An evaluation of the Women's Turnaround Service in North Wales

Final Report to NOMS Cymru

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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

This research report, commissioned by NOMS Cymru, evaluates the provision of Women's Turnaround Services (WTS) by the North Wales Women's Centre (NWWC), based in Rhyl, North Wales between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011. The Women's Turnaround Service was piloted in North Wales in May 2009 and fully established by April 2010. The WTS in North Wales was based on the work done in South Wales and the NWWC received help and support from the South Wales WTS. The WTS provides holistic one-to-one support for women in the criminal justice system or those at risk of offending.

The evaluation was tasked with assessing the impact of WTS provision on women's lives, their needs ranging from mental health to housing, and their offending behaviour, from the perspectives of WTS staff, referral staff, and the women themselves. The main findings of the evaluation are that the take-up of the WTS service over the evaluation period indicates a clear level of need for a WTS service in the region; that women's needs were high across a number of offending pathways; that the wrap-around service provided allowed women to address their problems at their own pace and empowered them to change; that the 'at risk' category of women was insufficiently defined; and that outreach work is important in a rural region.

Some of the key recommendations are that the WTS should be voluntary, so that clients are prepared and, able, to change; the WTS should support case workers in being able to listen and respond with empathy; and enable intensive work with clients which is responsive to, and led by, client need. WTS support needs to be underpinned by a solid knowledge and good working relationship with services available locally; willing to support clients in their dealings with agencies, especially gatekeepers to other services and benefits; and provide a non-judgemental, client-led service which empowers women to resolve their own problems and build a better life. Management of WTS provision needs to be tight, in order to recognise that client failure to engage may indicate that the client/worker relationship is malfunctioning and that a change of worker or a mentor might help the woman to progress. In North Wales, and in particular, in Gwynedd and on Anglesey, service provision needs to be bilingual and Welsh speaking case workers need to be accessible. Ideally service provision is based on a network of outreach workers who are readily and flexibly available to clients. Finally, exit strategies need to be clearly managed and monitored, possibly involving peer mentoring /"buddying".

Contents

1.   Background to the Evaluation

1.1   Corston and the principles of the Women's Turnaround Service

Concern about the treatment of women in the criminal justice system has been around since the days of Elisabeth Fry's visits to Newgate in the early 19th century. However, the position of women at the receiving end of criminal justice provision reached the then Labour Government's agenda when the proportion of women in prisons peaked at six per cent in 2002 (Berman, 2011, 5; Fawcett Society 2004). As a result the Women's Offending Reduction Programme (WORP) was launched in 2004 to tackle women's offending and reduce the number of women in prison. As part of these initiatives in 2005 and concerned particularly with the rise in female incarceration which exceeded that of men, proportionally, the Government ordered a review of female offenders in the criminal justice system. Baroness Corston delivered her report in March 2007 and concluded, that

> *... it is timely to bring about a radical change in the way we treat women throughout the whole of the criminal justice system and this must include not just those who offend but also those at risk of offending. This will require a radical new approach, treating women both holistically and individually – a woman-centred approach.*

It is well established that patterns of offending differ between men and women and this is exacerbated by entry into the criminal justice system. Only 1 in 5 known offenders are women and women make up only between five and 12 per cent of serious offenders in official statistics (Home Office 2006 and 2010). The peak age for offending is very young for women, between the ages of 12 and 14 with a second peak at about 19 (Hales et al. 2009), though this tends to hide a small but growing crime rate among older women (Bramhill, 2006). Nevertheless, female offending often has an early onset and early reduction (Fawcett Society 2004 and 2009) and female offenders, on average, accumulate fewer convictions than men (Carlen and Worrall, 2004). Furthermore, most female offending is at the less serious end of the offending spectrum. As might be expected from these figures, a higher percentage of women than men are sentenced to community sentences and women are less frequently sent to prison.

The Corston report, along with many others such as Fawcett, 2004 and 2005 confirmed what researchers (for example, Carlen, 1985) had argued for some time: that women were incarcerated for lesser offences than for men and earlier in their offending careers and that, since 1990 the situation had been getting steadily worse with female imprisonment increasing at a faster rate than that of men (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002; Gelsthorpe and Morris, 2002; Deakin and Spencer, 2003; Hedderman, 2004).

Once in prison, women's behaviour is more problematic than men's and they appear to feel the pains of imprisonment more acutely than men, signified by women presenting with greater levels of self-harm than men (Fawcett, 2004; Ministry of Justice, 2010). This problem has been increasing in recent years and women commit 50 per cent of incidents of self harm in prisons although they only make up five per cent of the prison population (Fawcett, 2009).

Many had argued that it is essential to look at the differences in female offenders and develop an approach based on their needs rather than shoehorning them into a male oriented penal system (one of the earliest was Carlen, 1990). Corston (2007), NOMS/NPS (2006), and Fawcett (2004, 2005 and 2009) found that female offenders presented with a combination of complex needs such as addictions (legal and illegal substances), unemployment, self-harming, victimisation (sexual and physical), poverty, mental health issues, poor or no housing, high levels of social exclusion, low educational attainment, and low training or skills levels, whilst often having sole responsibility for their dependent children. There was a growing awareness that their offending may grow out of, and fed off, these problems. Additionally, Plugge et al. (2006, 48) discovered a strong correlation between physical and mental health and offending behaviour.

Corston called for a radical overhaul of the way in which women were treated by the criminal justice system. The report found that short prison sentences had a major negative effect on both the women and their likelihood of future offending. It does not offer value for money (National Audit Office 2010) and thus Corston recommended prison only be used when necessary to deal with serious and dangerous offenders.

For Corston supportive structures were to be the backbone of the new criminal justice approach and she saw women's community centres as central to that supportive structure. These centres would facilitate statutory and voluntary agencies to reach women who had offended as well as those at risk of offending. She called for a holistic approach to meeting the needs of women, one which would support them to improve all aspects of their lives so steering them away from criminality.

Corston led the way in suggesting that the way forward to preventing most female offending was supporting women as individuals, mothers and members of communities to improve their lives, deal with their problems and build more positive futures. The report recognised that this could only be achieved by working with the women, not shoehorning them into programmes though, where appropriate, women would be supported to join such

programmes e.g. to deal with substance misuse or anger management. Importantly the support needed to be tailored to the needs of the individual, flexible not only for her needs but also taking account of her wider needs as a mother or other carer.

In Wales, the first Corston-style provision for female offenders in the community was launched in Cardiff in November 2007. The original Women's Turnaround project was delivered by Safer Wales, initially as a 6-months demonstrator project, but successfully gained follow-on funding until April 2011. In April, after a competitive tendering process for the whole of Wales, including North Wales, another provider took over the Women's Turnaround projects for the whole of Wales.

