

# Researching Third Sector Organisations' Contribution to the Criminal Justice System

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# Strengths of TSOs

Diversity and  
innovation of  
provision and  
cost  
effectiveness

Independence-  
approachable  
and  
trustworthy

Service-user  
engagement

Social  
cohesion and  
links with the  
community

Opportunities  
for offender  
volunteering  
and associated  
benefits

# Increasing the work of TSOs in criminal justice

- £10 million for VSOs to provide services for women offenders and those at risk of offending
- Offender Management Act 2007
- April 2011 – national directors to commission NOMS services from a range of providers
- Partnerships with the private sector
  - Social impact bonds at HMP Peterborough
  - Formal partnerships between Serco, Catch 22 and Turning Point

# Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan (Home Office, 2004)

Reducing re-offending 'pathways':

1. Accommodation
  2. Education, employment and training
  3. Health
  4. Drugs and alcohol
  5. Finance, debt and benefit
  6. Children and families
  7. Attitudes, thinking and behaviour
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**Aim 1:** To explore the extent of third sector involvement in the resettlement of offenders

- Secondary analysis of existing datasets from the Charity Commission and the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations

**Aim 2:** To explore awareness of, and engagement with, third sector organisations from the perspectives of prisoners

- Offender survey (n=680) carried out in eight English prisons + one Probation trust

**Aim 3:** To explore offender, prison staff and TSO staff perceptions of the role of TS in resettlement

- 293 interviews with prison and probation staff, TSO representatives, and offenders
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# Methodological challenges

Measurement largely depends on:

1. Which parts of the sector are measured
  2. Whether organisations consider offenders one of their main client groups
  3. Whether we include only the organisations whose primary area of work is the criminal justice system
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# Findings

- CC: keywords identified 769 charities
- NSTSO:
  - 18,380 identified offenders, ex-offenders and their families as one of their client groups
  - 1,744 as main client group
  - 4,916 identified criminal justice as one of their areas of work

