GOLDEN KEY LOCAL EVALUATION

SYSTEMS CHANGE CASE STUDY: RECALL GROUP

1   Summary of Key Findings

UWE Evaluation: This case study has been compiled as one of a number of deep-dive investigations of Golden Key's systems change activity and impact. The evaluation approach included desk research, including detailed document review, 3 interviews with GK staff, 6 interviews and 1 structured email correspondence with Recall Group members.

Background: Legislative changes to the criminal justice system in the last decade have increased the number of people who are recalled to prison repeatedly for breaking their probation rules. These recalls have been identified as perpetuating a vicious cycle of further recalls to prison and re-offending, particularly for people with multiple complex needs. A multi-agency group of senior leaders in the 'Avon and Somerset Reducing Re-offending Board' supported GK to establish a separate multi-agency group of operational professionals, the 'Recall Group'.

Set-up and purpose: The new Recall Group started in January 2018, facilitated by GK with 15 monthly workshops taking place between Jan- Sept 2018, and Feb-Sept 2019. Members were committed to the overall purpose of the group; to take a 'joined up' multi-agency approach to understand the causes for repeat recalls and find practical and/or innovative solutions to reduce recalls. Differences emerged in expectations of the approach to how this change would be achieved around: the importance of the Behavioural Insights Team report, expectations of members resource commitments, group processes to facilitate direction and activity, and expectations of member's abilities to influence change within their own organisations.

Approach and experiences: A 'practitioner led' approach mirrored that taken by the GK Systems Change Group, with time split between: tracking activity progress, discussion of problems and potential solutions, shared knowledge, agency updates, shared lived experience, reflection and planning. Members and GK staff interviewed felt the 'right' agencies were initially engaged, though some individual members became disengaged over time. Around half of members interviewed felt that the Recall Group needed clearer aims of what the group wanted to achieve and a more structured approach as to how that would be achieved in practice. GK staff shared a view that operational staff needed more support to 'think differently' to develop and lead change themselves instead of being led by strategic senior roles. Most members interviewed were frustrated with the perceived slow pace of activity and the limited resources outside the sessions. Many members interviewed enjoyed the session time to think creatively about solutions and appreciated the space bringing together multiple agencies. People with lived experience were engaged in 4 workshops which many members interviewed found valuable, though some felt they would like the involvement to be more focused and purposeful.

Change for people with multiple complex needs: Findings were limited by the retrospective nature of the case study approach and no pre-planned other monitoring or evaluation activity taking place until the case study research. The evaluation identified four areas of change within and between services that were successfully facilitated through the Recall Group which are likely to have affected people being recalled:

i.   **Improved communication from the National Probation Service (NPS) to prisoners, using the 'Email a prisoner' service.** The Recall Group played an important role in identifying the new Email a prisoner service and encouraging members to promote the service in the NPS. Members of the Recall Group worked to raise awareness of the service with NPS colleagues which led to

increased use by some staff. There was no monitoring data available to understand the prisoner experience, extent and nature of the service usage though it is likely email facilitated more timely communication.

ii. **Improved communication between prison staff and the CRC probation resettlement hub when recalled prisoners arrive in custody.** The Recall Group connected two members to provide a foundation for their work together to establish a new process where the HMP Bristol Offender Management Unit advises the CRC Resettlement Hub service promptly when people recalled are back in custody. This means the Resettlement Hub is able to make subsequent prompt arrangements to see the prisoner on the wing and it is possible this also avoids negative consequences from other process delays. There was no data available to understand how the prisoner's experience changed as a result of this.

iii. **Improved knowledge of local support services and other new local/national initiatives.** Session time was allocated to improve members' knowledge of local prisoner support services, other innovative initiatives elsewhere and relevant national policy changes. One knowledge sharing sessions on 'through the gate' mentoring services led to further promotion to the NPS outside the group. Interviewees reported this increased and sustained NPS engagement with these mentoring services. It is possible that prisoners have been connected with mentoring services who would not have been otherwise, but these changes have not been followed through to understand changes in prisoners' experiences.

iv. **Improved understanding of other parts of the criminal justice system involved in recalls and developed relationships.** Members have gained knowledge and insight into 'the system', the services involved in recalls. Members were positive about the group's value in understanding the perspectives and challenges facing other organisations. Most members interviewed had found the relationships they had developed within the group valuable and felt the sessions provided a space for positive discussion. This investment in understanding other parts of the system and building relationships between services can provide a foundation to support systems change activity in future.

Learning and next steps: Changes have been enabled by the multi-agency discussions, shared knowledge and expertise, along with the relationships developed through the group. The Recall Group has been challenged to manage the expectations of different stakeholders, particularly around agreed objectives and approach taken in how the group approached creating change. Further challenges in the approach have emerged in working with a group of primarily operational staff without allocated resources and lack of facilitation continuity. Given the level of senior leadership commitment to reducing recalls, opportunities were potentially missed to mobilise this commitment alongside the group members activities to drive change. Further recommendations are contained within the report to support the continuation of this group and/or future systems change groups.