1.2   The North Wales Women's Centre

The North Wales Women's Centre (NWWC) is based in Rhyl. The centre was initially established in 1999 as a limited company (Interactive Rhyl Ltd) providing ICT services to the local business community. In 2000, the NWWC gained funding for the Women's e-Village providing IT services for women, match funded by Coleg Llandrillo and Denbighshire County Council with EU Objective 1 ESF funding. In 2006, phase 3 of the ESF funding, match funded by the Big Lottery's Community Fund, provided funds to develop the North Wales Women's Centre. In 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government provided funding for the organisation to purchase the building to deliver a range of services for women suffering from domestic violence services to women. It has largely attracted women through a drop-in style system and it has shop fronted offices in the centre of Rhyl. It offers a place for women to find some space to escape from their problems; provides information and resources; and enables women to take part in vocational courses, such as photography, IT training, as well as social groups, to support their confidence, capacity building, and skills development. The NWWC became a charity in February 2011.

In common with most women's centres until 2009, the North Wales Women's Centre was only ever envisaged as a general support service for the women of North Wales. In the wake of Corston major funding was announced for 'one-stop-shop' centres for women in the criminal justice system and those at risk of offending through which women would gain help to deal with all of their problems. The Ministry of Justice made funds available and called on women's centres to apply for this funding. The NWWC applied and the Welsh commissioners, NOMS Cymru, awarded them a short term contract to support women in the criminal justice system or at risk of offending, alongside their ongoing provision of services to women who had more general needs. The aim was to integrate offenders with non-

offenders so as to normalise female offenders' experiences and provide an environment in which they are most likely to respond to support and intervention programmes (Corston, 2007 and the Fawcett Society Commission on Women in Criminal Justice 2004, 2005 and 2009).

In May 2009, in a process similar to the establishment of the project in South Wales, and with help and support from the South Wales Project the NWWC gained funding for a demonstrator Women's Turnaround project in North Wales. Following this pilot the WTS contract was awarded to the NWWC in November 2009 (for a timeline of the project, see Appendix 1). It was designed to provide support for women involved in the criminal justice service or those at a clear risk of becoming so involved; and provide a safe, non-judgemental environment in which women can make progress towards reducing their risk of offending behaviour, and improving their life chances and lived reality. Importantly, unlike a statutory service it does not require women to attend; and it is not tied to a community sentence or supervision requirements. The WTS relies on referrals from other agencies, drop-ins or self-referrals and all women attend on a voluntary basis.

In the pilot phase of the North Wales WTS, the NWWC liaised closely with the South Wales Women's Turnaround Project, accessing handbooks on service delivery and process documentation. Additionally NWWC management received induction training and support from Dee Tatum, Women's Policy Officer at NOMS.

The aims of the Women's Turnaround Service were to:
- Reduce the number of women in prison who do not need to be there as they are not serious or violent offenders who pose a risk to the public.
- Contribute to a reduction in the number of women who re-offend and the likelihood of women offending.
- Build on the successful NOMS Partnership Unit grant funded precursor, a demonstrator called 'The Women's Turnaround Project'.

For the NWWC, there was one significant change from the previous running of the Centre in that they were, as part of WTS, required to provide outreach services. The WTS activities ran alongside the previous NWWC activities and some women engaged with both or were referred from one to the other. The NWWC already had many links with other agencies including the probation service but with the advent of the WTS these broadened to encompass other local criminal justice agencies.

2.   Methodology

The evaluation of the Women's Turnaround Service was based on a number of methodological strands and aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Women's Turnaround model as delivered by the North Wales Women's Centre. The methodological strands included focus groups with clients and WTS case workers; interviews with clients, WTS staff, and workers at referral agencies; a number of case studies of specific clients drawn from the Meganexus database and from focus groups and follow-up interviews; and analysis of quantitative data on project clients using the project database, Meganexus.

The research team:
- attended a number of meetings with Turnaround staff, NOMS, and referral agencies to familiarise themselves with the project set-up and background;
- attended all Women of Wales meetings which bring together staff from statutory and third sector organisations with a role in supporting female offenders and women at risk of offending from the start of the evaluation to date;
- our research often took us to the NWWC and, during these visits, we observed the operation of WTS, we observed the staff and their interactions both with each other and with both clients and staff at other agencies;
- designed information handouts; interview and focus group schedules; and consent forms;
- carried out a focus group and six interviews with WTS staff. These involved the then WTS Manager (who was also the NWWC manager), the project co-ordinator, three case workers based at NWWC and two outreach workers. Each interview was recorded and lasted between 40 – 90 minutes. We explored a range of issues such as staff members views concerning the aims of the WTS, the referral process, types of clients and their relationships with them, the needs of clients and how they were met, services available in the area, the outcomes and exit strategies for women, the data-collection process and general comments about the WTS. During the process the outreach worker in one area was replaced twice. The newest outreach worker was interviewed;
- held an additional meeting with the Managing Director of the NWWC and the WTS manager to clarify some of the questions raised during the research in November 2010;
- presented the interim report to WTS staff and management in January 2011;

- carried out interviews with referral agency staff from five agencies in the North Wales area. These included: The interviews were all recorded and explored the referral process and views on the WTS;

- held three focus groups with WTS clients, two in Rhyl and one in Caernarfon. These focus groups ascertained information about the clients and their relationship with WTS staff and how they felt it had supported them and facilitated their work with other agencies;

- carried out three follow-up interviews with WTS clients who had taken part in the focus groups. At these interviews we gained more insight into the journey of these women and how they had been supported by WTS;

- handed out disposable cameras and progress diaries to participants in the focus groups and other interested clients, unfortunately due to the chaotic lifestyle of these women this was not a productive strand of research;

- analysed WTS case management data through the datadump received from Meganexus. All data was entered onto a specially designed data management system and the research team explored this to its full extent. Unfortunately, teething problems in the development of this complex tool prevented this being as fruitful as we had hoped;

- spent some time at the Women's Centre observing public spaces and interactions;

- drew electronic case studies from the WTS database.

The evaluation team experienced a number of problems in pursuing the methodological strategy set out at the beginning. As discussed in the interim report, a good case management system is invaluable in order to run a successful intervention programme and efficient service delivery. The NWWC were aware of that and invested considerable funds, energy, and time in the design and construction of a sophisticated system which, over time, would have been an invaluable tool. In terms of research Meganexus were very co-operative in agreeing to provide a 'data-dump' for the purpose of the evaluation and, at a meeting in June 2010, assured us that this would not be a problem. However, despite the staff at NWWC diligently entering all the data into the system it turned out that the first dataset received in September 2010 was incomplete and the remainder of the data was only received in October 2010. We were made aware in October 2010 that the data received in the datadump was not accurate, as the database had created new ID-references for clients with a change in their status leading to double-counting in the reporting tool as well as the raw datadump. As a consequence, for the provision of the interim report we relied on data provided by the NWWC in their quarterly reports.

There were numerous glitches in the establishment of the database and importantly, we were informed by the NWWC management at the last Executive Meeting of the WTS in March 2011 that the data used as the basis for the interim report, were incorrect. These glitches in implementing the database had an obvious knock-on effect on the evaluation. We only received a copy of the full database for analysis in February 2011, and there are still some misgivings over the accuracy of the data (through no fault of NWWC or any of its employees). The format in which the data was received also caused some problems and the quantitative data analysis was limited. This has caused some major problems for the evaluation, as well as for the commissioners and the NWWC, as the figures used in the interim report proved to be incorrect due to errors in the database reporting tool. It highlights why researchers should not rely on reporting features in case management systems but request raw data from the case management system provider. It also demonstrates the need for Meganexus to improve datadump facilities and may be an aspect, commissioners of case management systems should add as a requirement for providers of such systems.