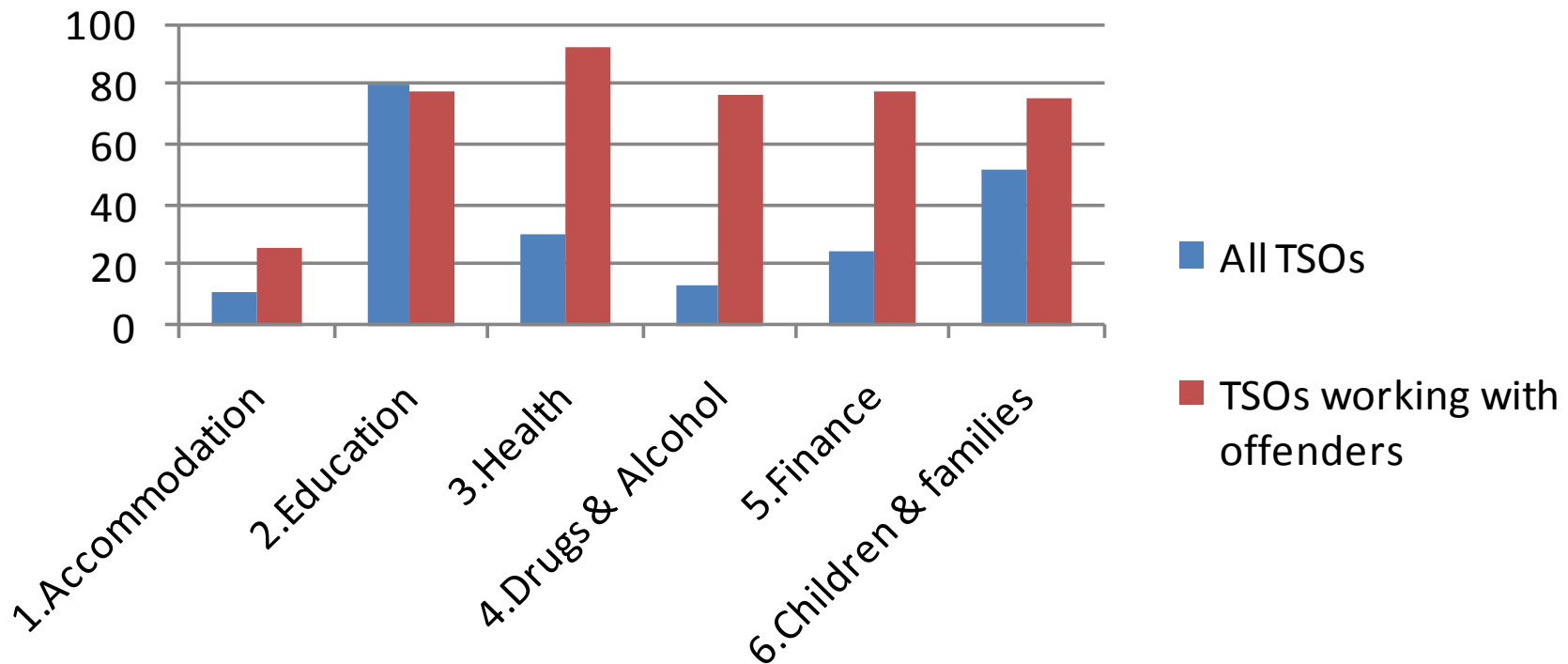


# Variation in findings from the two datasets

- Interpretation of criminal justice and what it means to work within it
- Demonstrates the inter-penetration of the criminal justice system and community work, where working with offenders and their families goes beyond the immediate boundaries of the criminal justice system

# TSO provision by pathway

## NSTSO data



- Estimating the prevalence of TSOs in CJ is complex and challenging:
  - Registered Charities who consider work with offenders as one of their key aims and worth highlighting in their aims and objectives (769)
  - Those with offenders as their main beneficiary group (1,743)
  - Those that identified offenders as one of their beneficiary groups but not necessarily the main one (18,380)
  - Those that identified criminal justice as their area of work (4,916)
- Levels of awareness of resettlement-focused TSOs in prisons remains low:
  - Average number of TSOs per prison was approximately 20
  - Respondents were aware of an average of only four TSOs
  - Respondents engaged with an average of no more than one TSO
- A number of TSOs had no or very few users among our respondents, despite the prisons reporting a working relationship with them
  - **Importance of VCS coordinators (Prison Service Order 4190, 2002)**