2   About Golden Key and the Local Evaluation

Golden Key (GK) is an eight-year project that aims to unlock access to services for people with multiple complex needs (MCN), including homelessness, mental health problems, drug/alcohol dependency and criminal offending behaviour. Golden Key is a partnership of statutory and not-for-profit agencies across Bristol (including the NHS, police, probation, City Council, Second Step, Bristol Drugs Project, St Mungo's and 1625ip) who are piloting new approaches to service delivery and mobilising systems change to ensure a lasting legacy for the city and its most vulnerable residents. It is funded through the National Lottery Community Fund Fulfilling Lives initiative. A team at UWE, Bristol is working as local evaluation partner to capture evidence and inform practice throughout the initiative[1].

2.1   Why have we produced these case studies?

This case study has been compiled as one of a number of deep-dive investigations of systems change activity and impact in order to (a) understand in depth whether and how a sample of GK's systems change activity is driving demonstrable change and the relationship with outcomes for people with MCN; and (b) draw out and capture learning from these activities to support enhancing GK's progress towards systems change. Projects were identified in consultation with the GK Programme Team and Service Coordinator Team (SCT) in order to provide a cross-section of approaches to systems change where there is emerging evidence of outcomes and impact. These qualitative historical evaluation case study reports are intended to sample GK's systems change activity and support learning, therefore should not be considered as a full comprehensive independent evaluation of the activity. Insights from these case studies will feed into the Phase 4 local evaluation report.

2.2   Research methods and approach

The local evaluation takes a formative approach which aims to support learning and development in a shifting complex environment. It is influenced by 'realist' principles whereby we seek to understand the *mechanisms* through which interventions produce *outcomes* within particular *contexts*. We aim to capture multiple perspectives, differing experiences and unanticipated/unintended consequences. This report presents findings from one qualitative retrospective evaluation case study to support the evaluation objectives. A mixed methods approach has been taken, with case studies based on a combination of semi- structured qualitative interviews as well as a review of associated secondary data sources where available.

Data collection was informed by the GK Phase 4 Local Evaluation Framework[2], which was used to develop interview questions and structure the analysis process. The evaluation approach included:

Desk research included detailed documentation review of: Behavioural Insights report 'Applying Behavioural Insights to offender recall in Avon and Somerset' (2017), Recommendation 'broad themes' framework, Recall Group workshop planning notes and agendas, sessions minutes/ notes including monthly action tracking logs/records, HMP Eastwood Park feedback notes, update report to Reducing Reoffending Board, RESET project visit notes and documents, draft offender journey checklist, GK

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[1] A selection of additional reports from the local and national evaluation be accessed at https://www.goldenkeybristol.org.uk/impact-evaluation-reports.

[2] Isaac, B., Bolden, R., Pawson, C. and Gasper, R. (2020) *Golden Key Local Evaluation Phase 4 Evaluation Framework*. Bristol Leadership and Change Centre, UWE Bristol, May 2020.

Systems Change reports (27, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, plus several draft ongoing reports). The review also included background reading on the wider related context[3].

9 interviews in total completed. 3 with GK staff, 6 with Recall Group members, plus representation from the Reducing Re-offending Board. Email feedback from 1 additional Recall Group member.

Many interviewees could not remember all the details requested, given between 12-34 months had lapsed between the Recall Group experiences and the evaluation interviews. Particular attention was paid to interviewees view on how they thought their perspective was affected by the time lapse and it is likely this has affected the quality of data collection and findings reported.

3   Background and Purpose

3.1   Background

The Transforming Rehabilitation programme introduced by the Ministry of Justice in 2013 dramatically changed the landscape of probation and rehabilitation services in England and Wales, aiming to address persistently high re-offending rates. Among other changes, the Offender Rehabilitation Act (2014) included changes to handling 'recalls' to prison (what can happen when someone breaks their probation rules), so that the cohort of prisoners who have at least 12 months of community supervision on their release, was expanded to include those who were given sentences of under 12 months.

The recall population has continued to grow over the long term, even though the overall prison population has fallen[4]. Local agencies in Bristol involved in the recall process were aware of the increasing number of people recalled to prison for limited shorter periods (14-28 days). Professionals and leaders recognised that the recalls themselves were perpetuating other factors which contributed towards further recalls and re-offending, particularly for people with multiple complex needs. This created a vicious cycle, a reinforcing loop where many different agencies contributed to produce increasingly negative outcomes for people who were recalled.