Additionally, setting up focus groups with WTS clients proved difficult. We had selected clients from a list we had drawn from the datadump in September according to length of contact with the WTS to get a broad overview of experiences of the service. We met with the case workers and the WTS manager to discuss any clients who were too vulnerable to be invited. At this stage not many clients were ruled out and we asked the case workers to invite all of the remaining clients on the list. We had produced an information sheet explaining the purpose of the focus group for handout to clients. In total, out of the 50 women suggested to the case worker for invitation, only 10 women attended the three focus groups set up. We were dependent on case workers to invite their clients, as we did not feel contacting clients directly would be a suitable approach for the vulnerable WTS client group. This put an additional burden on case workers but also allowed them to act as 'gatekeepers' to clients.

The focus group sessions seemed to be helpful to all the women who attended. The focus group meetings facilitated women in helping and advising each other, in recognising that they were not alone in the problems they faced or the journeys they were making. We were able to interview three of the focus group participants individually, sometime after the focus groups which took place in November 2010; one interview took place in January; two others took place in March 2011.

In addition to focus groups and interviews, we attempted to generate some more in-depth qualitative data by handing out disposable cameras, and progress diaries. Despite these being received well by WTS staff and clients we did not receive any back. Developing such a research strategy needs further work and is time-intensive, as it requires greater involvement of researcher with the clients, case workers, and established contact details and follow-up strategies. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the research, the vulnerability of the clients and their chaotic lifestyles we were not able to pursue this strategy with the required intensity.

Thus, we decided to draw further case studies from the WTS case management database. All 189 WTS clients on the database were ordered by registration date and every tenth record was extracted, thus giving us a further 19 electronic case studies. The following report is based on all data collated and we will identify the data source where appropriate. Extracts and quotes from interviews and focus groups are used where they exemplify our findings and represent themes resonating with other research data. The use of quotes from qualitative data, of course, does not suggest that the comments made by individuals at a certain point in time are representative of the views of other individuals involved. Nevertheless, they highlight individual positive experiences, interests, and concerns expressed by staff, referral staff, and clients and serve to highlight particular themes of relevance to the evaluation.

Finally, we had initially planned to assess 'distance travelled' in terms of client confidence and self-esteem by using the Rosenberg self-esteem assessments scale used in the WTS. These assessments were available on the Meganexus database for 33 per cent of clients. However, the assessments had to be extracted manually and the database has no provision for reporting on this assessment. The vast majority of assessments were one-off, only for 12 clients was there more than one assessment recorded on the database. Scores on Rosenberg's scale ranged from 11 to 50 (possible range is from 10-50), with 23 per cent of assessments scoring between 10-19 points; 30 per cent 20-29 points and 30-39 points respectively; and 11 per cent scoring 40-50 points. In nine out of 12 cases where more than one assessment was available Rosenberg self-esteem scores went up; in the other three cases scores remained stable. Given the limitation of this and other data available we will illustrate distance travelled with the help of the case studies.

3.   The Women's Turnaround Service in North Wales

The section below draws on quantitative data drawn from the Meganexus case management system; and qualitative data exploring client and stakeholder (staff and referral staff) expectations and experiences of WTS. The qualitative data are reflections based on what *the women themselves* said and felt about the service, in a particular context and time; they represent subjective points of view resonating with the themes noted during the evaluation. Thus the data presented here represents stakeholder perspectives; a main objective of our evaluation and particularly relevant given that pathways and journeys are so unique to the individual that definitively evaluating or even identifying a standard measure of 'impact' is well-nigh impossible. In this context, the voices of those women most closely involved in the WTS as clients are important records of 'impact', in that they are first-hand accounts of their views about a service, the entire ethos of which is women-centred and aimed at catering to individual needs and circumstances.

Analysis of the raw data indicated that 137 women were registered on the case management system on the WTS between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011. The database also included an additional 52 clients with registration dates between 1 May 2009 and 30 March 2010. Thus, the database includes a total of 189 clients; 162 since January 2010. The last referral was received and entered on the database on 20 January 2011. At the end of January, as a result of the impending end of contract in March 2011, the NWWC decided to concentrate its efforts on supporting existing clients and not to take on any new clients. It operated a waiting list for new referrals in anticipation of the handover to a new provider. This reflected the change in provision for the WTS (see discussion below and Appendix 1).

3.1   Demographics

There is a clear need for the services provided by the WTS. In a period of 10 months (1 April 2010 - 31 January 2011) it attracted 137 clients, which, for a physically large but relatively sparsely populated area, is a considerable achievement. In addition to the support provided for WTS clients, the NWWC also provided one-off or ad-hoc support for 120 clients between April 2010 and March 2011. This report focuses exclusively on WTS clients.

During the research period a quarter of referrals came from Rhyl and its immediate area (Denbighshire). Thus, the level of need for the Turnaround service became evident across the whole of North Wales, see table 1 below. By the end of the evaluation period case-loads were fairly evenly distributed between centre-based and outreach workers.

Table 1: Clients' county of origin

County (n=137)	Number of referrals and percentage
Anglesey	N=11, 8%
Conwy	N=20, 15%
Denbighshire	N=37, 27%
Flint	N=20, 15%
Gwynedd	N=34, 25%
Wrexham	N=3; 2%
County not recorded or outside North Wales	N=11; 8%

North Wales is divided evenly into urban (48%) and rural (52%) areas and has a small population of approx. 675,000 (ONS, 2005). Within sparsely populated areas, knowledge of, and, trust in, service provision can be slow to build (Asthana & Halliday, 2004, 461-463). Nevertheless, the project attracted a reasonable and steadily growing number of clients indicating a real and hidden need.

More than half of clients were aged between 25 and 44, but a significant proportion, about twenty per cent were 45 or older. Only five Turnaround clients identified as minority ethnic, equivalent to fewer than three per cent of clients, which is nevertheless a higher proportion than in the local population (approx. 1%). Contact with minority ethnic communities and religious minorities has been identified as a challenge for the North Wales Women's Centre more generally, the figures here suggest that they are working well to meet the challenge.

Thirty-four per cent of clients, where this information was recorded (language was not recorded for 38 clients, 28%), were Welsh speakers, which has huge implications for Turnaround service delivery. This is particularly true in Gwynedd and on the Isle of Anglesey, both of which have high levels of Welsh speakers in their communities; the two counties accounted for 91 per cent of the clients identified to be Welsh speaking.

3.2   Intensity of client needs

All the literature on female offending recognises that women often present with severe needs, often multiple needs (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002; Fawcett Society, 2004, 2005 and 2009; Gelsthorpe *et.al.* 2007; Corston 2007; Page with Rice, 2011). Even if one cannot be sure that these needs cause the offending behaviour they are at least strongly correlated to it. Breaking the pattern of offending behaviour often necessitates dealing with some, or all,

of these problems. As the women begin to build a more positive life and to work on improving their life chances, they also seem to improve their chances of desisting from offending behaviour. The positive effects for them, their children, whose life chances and lived reality also improve, and for other family members and their wider community are immense both in financial and social terms.