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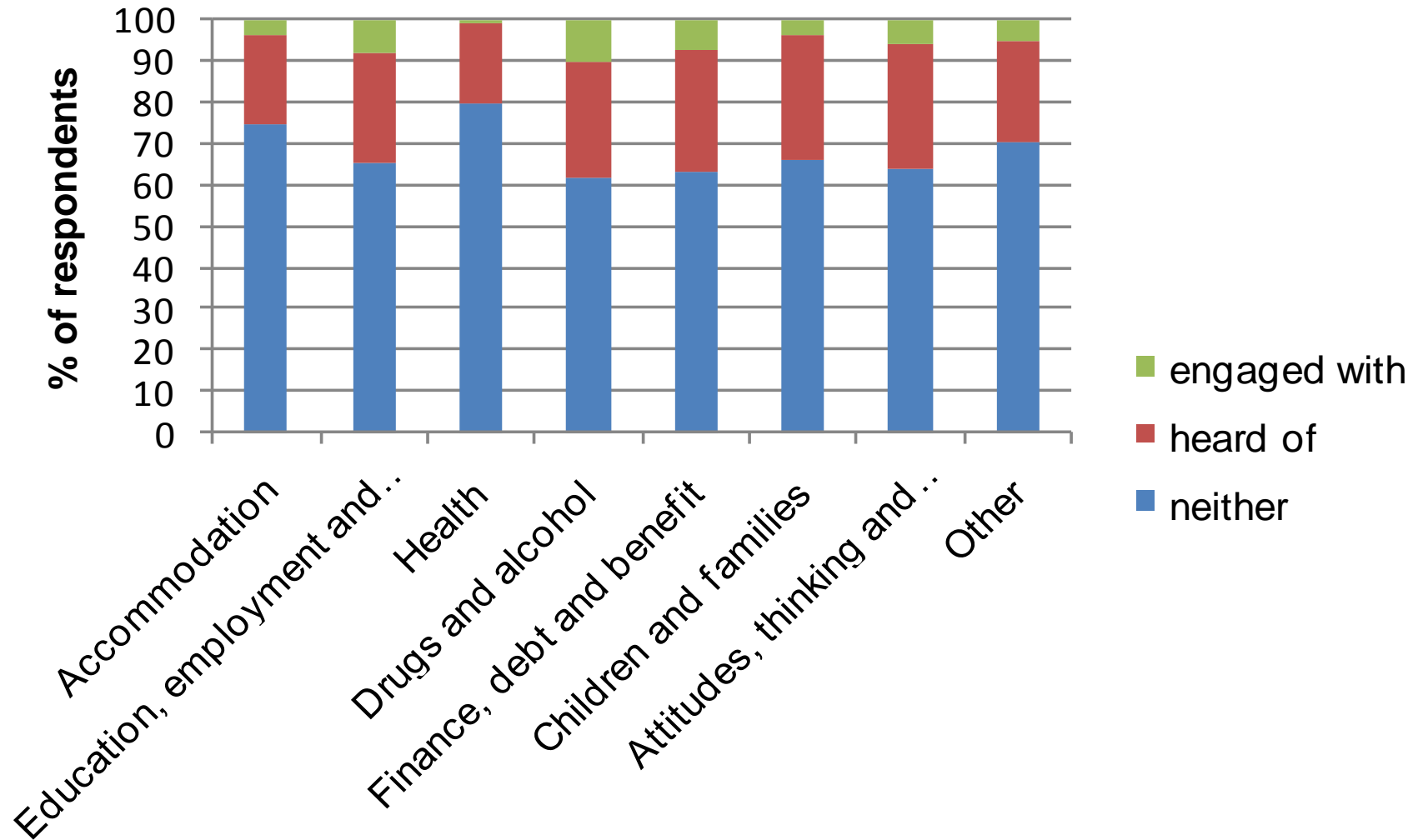
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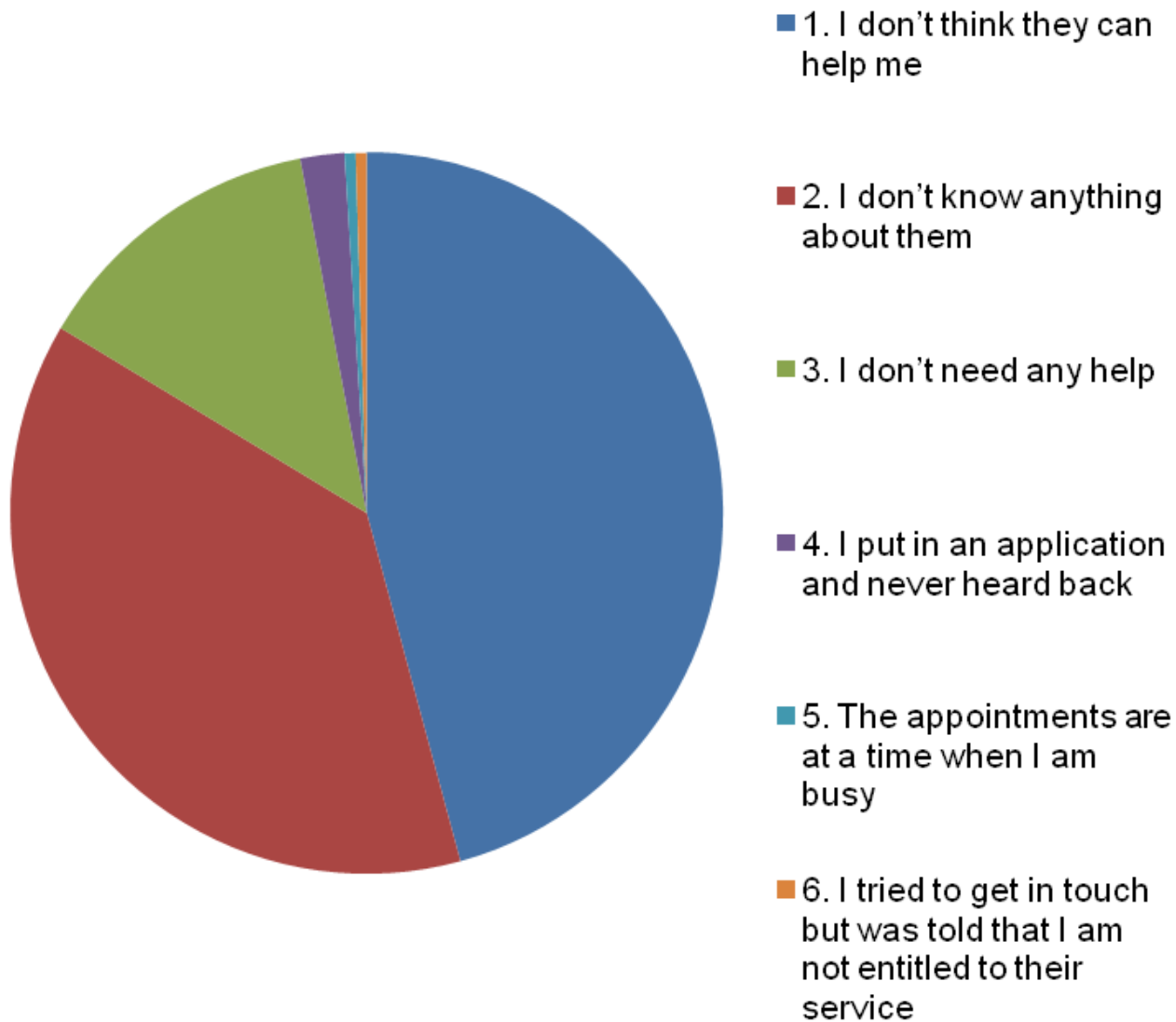
# Engagement with and awareness of TSOs: prisoner self reports (n = 680)

