelchair users: at that time only five had wheelchair access [disabled are not only wheelchair users]. But, in the absence of comprehensive data about provision for disabled residents, the report was non-committal in its conclusions about what further provision was needed (HMIP, 1998).

## Substance misusers

A relatively high proportion of Approved Premises residents are known to show drug related behaviour. The HMIP's drug misusers thematic inspection found that 43 per cent of Approved Premises residents had been identified as having a drug related problem, with around 58 per cent of these receiving some type of treatment, often in the form of prescribed medication such as methadone (HMIP, 1997). However, some of the Approved Premises staff interviewed for the 1998 Approved Premises inspection suggested that such figures were an under-estimation and that the proportion misusing drugs was probably above 80 per cent (HMIP, 1998, p.73).

Both of the HMIP inspections mentioned above found examples of good Approved Premises-based practice with drug misusing residents. The drug misusers thematic inspection, however, was concerned that Approved Premises staff were sometimes giving mixed messages to residents because of inconsistencies between policy and practice. That is, some Approved Premises had an explicit 'harm reduction' policy but, in conflict with this, made total abstinence a condition of residence. Moreover they failed to provide disposal boxes for syringes, which would have been in keeping with their alleged 'harm reduction' policy. The 1998 report stressed that 'harm reduction' and 'abstinence' models should not be seen as opposing policies but rather as methods along a continuum, with abstinence as the most desirable form of harm reduction.

There has been relatively little research, from a criminal justice perspective, into Approved Premises work with substance misusers. However the National Treatment Outcome Research Study (NTORS), the largest prospective longitudinal study of treatment outcomes for drug misusers conducted in the UK, is of relevance. While not targeted at offenders, high rates of criminal behaviour were reported among the sample, a proportion of whom were treated in residential settings. The study monitored the progress of 1,075 drug misusers recruited into one of four treatment groups, two community-based and two residential-based treatment modalities, including 'specialist in-patient treatment' and 'rehabilitation programmes'. Outcome data were obtained for 72 per cent of the sample one-year after intake. Substantial improvements were reported for clients in both the residential and community settings. Abstinence rates increased and there were reductions in injecting, sharing injecting equipment, heavy drinking and criminal behaviour for both the residential and non-residential groups (Gossop *et al.*, 1998; 1999).

The extent to which residential versus community settings influenced outcomes was difficult to determine because there were complex self-selection and referral processes which resulted in differences in the characteristics and problems of the clients in the different treatment modalities. However, the authors reported that '*clients treated in the residential programmes were some of the most severely disturbed, and these clients made some of the greatest gains*' (Gossop *et al.*, 1998: 51). The overall outcomes were lower than might have been expected in respect of those who were drinking heavily prior to treatment, but the best improvements in alcohol consumption were found for those heavy drinkers who had been treated in residential settings. Dually diagnosed drug-and-alcohol dependent clients were some of the most problematic cases in the study and, again, it was found that these clients made the greatest improvements after being treated in residential programmes. A recommendation of the study was that drug treatment services should include interventions for drinking problems because of the high correlation between excessive alcohol use and drug misuse.

An important conclusion of NTORS was that these treatment programmes were highly cost-effective largely because of their impact on criminal activity. The one-year follow-up study reported substantial reductions in the number of crimes committed and in the number of clients engaged in crime. Based on comparisons of self-reported offending at intake and at one year follow-up, the investigators estimated reductions in offending to the value of more than £5 million in terms of savings to the criminal justice system and victim costs. They concluded that for every £1 spent on drug misuse treatment there is a return of more than £3 in savings to society because of the reduced demands on the criminal justice system. In advocating such drug treatment programmes as value for money they noted that, despite their evident effectiveness

with some of the most challenging clients, residential drug treatment programmes had been especially vulnerable to the withdrawal of financial support.