A Bristol focused multi-agency 'Reducing Re-offending Integrated Commissioning Group' was established by Rob Fenwick who at the time was Southwest Prison Commissioner for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and a member of GK's Partnership Board. This then evolved into a wider group, the 'Avon and Somerset Reducing Re-offending Board' established by Sue Mountstevens, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset, in February 2017. The large group included representatives from: local councils, probation/NPS, Community Rehabilitation Companies, Resettlement agencies, Bristol Prison, third sector agencies, NOMS, Public Health, Police, Ministry of Justice, DWP and others. Through Rob Fenwick on the Partnership Board, the GK Programme Manager was invited and joined the Board, with a remit to share systems change expertise. At this stage GK were looking for opportunities to develop their systems change activity in the criminal justice area.

The Reducing Re-offending Board identified reducing recalls as the first workstream to focus on. The Board commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) to analyse the recall processes, associated data, and service user experiences to produce 'behaviourally informed' recommendations which could reduce recalls. GK supported BIT's work through engaging staff and people with lived experience (If Group and Peer Mentors) with the BIT research activity. The Behavioural Insights Team delivered their

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[3] For example 'Understanding the process and experience of recall to prison, HM Prison & Probation Service' (2018). Accessed December 2020 at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/723265/Understanding_the_process_and_experience_of_recall_to_prison.pdf

[4] Story of the Prison Population 1993 – 2020, accessed December 2020 at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/930166/Story_of_the_Prison_Population_1993-2020.pdf

report *'Applying Behavioural Insights to offender recall in Avon and Somerset'* in October 2017 with 11 main recommendations. Subsequently, the Reducing Reoffending Board convened a workshop which further developed the recommendations and grouped them into four broad outcome themes (both versions annexed to this report).

Other initiatives running locally and nationally were also working towards shared aims with some of the areas affecting recalls and the BIT recommendations, these include the Bristol IMPACT team[5] and the Offender Management in Custody model (OMiC), the 'Positive Project', and the HMP Bristol Resettlement Hub.

3.2   Recall Group set-up

Towards the end of 2017, the Reducing Reoffending Board's discussed how to approach reducing recalls in practice and to find an agency or group to take forwards the BIT report recommendations. At the Board meetings, the GK Programme Manager proposed trying something different to traditional approaches; to establish a multi-agency operational working group using GK's approach to systems change. GK emphasised their approach advocates operational staff involvement to design solutions 'bottom up', including lived experience, rather than a 'top down' approach imposing solutions from a high level onto operational staff without their involvement.

The Board agreed that GK would establish a multi-agency group of operational professionals, the 'Recall Group' which started in January 2018, meeting monthly. The Recall Group was initially facilitated by two members of GK programme staff who planned and facilitated the first 2-3 sessions drawing on GK's prior experience of running the 'System Change Group'. Subsequently, in June 2018 GK funded and recruited a Project Officer role with experience of the criminal justice system to facilitate the group. 15 monthly workshops took place between Jan- Sept 2018, and Feb-Sept 2019. The workshops paused when the role became vacant in September 2018 due to a leave of absence, with staff cover recruited to continue the workshops from February -September 2019. Workshops paused again due to a leave of absence in September 2019 and activity was further suspended and not restarted as of December 2020 during the pandemic.

The agencies with members recorded attending in addition to GK included: Catch 22, Working Links (CRC), National Probation Service - Offender Management and Assessment Team and at HMP Bristol, HMP Bristol Prison - Offender Management Unit, Avon & Somerset Police – IMPACT Team, ARA, and St Mungo's.

3.3   Purpose

All stakeholders interviewed understood that the purpose of the group was to reduce the number of people being recalled into short term custody, particularly focusing on a small sub-population of people who experience a 'revolving door' high number of repeat recalls. This group were identified by the BIT report analysis:

> *"A small number of offenders are repeatedly returned to custody, with **188 offenders out of a total 13,595 accounting for 60% of all returns to custody over the period**. These offenders have higher needs (particularly alcohol and housing) and create a significant repeat demand for criminal justice agencies."*

> BIT Report 2017

Interviewees all agreed with and expressed commitment to the idea that changes needed to be made to support reducing recalls. We did not find reference to any formally documented aims and objectives specifically for the Recall Group. There was a shared idea that the group would take a 'joined up' multi-

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agency approach to better understand the causes for repeat recalls and find practical and/or innovative solutions to address these.

There were differing views on how important the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) report was in driving the group's purpose. Some interviewees thought that the Reducing Reoffending Board had originally tasked the Recall Group to find ways to implement the 11 BIT recommendations. GK staff felt the BIT report was a useful starting point, but that a tension existed between (i) the group being led by external report recommendations with authors outside the local context, and (ii) GK's systems change approach being 'organically' led by group members and their experiences. The Recall Group members had mixed opinions of the BIT report, some were very positive about the report's value and importance, while others were unclear about its relevance to the group or applicability in practice. The BIT report recommendations were initially a focus for the group workshop sessions in early-mid 2018 but as the group developed later in 2018 and during the 2019 sessions, there was limited reference to the recommendations.