The clientèle of the North Wales WTS was no exception in the well established patterns of complex need. The majority of women benefiting from WTS were mothers, see table 2 below; thirteen per cent (n=18) were recorded as having a disability – four of them indicated a disability related to mental health, such as depression, ADHD, or learning disabilities (many more, 40%, reported a mental health problem which they did not report as a disability); the other 14 had varying levels of physical disabilities, such as ME, arthritis, or a lung condition.

Table 2: Motherhood

Clients' number of children	Number and percentage
No children	N=22 ; 16%
1-2 children	N=60; 44%
3 or more	N=30; 22%
No information recorded	N=25; 18%

Fifty-four per cent of clients had reported previous offending behaviour; an astonishing 12 per cent had ten or more previous offences recorded on the system; and ten per cent were actively offending at the time of service provision. The assessments carried out by Turnaround case workers indicated that the most common problem experienced by clients was employment and training, 53 per cent of clients indicated that this was a problem for them. Accommodation, was the second most common problem identified by 49 per cent of clients, followed closely domestic violence (44%); debts/financial problems and family relations (42% respectively); and mental health (40%) (see Figure 1 below). Nearly three-quarters of WTS clients identified with four or more different needs.

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Figure 1: Level of support need amongst WTS clients in per cent
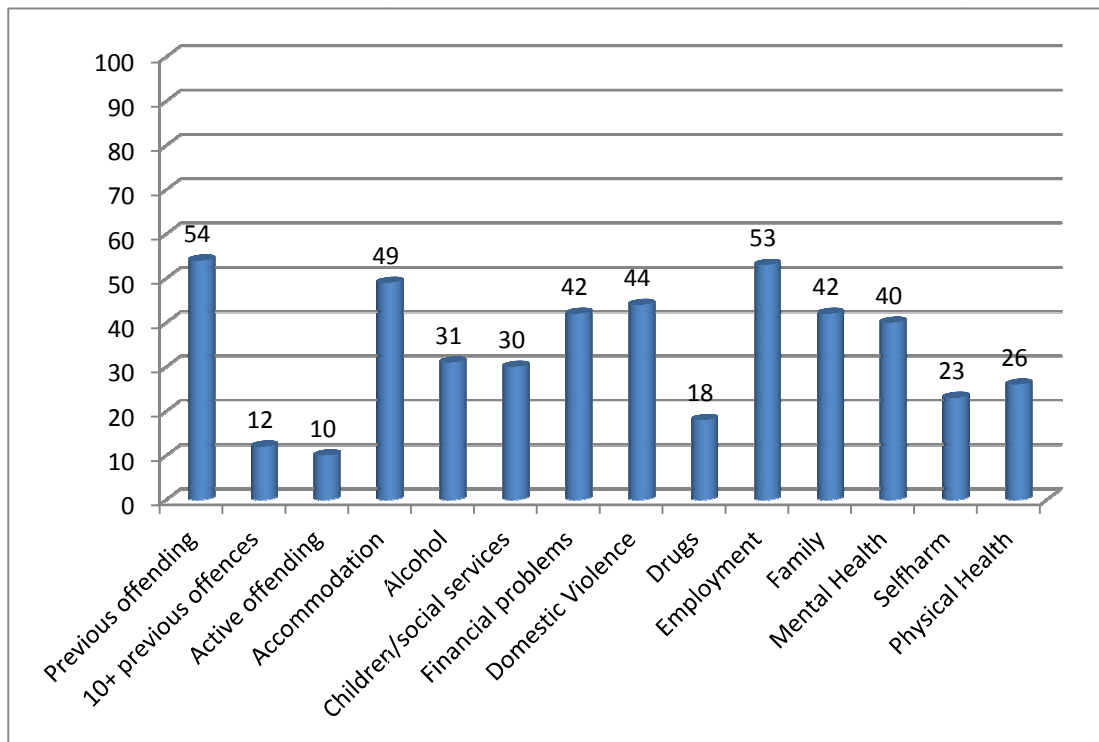
These findings were confirmed in the focus groups. All of the women in both the focus groups and the interviews had "classic" WTS profiles in terms of having complex and multiple needs; many also had significant involvement with the criminal justice system, predominantly for drugs and public disorder offences. The majority had been in contact with the criminal justice system and in several cases had been in prison for short sentences. Most had children and in several cases had had their children taken from them and were at various stages of negotiating and securing access (through WTS support). The cases of A and S below exemplify typical WTS profiles.

> *In S's case there were issues with her neglect as a child, lack of educational achievement, lack of housing, drug use and dependency (which led to a short prison sentence), pregnancy (discovered whilst in prison) followed by being a single parent, and problems with her relationship with parts of her wider family. (Client S)*

Older women tended to have more complex and long-standing problems interwoven with complex inter-relationships. For example, A has complex, multiple and long-standing needs and clearly requires and benefits from long term one to one support.

Problems with housing, problems with my son and the drugs[1]… I am living in a one bedroom flat with two children, both have special needs, both have got autism…[I have]been suffering with depression now for about 20 years… I do suffer from panic attacks, anxiety attacks and I get very low a lot of the time as well.

... I think that there should be more for women like me who are single who have a lot of problems with depression, anxiety and there should be more support for people like myself. There are no groups or for anywhere for me to go in town that I know of. (Client A)

The sheer complexity of need makes it much harder to support these women to take control of their lives and improve both their life experience and their life chances.

3.3 WTS support and service delivery

Over the past twenty years studies of social work, especially from a feminist perspective, have noted the need to pay attention to the individual client; his/her needs, and place in society (Hale, 1984; Hanmer and Statham, 1989; Fawcett Society, 2004, 2005 and 2009; Corston, 2007). Pawson and Tilley (1997: 215) noted that the success of a service arises out of its ability to provide '...reasons and resources to enable programme participants to change'. A successful service is constantly trying to create a context and environment that encourages the effective participation in programmes and promotes behaviour change (Marshall et al., 2002 and 2003; Clarke, et al., 2004; Corston, 2007). This highlights that there are two main factors to service delivery, those specific to the individual accessing the service, namely intellectual functioning, self-esteem, and motivation; and those related to service provision, intensity of support, empathy, ability to solve practical problems, programmes to serve the needs of the client, staff characteristics and worker/client relationships (Ogloff and Davies, 2004). Fundamentally, services need to be sensitive to the individual needs of recipients (McGuire, 2000; Corston, 2007).

The recent literature makes positive remarks about women's ability to positively respond to services which are focused on their needs, and which are holistic and accessible. Women are still often the main carers in our society, so their welfare has a broad and deep impact on society and our communities. In any service that supports women this part of their existence needs to be recognised. When women suffer from a troubled relationship with the community they may become excluded which exacerbates the problems for them and may cause worse behaviour and greater exclusion in a vicious circle.

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[1] Her son is a regular cannabis user.