In the rare studies that have been carried out investigating practice in Approved Premises directed at residents with substance abuse problems, some helpful factors have emerged. One study found that an attached drugs worker increased the referral and intake of substance misusers and helped to promote good practice and access to treatment (Newburn, 1998). The court was more likely to refer drug misusers to the Approved Premises in the knowledge that a drugs worker was on site. Following the appointment of the drugs worker, there was an increase in the average stay of residents with greater numbers completing their condition of residence. Another study identified the value of a co-ordinated approach across Approved Premises within a region to maximise a shared approach in using resources and expertise (Payne *et al.*, 2001). A full-time community psychiatric nurse was appointed to 'orchestrate' arrangements in three Approved Premises for managing and responding to the needs of drugs users. Positive results were obtained, including evidence of significant change in heroin use within the Approved Premises. Other features of the approach were giving priority to the treatment of drug problems and using a coercive approach to maintain abstinence from all drugs.

There is also some evidence that drug treatment in prisons followed by residential aftercare is effective in reducing recidivism (Hiller, 1999). In keeping with this, the three-phase *Prospects* programme being introduced by the Home Office is aimed at prison leavers with a history of drug abuse who have received CARATS and tested negative for drug use while in prison and who are motivated to remain drug-free. (See Chapter 2 for more details). Participants will be regularly drug-tested in the second phase (residing in Prospects Premises) and expected to remain drug-free, with continued support after leaving the premises to help maintain a drug-free and independent lifestyle.

Some of the premises referred to in this section are 'specialist' services aimed at substance abusers, but Approved Premises, in general, are now no longer able to refuse admission to substance misusers simply because of their habit. While the research carried out so far has led to promising outcomes for drug users referred to Approved Premises, paradoxically, the extension of provision in Approved Premises for substance misusers poses potential problems for other residents. Thus, in answering the question of whether there should be specialist drug misusers Approved Premises, Thurston (2002) turned the question around, arguing that '*drug misuse is so ubiquitous amongst hostel residents that...the question might more usefully be asked: Should some hostels be designated as drug-free to help those who have stopped misusing drugs and to protect the few who have never started?*'.

## Sex offenders

According to the snapshot survey conducted in March 2003, around four in ten of all male residents had a current or previous charge or conviction for a sexual offence, and the majority of these were also schedule 1 offenders.

The Approved Premises inspection in 1998 found that Approved Premises who accepted sex offenders often restricted the number in residence at any one time. Not all the 17 Approved Premises inspected were prepared to admit sex offenders, perhaps because of concerns about 'NIMBY' campaigns.<sup>2</sup> Hostel managers tended to determine their own admissions strategy without guidance from their management committees. The inspection team was concerned to find that not all hostels accommodating sex offenders had access to local sex offender programmes. However, the inspection was generally impressed with the '*constructive, supportive and restrictive regime*' being provided and found '*convincing evidence that approved hostels were better*

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<sup>2</sup> The Approved Premises Handbook has a section on 'Dealing with complaints from local residents' but managers of premises would perhaps benefit from additional support and guidance in dealing with potential 'NIMBY' campaigns.

*equipped to manage the risks posed by sex offenders in the community than other community-based arrangements'* (HMIP, 1998, p.72).

Accredited cognitive behavioural sex offender treatment programmes (SOTPs) provided in a community setting have been associated with reductions in reoffending rates and with changes in offending-related attitudes (Beckett *et al.*, 1994; Hedderman and Sugg, 1996). The evaluation of the Sex offender Treatment and Evaluation Programme (STEP) found that long-term residential treatment was more effective than short-term, non-residential treatment of child molesters. Accordingly, the STEP evaluation team recommended that specialised probation hostels, with specialist forensic input, should be set up to cater for high-risk offenders (Beckett *et al.*, 1994).