There were some different perspectives in interviewees' conceptions of **how** the group would be working to reduce recalls. GK staff facilitating the group indicated that their ambition was to support and empower group members to make changes to improve the system and to enhance the system's capacity for learning. This would be achieved as the group worked together over time to tackle the issues which led to repeat recalls, as group members developed new skills, knowledge, behaviours, attitudes and relationships. This would then enable the members to further improve the system in future beyond the group's activity and objectives. Group members expected that they would be focused on finding practical and innovative solutions but felt they had limited capacity/resources and power (many in operational roles), to deliver the significant changes themselves.

4   Development and implementation

4.1   Recall Group membership and engagement

Reducing Reoffending Board members committed staff from their respective agencies as Recall Group members. Senior leaders were given autonomy in selecting who they felt was appropriate to attend the Recall Group to represent their agency. At this stage there were no set criteria for any skills, attitudes or experience which would be particularly desirable and this resulted in different bases for selection being used. Some chose staff who were closest to the recall processes, others selected individuals who were passionate about changing the recall processes, or individuals they felt were ready for personal/career development opportunities.

GK staff interviewees emphasised their belief that a systems change group's success depends on individual members having the 'right' mindset to enable them to engage with systems thinking approaches. That members need to be able to think positively and innovatively about what **they themselves** are able to change within the system, rather than getting stuck on what is outside their control to change. Through the interviews it emerged that some members were asked to attend by their senior leadership but did not feel fully engaged with the group's approach and several group members had directly asked their manager if they could stop attending. This potentially underlies some challenges the group experienced in attendance and for GK in facilitating the workshop dynamic.

Most member interviewees felt the right agencies were represented on the group. Several interviewees felt that some members were not the 'right' people to attend from that particular agency, as they lacked enough experience of recalls. Several interviewees were concerned that operational staff could not achieve the groups' purpose alone and felt more senior level engagement was needed, particularly as there seemed to be increasingly junior delegation as time went on.

Attendance records were not available for the 2018 workshops. The interviews indicated that membership and attendance was variable during 2018, though action logs suggest some members were in regular attendance and engaged with actions for the group. The 2019 attendance records reflect

variable attendance, in some cases this was due to substitution or delegation of people from the relevant agency. Again, in 2019 there appears to be a pattern of a smaller group of 4-5 core members attending reasonably regularly with others attending infrequently. On a number of occasions over the two years, agencies substituted staff membership. Several members reported decreasing value in attending the group and no longer wanted to engage, others were substituted due to a job role change/move.

4.2   GK's approach to facilitating the Recall Group

Initially the GK approach to facilitating the Recall Group used the experience gained running the wider GK System Change Group since January 2015 and mirrored the approach. The key elements of the approach shared with the original System Change Group included: members attending from operational levels at relevant agencies (in this case, those involved in recalls), 'practitioner led' with members taking the lead setting priorities and focus, meeting monthly for c2 hour sessions, using 'action experiments'[6] as an approach to initiate learning and change, members owning actions and activity to drive change. The Recall Group sessions took place at HMP Bristol and the structure generally included time spent on:

- Reviewing recorded actions and updating on progress at each session
- Substantial 1 hr+ activity item, including: (i) identifying blocks/barriers through discussion, then drawing on operational member's experience and resources to come up with ideas to tackle issues identified to generate initial 'small wins', (ii) information/knowledge sharing item from members or invited guests, (iii) prisoners at HMP Bristol sharing their experience of repeat recalls
- General updates from members on related sector/agency information
- Reflection on meeting and planning for next meeting

The approach to running the group has remained reasonably consistent. More sessions including lived experience were run during 2019 (1 in 2018 compared with 3 in 2019) and a member of the Service Coordinator Team was invited towards the end of the 2019 session with plans to build their involvement.

4.3   Recall Group member experiences

The majority of interviewees felt it was very positive and important that the group had senior level commitment. Nearly all members interviewed reported the group's activity moved slowly which most members found frustrating. The workshop minutes and actions list reflect that members found numerous ideas to try to address some issues which contributed to frequent recalls. However, the majority were not implemented, sometimes after a considerable trail of small actions. Many interviewees thought that the solutions they identified in the group were positive and viable but ultimately did not progress due to member's lack of time outside the sessions or not being taken forward by their organisations for reasons including (but not limited to) staff resource and costs.

Some members said they enjoyed the sessions as a space where they could think creatively about solutions. Several members reported feeling expectations were unrealistic that operational staff in the group could take the lead on actioning solutions without senior level engagement and resources. There were several suggestions that GK had lost some credibility in pushing members to be more ambitious in identifying possible solutions, particularly where members felt there were national level barriers outside of their control.