Thus, clients in the WTS need to be seen as individuals with both material and emotional needs, in many cases they also need to be seen as partners, carers, and people who have or could have careers. The services need to listen to the women in a non-judgemental environment; deal with them with empathy and a belief in their capacity to change their behaviour; give help and support through relational and emotional as well as practical difficulties; support the women to search for their path to a more positive life for them, their families and communities and respond to women's needs rather than try to shoehorn them into available services (Fawcett, 2004 and 2009; Trotter *et.al.*, 2006; Corston, 2007; and Gelsthorpe *et.al.* 2009). It is not enough to guide them to repair mere physical or material problems. Therefore whilst support to secure housing, benefits, grant and training opportunities is essential and necessary women also need help to repair relationships and to build a sense of who they are, learn to take confidence in themselves, to build self-esteem and trust and develop reciprocal relationships of trust and value (Bourdieu, 1984; Eaton, 1993; Corston, 2007). For those with children or with other dependants it may be necessary to provide practical help to ensure that they are in a position to take advantage both of WTS but also services to which they are recommended.

These are very exacting standards against which the services provided by the WTS can be tested.

> *…it has been literally from helping [the client] clean her home so that it is at an acceptable standard for Social Services… from that basic level…right through to supporting with court cases. (Referral Staff)*

Support provided ranged from attendance at court or case conference to arranging meetings with social services; councils; referrals and liaison between services; contacting the police; helping find accommodation; getting the women involved in other support services or programmes such as to help with training, dealing with problems of domestic violence or confidence; helping to plan repayment of debts and to manage money; moral support and 'hand holding'; 'translation' of what is being said in meetings; and help with reading and writing. Different kinds of help are often provided during the same time frame, reflecting the multiple, complex needs of the women. The electronic case studies provided some evidence of the intensity of client need. In one case, a worker recorded 21 activities over a seven months period all related to the maintenance of a non-offending status, while also providing support to the client whose husband was suffering from a serious illness. Another case study reports 48 activities over an eight months period which ended in a successful WTS

completion as the client managed to build sufficient capacity to allow her to communicate directly with specialist service providers.

> *...if it wasn't for [case worker] we'd still be living in a bedsit with a newborn baby….we were on the housing list but we were only given 16 points- [case worker] rang up and… got a housing officer to come out, she came with   them because she knows what I'm like about meeting new people, and when   the officer came out we got our points bumped straight up…since I've been   seeing her, I don't have a problem with my anger so much now. (Client K)*

One of the most important elements of support was listening and understanding. This was recognised by Turnaround clients and referral staff.

> *She gives us support, practical and emotional and helps us onto the right path and opens doors. She tells you what's available and then supports you to make a decision but it's your decision. (Client M)*

> *I have been seeing her since July and I was in a hell of a state. I was crying. I was going to self-harm. I was thinking of taking an overdose just to kill myself and then she was there and we've just been talking and I feel better and better. (Client B)*

> *One to one support, looking at welfare issues, hand-holding…It is the basics really, the foundations that they put in place, it might be somebody that has got maybe an anxiety about going to the doctors or going to probation and if they don't attend that has implications.   If they build up the persons confidence; they actually attend with them and it makes such a difference to the relationship. (Referral Staff)*

The support provided has been described by clients, project staff, and referral staff as a life line and a safety net for women, some of whom may have been 'abandoned' by, or do not trust, statutory agencies. Referring clients on to the appropriate, qualified agencies and, in some cases, attending initial appointments at these agencies is an important element of the Turnaround Service. Additionally, it has been highlighted by Turnaround staff, referral staff, and clients that the voluntary and holistic nature of the Turnaround Service is important to the delivery and effectiveness of the service:

> *...it's something that is voluntary, I think that is really what makes it work…it is led by the women; they… set the agenda don't they. So if they want to look at something to do with say learning, you know, they will see that as a priority if they want to get a job, or childcare or all the different things that they might want to…you build up that confidence on that relationship and rapport that is what makes a difference and then*

that is then what enables them to bring up the other problems such as domestic abuse and drugs and alcohol. (Referral Staff)

Turnaround's holistic and non-judgemental approach aimed at empowering the women was recognised as essential to its success. The fact that the service was about supporting *people* and not about dealing with *issues* was noted repeatedly by clients, referral staff, and staff alike. In line with the ethos of Corston, the women- centred nature of Turnaround was also seen as a key factor of the service.

...we didn't have anything solely for women and a lot of the accredited programmes that we have, again, they are just for male offenders…Which is something that we were aware of but, you know, I suppose we couldn't really do anything about because there hadn't been one written for just women offenders and there was a need for it and the need had obviously been there and increasing as well. And I think that it was something that Baroness Corston realised when she went into prisons that women had this need and basically were not catered for. (Referral Staff)

Turnaround requires women who use the service to be at a stage in their lives where they want to change and do things for themselves, emphasising that it has to be the 'right time' for them. This resonates strongly with desistance theories centred on the 'cycle of change'; an offender's readiness and motivation to change which needs to be supported by practical assistance to avoid social problems undermining the change process (Maguire & Raynor, 2006, 24-26). This was in fact identified by the women themselves:

[the focus group participant] stated that she felt that the woman had to be ready to be helped and want to change – it was only then that Turnaround could help. I asked her how one might move women towards that position. For her she said very clearly it was the shock of prison but also her pregnancy. She noted that a number of her friends were not ready to change and would not contact [Turnaround] despite her recommending the service, they were happy as they were. (Focus group participant, notes)

A separate, though related, issue which arose from the qualitative research was there was some suggestion that the younger women were better able to benefit from WTS. It was more frequently these women who reported positively about accessing training, college courses and entry into the labour market. Whilst the number of cases in our qualitative research was too small to explore this issue in depth it is an interesting finding and one which might prove to be a fruitful area for further research.

In conjunction with the support offered to the women, the women could also access counselling through Turnaround as WTS paid for 14 hours of counselling time. For insurance and safety reasons the counselling service was based within the NWWC, available to all women able to access the NWWC and due to the high take-up rate was operating a waiting list, although Turnaround clients were prioritised. In the case of WTS women the counselling sessions were fully integrated into the support and counselling was seen to be more effective in the context of the WTS than when counselling is delivered as a 'stand alone' service.

3.3.1 Responsiveness and Client Characteristics

Everyone who works with offenders and those at risk of offending recognises that one can never force people to change. However, the best services work with women to prepare them for that journey:

> *The first step is the hardest – deciding to change. She got me there. (Client J)*

Focusing on the personal characteristics of the individual throws light on how best to successfully engage with women and therefore permits workers to match specific individuals to particular types of treatment approaches and styles of programme delivery. The WTS focus on client need and processes of change is contrasted by one client with the focus on outcomes noted in other service provision.

> *... [other organisations] want to deal with the problem you've got, whether it drugs or its alcohol, or if someone's in and out of trouble or whatever, they want to deal with the consequences of your actions (…) and they want to fix you, well you can't be fixed, you can't just be fixed, you can be guided, and you can be helped and you can heal,…. Turnaround heals you, and it gives you that knowledge to where you want to go, and the options of where you want to go, it's not tunnel visioned, it's not right let's get you off the beer let's get you off the gear, let's stop you going shoplifting, it not like that its…. Turnaround is supporting YOU and what you want, not your addictions and your failures, your failures very rarely come into it, turnaround, the whole point of it is pushing you forward, not living in the past, dealing with it yes, getting help for it if you need it, they'll find you the right support with the doctors or whatever, but the whole point is that they inspire you to turn your life around, and it's your life and it's not all about the amount you've drunk or the amount of drugs you've took, or the bad deeds you've done, it's about moving you forward….. and that's the difference between Turnaround and [other organisations] Turnaround is a crutch, they cover all areas, they give you that support. (Client A)*

To do this requires workers to get to know the women; it involves intensive work at the beginning of the relationship to build trust; persuade a woman that she wants to change, and discover the information necessary to establish her needs, and what she is capable of responding to.