In a two-year follow-up, it was found that none of the offenders who had significantly changed their attitudes in the desired direction had reoffended (Hedderman and Sugg, 1996). Although the long-term residential programme included offenders who exhibited by far the highest risk of harm and reoffending, the follow-up reoffending rate was not the highest in a group of seven programmes that were evaluated. It should be noted also that almost 50 per cent of the offenders who were reconvicted had not successfully completed their programmes. These findings, however, should be treated with caution for two reasons. Firstly, the duration of treatment for the residential group was higher than for the other long-term groups. Secondly, the residential treatment programme referred to in this study had a more intensive regime than a standard bail and probation hostel so it would be difficult to directly translate this evidence to Approved Premises.

### Mentally disordered offenders

Following the *National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990* resulting in the 'Care in the Community' policy, people with mental disorders who previously would have been psychiatric patients became more likely to be referred to probation hostels if they committed offences (HMIP, 1998). Thus, Approved Premises staff had to deal with those designated as mentally disordered offenders (MDOs), including residents suffering from personality disorders and whose behaviour posed a threat to public safety.

Less than 50 per cent of the 17 Approved Premises sampled in the 1998 inspection had adequate provisions to deal with MDOs. The best equipped had collaborative arrangements with health and psychiatric services, but even in these Approved Premises staff reported feeling out of their depth in dealing with the behaviour of some residents. An additional difficulty was the attitude and behaviour of other residents to MDOs.

Elliott House, established in 1993 in the West Midlands, was the first approved bail and probation hostel exclusively targeting male bailees or offenders whose mental disorder was not acute enough to require hospitalisation. It aimed therefore to reduce the numbers of MDOs needlessly remanded into custody. Mental health services were provided by a visiting multi-disciplinary team from a forensic psychiatric service, Reaside House, and additional resources were also provided by the Home Office. An evaluation of Elliott House concluded that it had demonstrated the viability of accommodating MDOs, many of whom had committed serious offences, in a specialist bail and probation Approved Premises. Staff involved in this pioneering Approved Premises pointed out that:

*'The working relationship between Elliott House and Reaside Clinic lies at the core of the project's success. It is a relationship that respects individual realms of expertise and one from which has sprung an ethos that successfully combines the dual function of the hostel: the need to maintain a balance between the socio-medical care of mentally disordered people and the need to protect society from the criminal behaviour of individuals'* (Brown and Geelan, 1998, p.11).

Other elements identified as contributing to the success of the project were:

- the establishment of links between residents and psychiatric services in the areas to which they would be relocated,
- risk assessment to identify social elements in a residents life that may require intervention, such as acquiring appropriate 'move-on' accommodation, help with budgeting, facilitating contact with specialist agencies to help with, for example, alcohol abuse,
- residents were encouraged to recognise the difficulties and problems of others and to inform staff or to intervene appropriately.

This last point accords with arguments more generally for 'pro-social regimes' in Approved Premises. Staff described this as a '*communal recognition among residents that the hostel exists to care as well as to control*' (Brown and Geelan, 1998, p.13).

In a later evaluation of Elliott House which involved retrospective analysis of the progress and outcomes for residents between 1994 and 1996, it was found that the reoffending rate had been low (Geenlan *et al.*, 2000). Nearly all the referrals to Elliott House had been bailees (96%) but only four per cent reoffended whilst resident at the Approved Premises, which is comparable to the figure of around three per cent for Approved Premises in general (HMIP, 1998). Breach rates were also generally comparable to that of Approved Premises for offenders in general. Conducting a logistic regression analysis it was found that a statistically significant factor that was associated with reduced risk of breach was having attended mental health services as outpatients prior to admission. This finding indicates that as well as contributing to public protection whilst the bailee/offender is resident, such Approved Premises could also bring such a resident into long-term contact with mental health services, thereby reducing future reoffending and enhancing long-term public protection. This idea is confirmed in research conducted by Nadkarni *et al.* (2000) who identified a link between the breakdown of MDOs' contact with psychiatric social services and further offending. A mental health presence in Approved Premises may be beneficial in promoting contact with local services after discharge, for example, if people who are usually reluctant to use psychiatric services because of perceived stigma are helped to overcome such reservation as a result of their experiences when residing in a Approved Premises.