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[6] More information about Golden Key's system change approach and action experiments included in the UWE local evaluation phase 3 report available online at: https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/OutputFile/850569

Four interviewees felt that that more time than necessary was spent in sessions repeating discussions and updates. This was partly thought to be due to members not having sufficient time outside of the session to complete activity, combined with inconsistent attendance of other members. Nearly all members reported finding the changes to GK staff facilitators were disruptive to the group's continuity and holding the status of actions.

> *"it felt like we spent a lot of time talking about similar things….and nothing really moved, it felt a bit like we just went a bit round in circles."*

> Recall Group member

All interviewees agreed with the Recall Group having a multi-agency approach which they felt was necessary in this area. Many of the member interviewees reflected on the approach which GK took to the Recall Group being a 'culture clash'. Members highlighted how different it was to their familiar ways of working within their organisations which were more structured and hierarchical in contrast (particularly in prison and national probation services). GK staff shared a view that one of the key facilitation challenges was getting members to first 'think differently' where they thought some members found it uncomfortable identifying solutions themselves, as it was strategic senior roles who usually shaped change within their organisations. Most member interviewees reported finding the multi-agency discussion at the sessions valuable and several also appreciated the practitioner led approach with the opportunity to develop solutions.

Some members interviewed felt that over time, the Recall Group had increasingly lacked clear objectives. Members were confused by the overlapped purpose and sometimes membership with other multi-agency initiatives. Some members/GK staff were aware that the Reducing Reoffending Board were frustrated with lack of agreed objectives for the Recall Group and demonstrable change in reducing reoffending, which led to some loss of confidence in the recall group over time. The Reducing Reoffending Board established a second separate working group to reduce recalls; the 'Positive Project' with more strategic membership but which did not involve GK.

4.4 Lived experience - service user involvement

The Recall Group experienced challenges involving service users in early 2018 when the group started, mainly for practical reasons involving prisoner security. However, initial issues were overcome with the support of members and prisoners were successfully engaged to share their experiences with the group.

One or two prisoners attended slots at 4 sessions out of the 15 workshops; one session in 2018 and three sessions in 2019. Current HMP Bristol prisoners were encouraged to share their experience of the recall process in an open manner. Some members had experienced the prisoners in their professional roles which could have limited how open prisoners were with the group and also shaped members' perceptions of the prisoners. A GK staff facilitator visited HMP Eastwood Park to gain insight into three women's experience of recalls from prisoners there and ensure women's experiences were included. This was then written up and shared with the group. A GK Service Coordinator was invited to one of the last sessions in 2019 with a view to becoming more involved with the group to bring their experience and potentially focus on 10 specific GK clients with experience of repeat recalls.

Members interviewed reported the value and importance of gaining involvement from people with lived experience and their appreciation for these sessions where attended. One session in particular resulted in the prisoner being given professional advice from attending members to try and help them. One interviewee felt the group already had a good understanding of how people experienced the recall process and the issues there, so the time spent was not always valuable to build their understanding. Several interviewees felt that the lived experience involvement could have been more focused and purposeful to the group's activity.

4.5   Different stakeholder's future expectations for the Recall Group

GK staff hoped that resources would be allocated to continue the group in future, to further engage probation and to build on the Service Coordinator Team involvement drawing on the specific experience of 10 identified GK clients. There was a desire from GK to improve the communications to ensure clear expectations of the group externally.

Around half of the member interviewees from different agencies felt the group needed clearer aims of what the group wanted to achieve and a more structured approach as to how that would be achieved in practice. Some interviewees felt sustaining membership could be tricky, especially with many staff changes since the last session. One interviewee suggested the group should run with specific members for a fixed time, following more of a 'task and finish' approach which may increase drive/momentum and support members commitment.

Several interviewees thought that there were current opportunities (at December 2020), to further push use of the Email a Prisoner service, with people's increasing familiarity working virtually and online during the pandemic. Also, it was suggested that other opportunities may open up due to changes with the resettlement hub.

5   Evidence of Systems Change

5.1   Change for people with multiple complex needs (MCN) and other service users

GK clients or a specific cohort of MCN individuals	Wider population of MCN service users in Bristol	Service users generally
MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE

Whilst a large number of people are recalled to prison, the BIT report found that only a small number of these are responsible for a large proportion of the recalls. Whilst this was not articulated as a specific number by interviewees, the articulation of the group's purpose suggested the overall target population for the Recall Group's work is the cohort identified by the BIT report (around 200 people).

It is possible that there has been a change in the experiences of people being recalled, due to changes to improve communications made within and between services described in the next section. However, until this retrospective evaluation case study there was no Recall Group coordinated activity to understand the resulting changes for services users, and the evaluation could not find any indications from interviewees, service user feedback or available retrospective monitoring data to confirm change in the service user's experience.