Population	Type of prison (two privately run)	Response rate n (% population)
Female	Closed	85 (18)
Male	Open, training	50 (10)
Male	Open, local	90 (9)
Male	Juvenile	19 (4)
Female	Open, training	16 (11)
Male	Closed	66 (12)
Male young adults	Closed	46 (10)
Male	Closed local	308 (25)

# Prisoner awareness of and engagement with TSOs

- TSOs operating in each prison
- $n = 15-31$ , total of 116 different organisations
- *Have you heard of x?*
- *Have you worked with x? (If not, why not?)*
- Low overall engagement levels with TSOs:
  - Heard of, on average, just four organisations
  - Engaged with an average of one







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# Methodological observations

- Interviewee referrals: 'Rep junkies' Vs general population
- Prisons may be more 'geared up' to research than Probation Trusts?

# Staff perceptions

- Fears that TSO involvement may threaten job security
  - Tensions where professional staff are under statutory obligations and volunteers are not
  - Staff facilitate / restrict offender access to TSOs
  - Third sector no longer perceived as such a threat in prisons
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# Security Vs Rehabilitation

- *For volunteers they've got to remember that it is offenders that they are dealing with and there are certain boundaries... you tend to get some who don't see why certain rules exist (Prison Staff)*
- *Some and especially more of the old school prison officers are not used to this and it is a change... they look at us being softy, softy, fussy people and some of them still believe in the hard regime of prison and that is not how it is anymore....it's about trying to rehabilitate people so they don't reoffend (TSO Staff)*

- TSRC Working Paper 34  
**The role of the third sector in work with offenders: the perceptions of criminal justice and third sector stakeholders**
  - TSRC Working Paper 57  
**Scoping the involvement of third sector organisations in the seven resettlement pathways for offenders**
  - TSRC Working Paper 61  
**Offender engagement with third sector organisations: a national prison-based survey**
  - Voluntary Sector Review (2011)  
**Exploring the relationship between the voluntary sector and the state in criminal justice**
  - Research in Public Policy (2011)  
**Open public services and the third sector: what's the evidence?**  
Ongoing: Volunteering promoting desistance, Payment by Results, Partnerships, Commissioning
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Date for your diaries:  
One-day conference in London  
May 16th

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