## 5. Conclusions

Approved premises – or bail and probation hostels as they have been known - are a vital element within the criminal justice system. Although they have always had a special affiliation with the Probation Service, the greater connectedness of probation to other criminal justice agencies under the heading of 'correctional services', means that Approved Premises are now part of a more corporate approach with shared goals. The complementary nature of their role in supporting effective practice in partnership with probation and other services has been emphasised in recent policy and practice documents (HMIP, 1998; National Probation Service, 2002a).

Being part of this wider criminal justice system, it is inevitable and right that practice in Approved Premises reflects the 'state of play' more generally in finding out and implementing 'what works' to reduce reoffending and to protect the public. The development of practice in Approved Premises must therefore always look towards new findings from research and evaluations, which will continue to extend the knowledge-base of practice in criminal justice. The most thorough, recent reviews of effective practice concur that many questions still remain unanswered and that more research is needed (Lösel, 2001; McGuire, 2002). We do not yet have anything like the equivalent of aspirin to prescribe in tackling the problem of crime (Lösel, 2001) – nor are we ever likely to have anything so specific within the field of criminal justice. In the quest for what works to reduce recidivism there are many constraints against applying the same degree of scientific control as in medicine (where 'placebo' treatments can be used) and in other fields of science (where variables can be controlled in laboratory conditions). There are numerous factors that can influence how a human being behaves and therefore positive outcomes following interventions are likely to be the outcome of numerous factors in addition to the intervention or in some cases independently from it.

Within these limitations, considerable progress has been made in developing knowledge of 'what works' to reduce recidivism (see Harper and Chitty, 2004, for a recent review) and the findings have provided the basis for 'accredited programmes' for offenders which have been 'rolled-out' in the National Probation Service and in the Prison Service. These programmes, and also the principles for implementing them, have been strongly informed by the consensus view of experts that the most promising results so far have been obtained from community-based cognitive behavioural programmes (Vennard and Hedderman, 1999; Lösel, 2001; McGuire, 2002). Pro-social modelling – though an approach or style of working rather than an intervention – has also emerged positively evaluations (Rex and Crosland, 1999; Trotter, 2000; Rex and Gelsthorpe, 2004) and is highly commended in research reviews. While cognitive-behaviourism is the method which has been given the highest profile in research and recent practice, there is a general concurrence among researchers in this field that a *combination* of methods and interventions – in other words a 'multi-modal' approach – is needed to tackle the social and psychological factors associated with offending (Lösel, 2001; McGuire, 2002). Attending programmes which challenge assumptions and thinking habits will only help if other basic needs are also addressed. Also, getting people to attend and 'stay with' programmes can be helped by essential practitioner skills. The drop-out and non-starter rates for cognitive-behavioural programmes have been high, giving rise to increased attention to case-management approaches which include supportive and motivational one-to-one work (Burnett, 2002; Roberts, 2004).

In each of the key elements mentioned above and given prominence in the 'what works' literature and in recent debates – (1) cognitive-behavioural programmes; (2) pro-social modelling; (3) motivational and supportive work – Approved Premises are well-placed to make a significant contribution. For reasons of access and oversight, Approved Premises provide an ideal opportunity for delivering and holding cognitive-behavioural, or any other programmes that involve a series of meetings. Previous work in Approved Premises applying a 'firm but kindly' leadership style, listening to and showing an interest in residents, and making clear what was required of them (Sinclair, 1971) suggests that Approved Premises might have been 'onto'

something corresponding to pro-social modelling for a long, long time. The application of motivational work and PSM in a sustained way as part of the *Approved Premises Pathfinder* places them centre stage in taking forward this approach. Motivational and supportive work overlap with PSM and build on 'everyday' interpersonal processes, although there is scope for more sophisticated techniques to be applied, including professional counselling and motivational interviewing (Burnett, 2004; López-Viets et al., 2002).