5.2   Changes within and between organisations

Changes in individual staff (values, behaviours, beliefs, skills, knowledge)	Coordination/structural changes within organisations	Coordination/structural changes between organisations	Change experienced by Bristol citizens
YES	YES	YES	NO

Recall Group members, service users and the BIT report all raised the negative consequences of poor and untimely communication between the prison, probation services and recalled prisoners, which affected subsequent outcomes and drove repeat future recalls. The negative consequences identified included: recalled prisoners feeling a 'sense of injustice' about the recall decision, damage to offender/probation relationships and trust, recalled prisoners feeling a loss of control and distress, paperwork and process delays, and increased difficulty accessing resettlement services. The BIT report also highlighted the importance of personalised communication between probation and prisoners during the recall process to support. The Recall Group placed significant focus on trying to improve communication in several key areas between probation, prison staff and prisoners.

There were four key areas where change was evident as outlined below. The first two relate to specific changes in communication which are likely to directly affect people being recalled. The last two relate to more general changes in the group member's knowledge of and relationships with other services which it is not possible to relate to further change (yet).

5.3   Improved communication from the National Probation Service to prisoners, using the 'Email a prisoner' service

A member of the Recall Group shared knowledge at the August 2018 workshop about a new 'Email a prisoner' service being piloted in the South East in selected prisons, and also in use at HMP Eastwood Park. The service enables anyone to email a message to an individual prisoner which would be printed by prison staff and delivered with the next daily mail delivery.

Subsequent workshop actions/updates list discussions in September 2018 and early in 2019 returned to the Email a prisoner scheme to check progress on the national rollout at HMP Bristol. One member from the National Probation Service (NPS) had positive feedback along with colleagues about their experience using the service. By July 2019, the group had confirmed the service was available at HMP Bristol. The NPS members took on actions to promote the service to their colleagues, and the GK Facilitator discussed using the service with the CRC.

Interviewees from the NPS confirmed that members of the Recall Group had worked to raise awareness of the Email a prisoner service with their NPS colleagues which had led to increased use by some staff. Use of the service now at NPS is variable depending on staff preferences. The Recall Group played an important role in identifying the new service and facilitating members to take on the role promoting the service in the NPS which ultimately did increase uptake. CRC members who were interviewed did not know whether the Email a Prisoner service was being used within their organisations.

Unfortunately, there was no monitoring data available to understand the extent of usage or whether probation communication is timelier when the email a prisoner service is used, though this seems likely given the nature of email. There was no consideration indicated from workshop notes or interviewees on whether or how messages were personalised (relating to the BIT recommendation 1.2.1). It is not possible to say whether use of the scheme would have increased at a later date without the Recall Group focus; it is now in widespread use nationally. There may be opportunities to further understand the best situations and approaches for using Email a Prisoner in different organisations.

5.4 Improved communication between prison staff and the CRC probation Resettlement Hub when recalled prisoners arrive in custody

In Autumn 2019, following discussion at the Recall Group, two Recall Group members worked together to establish a new process so that HMP Bristol Offender Management Unit emails the CRC Resettlement Hub service a daily list of all people recalled who are back into custody. The Resettlement Hub is now able to promptly identify recalled prisoners to arrange to see them on the wing.

The Recall Group played an important role in connecting these staff from the two organisations and building their professional relationship. The Group also provided a multi-agency space to understand the importance of timely advice for avoiding repeat recalls and encouragement for each member to think about what they could do differently.

5.5 Improved knowledge of local support services and other new local/national initiatives

Through discussions at the Recall Group workshops, a theme emerged that often members were not aware of appropriate services to provide support to people being recalled throughout their journey. Opportunities were identified to improve knowledge of local support services and session time was allocated to improve member's knowledge. Primarily, the significant areas included:

- Sharing information about Bristol's two 'through the gate' mentoring services (05/06/2018),
- Sharing updates on the 'Email a prisoner service (August 2018 onwards)
- Sharing and promoting Bristol 'Survival Handbooks'[7] (2019 sessions),

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[7] For example:
https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/503114/Survival+Handbook+for+homeless+people.pdf/b73b7aae-c9fa-4f1b-bc4f-c788dc4eacfd

- BCC housing representative attending to share knowledge of the homelessness pathways (23/05/2019)
- DWP attending to share information about the introduction of Universal Credit (22/08/2019).
- Visit and sharing knowledge with members of the Birmingham RESET project
- Visit and sharing knowledge with members of the HMP Exeter Departure Lounge initiative

Most interviewees mentioned finding the updates and information sharing useful to support them in their roles.   The interviews indicated that the Recall Group played an important role in understanding the lack of awareness within NPS of the 'through the gate' mentoring services. The knowledge sharing within the Recall Group then initiated further promotion by the mentoring services to the NPS outside the group. One interviewee said they understood the mentoring services had seen increased referrals at this time due to increased NPS engagement. As a result of the activity, NPS became more engaged with the 'through the gate' mentoring services at that time and this change has been sustained.