3.3.2 A client-led service

Providing such intensive and demand-led service is difficult and not always possible. Unsurprisingly, the most positive experiences arose when women felt that they were at the centre of provision: for example, when workers were willing to be contacted 'out of hours', though few clients reported using this. Their confidence arose out of the knowledge that support would be available rather than out of using that availability.

> *If we need her, at the drop of a hat she'll be there. (Client A)*

Few of the clients we spoke to reported negative experiences. Any such negative experiences arose where women felt they were not at the core of the service, where the service did not respond to their needs. These views emerged strongly from one of the focus groups which had three participants. All three clients participating felt let down by the service and all of them recounted incidents when appointments had been missed. We are unable to quantify how often this had happened across different case workers and on how many occasions, but it was a striking feature of one focus group. Further, it was impossible for us to ascertain what the reasons were for the missed appointments and we acknowledge that this can happen in any service. However, it serves to illustrate the impact of such events on vulnerable women and the particular repercussions for women with dependent children.

It was important that clients had a true feeling that the service served to respond to their needs. They would report that their worker put them in touch with or had helped them to access local services which had helped them. These women were most likely to have travelled furthest – be ready to access training or college, or be at a point where they wanted to find work or were thinking of accessing work or training. Turnaround support was summarised as being both emotional and practical and encompassed help with, for example, housing, drugs, confidence building, signposting services, help with accessing college courses/training, work and benefits advice, removal to safe accommodation, accompanying them to meetings and fairly intensive overall advocacy.

In line with this the women who made most progress were those who viewed the service as tailored to their needs as individuals and as members of families (with partners, children, or

dependant adults). This was contrasted with a service that took little interest in them as individuals; most of the clients had experienced such services elsewhere. Where women felt encouraged to attend programmes or courses which happened to be available, in order to fit them into the parameters of the service provider, the women responded more negatively. The closer the service moved to the ideal tailored service, the more likely it would genuinely engage the women and support them to alter their lives.

3.3.3 One-to-One support

For over a decade there has been a focus on 'what works' and the implementation of group programmes to address criminal behaviour. Corston (2007) challenged this focus in the case of women and drew services back to individualised help and support. In the implementation of Corston-style services what has become increasingly apparent is that success in criminal justice cases is reliant not merely on the service but on the people who deliver it. This should not be unexpected. There is an established body of literature on the influence of the therapist in psychological treatment (Marshall and Serran, 2004) and the Corston-style service relies heavily on the relationship between client and worker. Furthermore, Chapman and Hough (1998: 62) suggest that '… worker's style of intervention and quality of relationship with the individual have been identified as critical to both change and resistance. This suggests that care should be taken to maximise these factors through staff development, purposeful deployment of staff... '.

Thus, unsurprisingly, the relationship between client and worker emerged as important in the North Wales WTS, where the enthusiasm of the client was often predictable and dependent on which worker dealt with their case. Some of this was clearly down to personality.

> *She's like a friend as well. She will listen and will help with my problems. I text her, I feel better. (Client S)*

> *It wasn't just one problem with me, there were many problems (….) if I didn't have [case worker] there for support at that time I'd be in a mental home (….) it's made everything 100 per cent easier (….) the amount of times I nearly slipped, it's because of [case worker] that I haven't slipped. (Client J)*

Clients were happiest with workers who were able to empathise with their emotional and practical situations, provided a personalised service and responded to their particular needs, material and emotional.

She's good with support letters which get people's attention to say you are really in the 'shit'. (Client S)

Knowledge of the needs of offenders and of how best to empathise and respond in a supportive way which also positively challenges the behavioural choices of clients are factors which can, to an extent, be learnt. Therefore whilst personality is important, many of the facets which appear to be reliant on individual characteristics of a worker can be taught and included in a rigorous training programme at the outset of service provision in order to provide an equitable and dependable service.

Another factor that we expected to affect the success of service delivery was the lack of access to the general services provided by the NWWC. Before the data collection we had assumed, as had the workers, that access to the women's centre would be an important extra resource for clients from the Rhyl area. What was quite unexpected was that this did not emerge prominently from the narratives, though, of course, some of the Rhyl women did access and obtain support from the courses offered at the NWWC and many accessed the counselling provided.

In our focus groups, women in the outreach services reported positive experiences of the WTS. The outreach services were impressive in the way in which they overcame logistical problems of covering large geographical areas, the lack of a building in which to meet with clients and the lack of courses available. Rather than leading to a lower level of service this seemed, if anything, to enhance its effectiveness: the workers meet with clients at neutral places, often somewhere most convenient for the client; and they tap into services available in the communities allowing clients to meet with women not in the criminal justice system so serving to normalise their experience and enhance their confidence.

3.3.4 Geography and Language
North Wales presents two challenges to service delivery that most areas and agencies do not need to tackle, namely, a dispersed rural population and being able to cater for Welsh language speakers. The linguistic needs of this area cannot be overemphasised, 34 per cent of clients where this information was recorded were Welsh speaking. In the areas of Gwynedd and on the Isle of Anglesey all service providers need to be bilingual as many of the clients are Welsh speaking and some find it difficult to converse in English. In other areas of North Wales bilingual workers would be advantageous but may not be necessary. For a service which is reliant on building trust, being able to converse in your first language

is essential. Part of the success in these rural, outreach areas, may have arisen because NWWC respected this need and appointed a Welsh speaking outreach worker.

Provision of services in a rural environment always poses special challenges, where the service needs to be personal and intensive there is clearly a requirement for workers who operate in close proximity to their clients. In a rural environment outreach services are essential, many clients cannot travel to a Centre or such a journey would be too complex and expensive for them to negotiate; thus, services have to come to them. The NWWC should be congratulated for their foresight in recognising the need for outreach workers and ensuring that they were provided in the more rural areas.

At the outset the NWWC envisaged that the best support would arise out of women attending the centre as often as possible so that they could access other services and meet other women all of which was available only at the centre. They were therefore less prepared for the extent to which their Centre-based workers needed to operate out of the Centre, to meet women where it was most convenient for the woman and to attend meetings with other agencies to support the women in gaining access to needed resources. From interviews and contact with staff at the start of the research we therefore found that centre-based staff reported that the service was very much located in the centre and although workers discussed leaving the premises the majority of their time was clearly spent there, with common references to women "coming in" to the centre as opposed to staff going out into the community to meet the women. This was clearly more convenient for the workers and an efficient way of working. More importantly, it was also believed to be the method that would prove most fruitful for the women.

However, over time it became apparent that some women felt less supported and were more likely to view the service as separate from them rather than an additional service for them. Therefore, towards the end of 2010, the Centre staff began to operate a semi-outreach service, visiting the clients at their convenience and attending meetings with other agencies. Where this happened the service was most valued and viewed as genuinely for the client, it helped build trust. Once this happened the Centre both provided the access and support of a 'one stop shop' alongside the convenience and personal touch of meetings closer to home. This new way of working was more women based, more responsive to the needs of women and was appreciated by the clients, though it was more time consuming.