Approved Premises are particularly well-suited to meet the dual objectives of reducing offending and public protection because of the intensity of contact and oversight they afford. Their great strength is that they can provide an 'enhanced level of supervision in the community' (National Probation Service, 2002a, p.5) simply because of the additional contact and the structured and supportive environment that they allow. They therefore make it possible for higher risk offenders (more persistent, or more at risk of self-harm, or those committing more serious offences) to be more closely managed in the community, thereby increasing the chances of their rehabilitation. As well as offering these strengths though, and as this review has made clear, practice in Approved Premises pose specific issues and challenges. Staff have particular responsibilities because of their work with some of the more difficult and potentially dangerous offenders in the community. Approved Premises are a criminal justice intervention and staff have to relate appropriately to people who are likely to have additional needs as a result of being away from their families and usual domestic situation. The 'mix' of residents with different problems and vulnerabilities may give rise to tensions and conflicts of interest, demanding skilled and sometimes specialist responses. To meet all these requirements, staff need appropriate training and support. Equally, it is important to recruit and select the right staff and have managers in place with good management and leadership skills.

Given the strengths and challenges outlined above, it is not enough for effective practice in Approved Premises to simply mirror practice in the field. They are not just a chip off the criminal justice block, merely absorbing and replicating effective practice in the field. This review has referred to many examples of specific practice in Approved Premises, in addressing offending behaviour, in managing a high risk of harm resident population and in dealing with offenders with special requirements. These strands of experience and the related research findings continue to have relevance, and the lessons learned can be incorporated into present practice: for example, lessons about the dangers of mixing low risk bailees with convicted persistent offenders (Pratt and Bray, 1985); and factors which enhance the 'manageability' of Approved Premises (Lewis and Mair, 1988).

Although progress has been made and some of the findings are encouraging, it is not yet possible to claim knowledge of what works in Approved Premises. To attain more certain answers there is a need for experimentally controlled studies, in which a sample of offenders receiving no intervention is matched with a sample who are. There are ethical constraints against such an approach and, even if possible, as mentioned above there are limits to the conclusion which could be drawn from such a study because of other uncontrolled factors that influence results. The *Approved Premises Pathfinder* however is a major step in the right direction, being a large-scale, systematic and multi-faceted study which will be hugely informative for Approved Premises practice.

Based on the relatively small number of studies concerned with them, it could be argued that Approved Premises have been under-rated in criminal justice history but need not remain so. They are uniquely placed to move beyond simply being supportive and reflective of other bigger and more well-known services in the criminal justice system. The rest of the criminal justice system may have something to learn from Approved Premises, because they provide fertile ground for more intensive work and for testing out new approaches. The opportunity to apply pro-social modelling in a more intense and sustained way, as in the *Approved Premises Pathfinder*, is a case in point.

Approved Premises are now at a very exciting juncture in their history. Having been through periods when they have been under-used if not wasted, or not used to best advantage, they are now poised to become a more prominent and recognised asset in the criminal justice system. They have gone from being make-shift temporary homes for petty offenders to being at the critical edge of work with offenders in the community. Following the introduction of national standards and guidelines and a cohesive management structure for strategy and service delivery, some Approved Premises are making great strides forward. Their work is being integrated with accredited programmes and public protection arrangements and the *Approved Premises Pathfinder* is helping to determine the best practices and strategies to be co-ordinated into Approved Premises regimes. The Prospects Projects will similarly develop a special intensive regime, while aiming to integrate this work with work in prisons and in the community after residents leave the Prospects Premises. At a time when community interventions are being looked upon with increasing respect and optimism, when prisons are seriously overcrowded, and when resettlement services are being strengthened, Approved Premises could be at the fulcrum of the management of high risk offenders and effective practice in the community.

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