5.6   Improved understanding of other parts of the criminal justice system involved in recalls and developed relationships

Members have gained knowledge and insight into 'the system', the services involved in recalls and the different experiences of other member's organisations. Nearly all interviewees were positive about finding the group's valuable in understanding the perspectives and challenges facing other organisations, also echoed in their belief in the multi-agency approach. Most members had found the relationships they had developed within the group valuable and felt the sessions provided a space for positive discussion. One interviewee who had completed the Systems Change Training with Martin Sandbrook organised by Golden Key had found this very valuable. This investment in understanding other parts of the system and building relationships between services can provide a foundation to support systems change activity in future.

6   Engagement with GK System Change Principles

The Phase 4 evaluation framework outlines nine key principles/assumptions that underpin the GK approach to system change. The extent to which these are evident within the (a) approach and (b) within the outcomes of the Recall Group are summarised below.

- **PERSON CENTRED, ADAPTIVE SERVICES:** Recall Group members generated suggestions for developing more person centred oriented processes within some specific services but faced institutional and statutory barriers and a lack of resources to progress these.

- **SUPPORT WORK INFORMED BY PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY:** Minimal reference or evidence of psychologically informed approaches with the group sessions or from interviewees. The GK psychologist may have input to the development of one workshop. The Behavioural Insights Team report was informed by psychological theory, but the Recall Group made very limited use of the contents to shape their aims or activities.

- **SERVICES INFORMED BY MCN LIVED EXPERIENCE:** Service users/prisoners were invited to share their experiences with the group but were not involved as ongoing members. GK gained input from Eastville Park to inform the group's understanding of women's experience. The BIT report contained research with recalled prisoners but these insights were used minimally. Members felt the lived experience involvement could be more focused and purposeful to the group's activity (e.g. shaping purpose and priorities or feeding into shape potential solutions and understand whether these work for the service user.

- **FOCUS ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:** A strong focus within the group on developing relationships which was valued by members and catalysed one area where the evaluation found evidence the group generated change. Time was committed to understanding the perspectives and challenges facing other organisations which also helped build relationships between members.

- **STAFF SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT:** The approach aimed to empower operational staff within services to focus on how they can catalyse change. In practice, some members appreciated the autonomy to find solutions drawing on their operational experience but the approach may have disempowered members as most did not have the necessary authority or resources to effect change.

- **LEARNING AND REFLECTION:** Time for reflective discussion was consistently allocated at the end of Recall Group sessions. A member feedback survey was completed but it was not clear how this informed the group due to staff changes. Examples did not emerge through the case study research of how the group learnt and developed the approach over time, despite the challenges faced and member's frustrations. Several members were positive about their learning around systems thinking and systems change. Most members valued the group to develop their knowledge around other service provision and important changes to services that affected their work.

- **DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES & EXPERIENCE:** GK staff were concerned the Recall Group had taken a very male focus and gained input from Eastville Park to inform the group's understanding of women's experience. Aside from gender, no consideration emerged through the case study research of how different experiences and perspectives were systematically considered by the group.

- **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**: The Recall Group demonstrates a strong example of a committed multi-agency approach with a shared agreement of the issues around people being recalled. This was valued by members as a rare opportunity to meet with people from other agencies. Some good examples of partnership working emerged in finding solutions and smaller process changes in services, but these did not progress to larger scale partnership working initiatives with leadership support.

- **WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH:** Members valued the Recall Group for the knowledge and understanding they gained of other services and the relationship between services which may support their being more able to take a whole system approach in future.

7   Learning and next steps

7.1   Learning and insights

The Recall Group has successfully facilitated change in several areas. The changes have been enabled by the multi-agency discussions, shared knowledge and expertise, along with the relationships which have developed through the group. The changes are primarily small tweaks to processes within and between services but that is not to say that small changes cannot lead to great impact! Potentially these changes may have led to improved experiences for people who are recalled but the retrospective nature of the case study approach and lack of any other project activity to monitor or evaluate, has not supported collecting this evidence.

The Recall Group was challenged from initiation by the tension between the Reducing Recalls Board's expectations for the Recall Group to respond to the BIT report recommendations and GK's 'organic' approach with limited available operational resources. The lack of clarity in this area, minimal use of the BIT report without agreed alternative clear objectives for the group has likely contributed to declining commitment from the Reducing Recalls Board, and member's confusion as other initiatives were set up. The Recall Group has also experienced challenges with continuity with changing facilitators, both within the sessions and also in the gaps between sessions.

The approach working with a group of primarily operational staff without allocated resources (i.e. assuming the group can only do what members in the room can do), does not appear to be generating

significant change to reduce recalls, given the efforts invested and expectations. Operational staff could benefit from further facilitation and support to move beyond focus on immediate operational blocks and gain senior leaders' commitment to change in their own organisations. The Recall Group has made limited use of senior leaders' commitment, authority and ability to mobilise resources, which has led to some frustration for members.