3.3.5 Exit Strategies

Providing intensive support for vulnerable women who may have had negative experiences with statutory agencies raises the risk of creating client dependence. This did not appear to be a problem in the WTS, although, as with many other aspects of the service, there had not been much guidance from commissioners on how to effectively manage timely and appropriate exit of clients. It is important that clients do move away from dependence on the WTS, both to recognise client progress and enable client empowerment and so that workers have capacity to take on new clients with greater need. However, closing files too early can be problematic – one of our interviewees reported that her case had been closed without her knowledge but she managed to negotiate re-engagement and went on to get excellent support.

Whilst this type of work can never be precise, some examples of best practice seemed to take shape:

➢ Intensive sessions (up to 3 times a week, dependent on need) where women discuss their problems in a non-judgemental environment and where trust is built between worker and client.

> *I used to see her about 3 times a week but now things are better so it's just when I need her. (Client B)*

➢ Support to resolve practical problems e.g. supporting women in writing letters to or attending meetings with providers (of housing, benefits etc.), underpinned by ongoing support to deal with emotional issues.

> *'Have not been arrested for 5 months, X supported me with everything: courts; house, everything. I rang her pleading 'just to get me out' and she moved me into a refuge in *** and she is helping me get away.' (Client B)*

➢ Referral to agencies to help with particular issues such as drug addiction or mental health problems.

➢ Once their lives begin to be a little less chaotic they are ready to gain a benefit from other providers such as those offering confidence building or other courses.

> *She put me in touch with other organisations such as the freedom group to deal with abusive relationships and got me to go to a counsellor and supported me to start a confidence class. So I'm getting there. (Client M)*

➢ Developing independence from the worker whilst still being able to access support if needed.

> *I don't need her any more. I didn't know she helped so many people. I need to move on to let her help other people. If I wanted her back then I'd just phone her and I'd know she'll be there and that is important. (Client B)*

➢ In many cases women are then able and willing to pass on their experiences to help others as mentors and buddies.

Appropriate and well planned and monitored exit strategies are important for the Turnaround Service both to give the women confidence and make way for new service users. For women who are accessing the service in the Women's Centre in Rhyl, the transition to courses provided in the Women's Centre was used to prepare clients to exit and allow them to be moved on at their own pace and when they were ready; it provided a good, supportive exit strategy.

3.4   Success of WTS

Measures of success are often difficult to agree. As the WTS was intended to provide a holistic wraparound service and to improve the women's lived reality and real experiences merely measuring their activity in terms of outcomes relating to education, training or jobs would be unrealistic. Similarly, the research did not continue long enough to assess re-conviction rates. In the interim report we highlighted the proportion of progress achieved on the pathway areas of need. In this report we want to go beyond those statistics and use the women's assessment of their own progress, coupled with movement as recorded on the database or by the workers. One factor worth mentioning is the scale of financial as well as social return that a service such as the WTS can potentially deliver. The cost of the service was under £1,700 per woman attending the service; this calculation was based on the size of the contract awarded for the number of clients on the service. While the costs of offending behaviour and involvement in criminal justice are impossible to calculate exactly, the Social Exclusion Unit (2002) estimated the costs of various effects of offending behaviour and entry into the criminal justice system (see Appendix 2). This should provide some insight that the financial return from the WTS can run into the tens of thousands, leaving aside the amount of social harm that could be prevented.

Despite minor critical statements or a desire for the service to work a little differently, overall the women were extremely enthusiastic about Turnaround and while all have very complex and difficult life experiences, they talked about significant positive changes in a very short

space of time (relatively) which they could point to as being directly a result of WTS. Interestingly a number of women recognised that a service such as WTS could only work if the woman was at a stage where she was willing to be helped, where she wanted to change her life and as WTS is also purely voluntary it may be that the overwhelming success reflects the fact that these women wanted to change their lives and therefore had chosen to engage with the process.

> *I think I have moved forward, yes. I think when I get my house I think I will feel a lot better in myself and the kids will feel happier in themselves. (Client A)*

> *I think they basically they are trying to support me in issues that I might not be able to deal with on my own and just give me a bit more encouragement to do things for myself. I mean I am quite independent and I do a lot for myself but when my depression is really bad I need that extra help to deal with it… And my parents don't support me or anything or help me with anything. So it is like a back up call you know if I need to speak to anyone or need some support… (Client A)*

Possibly the clearest indication of success was the fact that almost all of the women we spoke to stated that they would recommend WTS to a friend as one of the services most likely to help them to change their lives. And indeed self-referrals were a major element of the WTS client base (see Table 4 below).

The service is seen to be of benefit not only to the individual clients but also to their children, partners, and wider families, as well as to other services, in providing wrap-around sustained support which other services cannot deliver. This could be clearly seen in one of the case studies where WTS workers engaged with clients, their adult children, and even supported a client's daughter in retaining care over her own daughter - the client's granddaughter (E-Case Study, 11).

The WTS provision in Rhyl benefited from access to in-house counselling. However, the benefit appeared to be mutual. The counsellor reported that counselling was more successful when married with good practical and emotional follow-on support.

> *It [Turnaround] absolutely dovetails, I mean, without that, without them being able to come and access their key worker, our job would be I infinitely harder, infinitely. Our work is much quicker and much more effective because of the holistic nature of what the project offers here. (NWWC counsellor)*

Additionally, the counsellor was convinced of the long-term effectiveness of the WTS coupled with counselling support.

> *And there is no recidivism either, certainly not in the 18 months I have been here. So people aren't fixed for a bit, not that I fix them, but they are not ok for a bit and then they come back. You know we do the work and then they are on their way. (NWWC counsellor)*

Of course, service provision was not exclusively positive. However, some negative comments were out of the control of the WTS workers. For example, the poor housing stock in Rhyl proved a problem for both the workers and the clients. It renders the women's housing problems more acute and reduces the possibility that Turnaround staff can help to provide permanent and acceptable solutions so reducing their ability to turn the women's lives around. Despite these problems the Centre staff still managed to help women with their housing needs.

> *I live above a Bookies… and the televisions in there are very loud and you have to turn your telly up loud to try and blank out the sound but you can still hear it, the horse races or what have you. People from the Bookies stand outside the door drinking cans of beer, smoking weed, shouting, yelling …you can hear the tellies going at half seven in the morning but the cleaners go in at half five in the morning until half seven, so that keeps us all awake… I am getting to the point now where I am getting really desperate. I just need to get out of the flat. (Client A)*

Housing was at the core of A's current needs; she had been in her current flat for six years at the time of interview. She had been trying move for all this time, WTS has been helping for some time and she felt her WTS case worker had recently made progress in addressing this.

> *She just chased it up for me, I was already on the list but she just chased it up for me to try and progress it along a bit further…She has been with Conwy Council, she has been in touch with…I think they call it Tai Clwyd now North Wales Housing, I am not sure. (Client A)*

Evidence from staff interviews indicates that the main aspect of the Turnaround's success lies in the voluntary aspect of the service, it was "women led" rather than paperwork driven. Other services often require attendance and penalise failure to attend. It is the combination of being women led, clients' readiness to change, along with the voluntary nature of the service which staff feel to be the key drivers of its success.