The Recall Group has experienced some similar challenges to the original GK Systems Change Group. An important question for GK to consider is what can be learnt across both of these groups about successful approaches to driving scalable and/or systemic change which can tackle identified problems.

7.2   Recommendations and next steps

- Review learning around GK's different systems change groups and forums as to what has worked in initiating systemic and/or scalable change.

- Consider how senior leaders can be engaged in multi-agency change initiatives in different ways to make the most of their commitment, authority and ability to mobilise resources to support the Recall group's objectives.

- Increase focus at initiation on how and why the system is producing the outcomes it does to gain a good understanding of the 'problem(s)' before initiating change. Gaining relevant diverse perspectives across the system, and review existing evidence/data to inform the understanding.

- In line with thinking about complex systems, understanding of the problem should then be closely linked in with further efforts to understand whether and how changes have been made, and what happens as a result (including unplanned 'knock-on' effects across the system). More formally this can be evaluation or monitoring but this can take many other forms, the important point is some manner of observation to see what happens after a change has been made.

- Consider how, where, and when service user involvement can be most helpful and facilitate the involvement to meet the purpose in the following areas: (i) understanding the nature of the problem, (ii) deciding what action to take and how it is designed, and (iii) understanding what has changed for whom, and how, as a result of your activity.

- Consider alternative ways of facilitating groups (other than a GK core/lead facilitator), and/or think about contingency plans which would overcome the negative impact of GK facilitator changes.

- Find innovative new ways to work positively with the organisational culture when working with(in) the criminal justice system (e.g. acknowledgement, open discussion, additional energy invested at the start to engage members/leaders with the approach and gain buy in, group activities focused on shifting mindset).

- When recruiting new members, ensure relevant stakeholders are clear on which qualities and experience would make a 'good' member.

- Ensure that systems change groups are drawing on GK's valuable Service Coordinator Team resource, who are highly experienced with the relevant services and in working with people with multiple complex needs.

- Further understand the best situations and approaches for using Email a Prisoner in different organisations to improve communications.

Should you have any queries about the GK local evaluation or feedback on this report please email beth.isaac@uwe.ac.uk or Richard.Bolden@uwe.ac.uk.

Additional info

Draft outcomes framework, based on the 11 BIT recommendations, developed by a Reducing Reoffending Board coordinated workshop prior to the Recall Group initiation. ** indicates a new or significantly adapted outcome, from the original 11 BIT recommendations.

How the whole system can improve offender experience of reception into custody … *"overcoming despair/abandonment"*

- 1.1: Simplify the induction pack into prison, reducing duplicate demands for info
- 1.2: Default offenders to induction group
- 1.3: Make clear process for escalating housing concerns from point of reception
- 1.4: **Enhanced needs assessment for complex cases
- 1.5: Develop a bespoke re-entry handbook
- 1.6: Incentivize offenders to work whilst in prison to save money/*engage recalled offenders in regime opportunities*

Enable supportive communications and relationships between Offender Managers in the community with offenders recalled to custody and prison staff… *"disapproval of the act, not the actor"*

- 2.1: Make it easier for probation officers to schedule appointments in prison
- 2.2: Find alternative ways for offender managers to convey a message that feels personal to the recalled offender if an early meeting or phone call is not possible (1.2.1)
- 2.3: Develop an offender journey checklist for probation staff to help them address the multiple needs of recalled offenders quickly (2.1.1)

Plan for release… *"having hope and motivation about changing lives"*

- 3.1: Increase the sense of a 'fresh start' on release (1.3.1)
- 3.2: Make license and RSS plan creation more collaborative (1.2.2)

Through the gate support… *"matching intensity of service to individual risk"*

- 4.1: **Coordination/introduction of Peer support service for through the gate support (More coherency in peer support offer)

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11 original recommendations, *Behavioural Insights report 'Applying Behavioural Insights to offender recall in Avon and Somerset (p6, 2017)*

1.1.1	Make it easier for probation officers to schedule appointments with offenders in prison. (page 16)
1.1.2	Simplify the induction back into prison, removing duplicate demands for information. (page 16)
1.1.3	Default offenders into attending the prison induction. (page 17)
1.2.1	Find alternative ways for Offender Managers to convey a message that feels personal to the recalled offender if an early meeting or phone call is not possible. (page 18)
1.2.2	Make licence and PSS plan creation more collaborative. (page 19)
1.3.1	Increase the sense of a "fresh start" on leaving prison. (page 20)
2.1.1	Develop an "offender journey" checklist for probation staff to help them address the multiple needs of recalled offenders quickly. (page 23)
2.1.2	Develop a process for escalating concerns on housing availability when an offender arrives with no accommodation to return to. (page 24)
2.2.1	Develop a bespoke re-entry handbook for recalled offenders. (page 25)
2.2.2	Give offenders an incentive to work in prison and save money for their release. (page 26)
2.2.3	Introduce an SMS peer support scheme for offenders transitioning back into the community. (page 27)