From the client perspective the approach of their case worker was key to success. They needed a worker who would empathise, work flexibly with them and be willing to tackle emotional as well as practical problems. Someone who would help them tackle bureaucracy; and be there to give them the moral support in interviews with officials or gatekeepers. This suggests strongly both that the capacity of the individual case worker and the dynamic between case worker and client is a strong variable affecting individual 'journeys' and that flexibility to meet all the needs of each woman is essential. The women could not be shoehorned into processes or to programmes. The women also recognised that they needed to be amenable to being helped, that they needed to want to change so that whilst many would recommend the service to friends one or two said that they would only do that when they knew the friend really wanted to change as otherwise the referral would be futile.

When talking of success, a number of the women wanted to be able to do without the service, to move on but were nervous about moving on and coping on their own. Permission to contact their case-worker, if they ever needed to, built confidence to exit the service. A number of women felt that a mentor system for those nearing the end of their connection with WTS would be a good idea and many expressed a willingness to act in this capacity or to support women who were at the start of their journey. And indeed, towards the end of the service's operation, the NWWC started operating a 'Buddy' scheme involving trained volunteers supporting the WTS workers. Whilst our experience in assessing other programmes and the findings from other research suggest that such a system would have supported positive outcomes it was introduced in WTS too late to be assessed by this research.

3.5   Women of Wales Alliance

Successful interventions are more likely where agencies work well together and in an era of a more diverse landscape of service provision and increasing competition this is vitally important. Effective information sharing and growing a local knowledge base of local services and people is of particular importance in the criminal justice arena based in an area of such geographical spread and demographic diversity as North Wales. The Women of Wales Alliance (WOW) facilitates very good inter-agency links between WTS and other agencies in North Wales. WOW is not required to meet; agencies attend because they find it useful. This group meets every six weeks and is made up of representatives of a number of statutory and third sector organisations which came together organically, drawn by a shared desire to improve the lives of women in Wales. Meetings are used to share information about all the services available to women in North Wales and further afield; to

avoid duplication of efforts; to set up contacts and links between services; and to provide mutual support. The WOW group has agreed terms of reference and produced strategic objectives with action points and delivery time frames. The group was instrumental in helping the WTS set up links with HMP Styal by drawing on the experiences and knowledge of staff from other agencies and using contacts provided by other members of the group.

WOW is a space in which real trust has been allowed to flourish between organisations so that they now enjoy better working relationships and therefore practice more effective information sharing and support of each other and the women who rely on their services. WOW has become a space in which the organisations can talk frankly about problems. It is very much hoped that the WOW meetings will be sustained through this period of cuts and increased pressure on agencies and workers.

4   Management Processes and Problems

4.1.   Referral Process

There is a clear indication of need for the services provided by the WTS. The WTS was contracted to provide services for 135 clients between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011 and our data analysis suggests that 137 women were registered on the case management system on the WTS. As per 22 February 2011, 54 of the 137 cases were still active; 45 cases had been completed (33%) and 38 cases (28%) were recorded as inactive (3) or withdrawn (35). At the handover stage at the end of March 2011, 12 cases were handed over to the new WTS service provider and another 15 clients were on the waiting list for the new service.

The largest proportion of referrals to the WTS came from probation, 20 per cent; significant numbers of referrals were also received through self referrals, 14 per cent; health services, 12 per cent; and the police, seven per cent. Other sources made up 23 per cent of referrals, such sources included Nacro, Touchstones, Women's Aid, and Arch Initiatives.

Table 4: Referrals

Origin of referral	Number and percentage
Probation	N=28; 20%
Prison	N=2; 2%
Police	N=10; 7%
Social Services/Children and Families centres	N=10; 7%
Housing	N=3; 2%
Health services	N=17; 12%
Other organisations	N=30; 22%
Self-referrals	N=19; 14%
Origin of referral not recorded	N=18; 13%

The referral process to the WTS is set out in the referral pack provided to all referral agencies, such as probation and Nacro. However, interviews with referral staff and attendance at Women in Wales (WOW) meetings indicated that there was considerable variation with regards to how clients were referred and how much of the information required in the referral pack was completed. The referral pack for the WTS was inherited from the South Wales Turnaround Service and both NWWC staff and referral agencies in WOW felt it was rather unwieldy. The process presented referral agencies with a lot of work in order to comply and provide the information necessary to WTS. The NWWC recognised that the pack was leading to variable referral processes and they had amended the referral pack and it was already in use in the Custody Suite at the time the service contract was awarded to a new provider.

The WTS received a very healthy number of referrals and numbers were likely to rise in the process of building the service and building trust both with potential clients and potential referral agencies. Towards the end of the research period the WTS was clearly making greater progress in referral rates: it had just gained access to the prisons who would deal with most of the women from the area; many of the women who had been clients were at a stage where they had made significant progress and would suggest the service to friends; had successfully negotiated with North Wales Police a process which would have led to women being referred by staff in custody suites in the area; and more agencies were recognising the benefits of WTS and therefore referring clients.

The number of referrals received by the WTS indicated a clear need for support of women in the community. In terms of referrals of the WTS target group of women offenders and women at risk of offending, statistics are less clear cut. Whilst only about a third of referrals were received from criminal justice agencies more than half of the women referred had a history of previous offending. It is less clear how far the other half of clients referred to WTS were at risk of offending. Approximately nine months into the project it was clear that the WTS staff were becoming increasingly aware of the need to ensure that the women included on WTS were focused on these groups and they took steps to increase the number of direct criminal justice referrals. This change was beginning to bear fruit when both the research project and the delivery of the service through the NWWC ceased so it was not possible to assess the full effects of the changes though it is clear that criminal justice referrals were increasing towards the end of the research period.

Two areas of referral had particularly worried WTS staff: prisons and police. Both of these services involved difficult negotiations and needed to be persuaded of the utility of WTS. WTS only received one referral directly from prison. Staff at NWWC recognised that women from prison would benefit greatly from their support and therefore, in order to ensure that these women were properly provided for WTS negotiated access to several prisons and staff received security training in November 2010 allowing them to attend HMP Styal in Cheshire to inform staff and prisoners about the support available through WTS. Additionally, WTS staff began negotiations to gain access to HMP Drake Hall in Staffordshire. The police had not directly referred women to the service. NWWC recognised that many of the women who came in contact with the police through arrests could gain from access to WTS and began discussions to set up a referral process. At the time of terminating the service the NWWC had successfully set up a referral procedure for women from custody suites with North Wales Police. These alterations would have helped to ensure a more focused intake of clients with a criminal justice background in the future, it would also have led to a larger client-base.

An area of promise but also concern is the number of self-referrals received in the WTS. On the one hand, this suggests that word of mouth about the service and the quality of support was spreading; on the other, assessment of need is more difficult, and the format and procedure of such referrals is less clear cut. The data from the electronic case studies suggest that two out of three self referrals had an ongoing involvement with the criminal justice system. These clearly fell within the remit of WTS and suggested that self-referral was a productive means of recruiting core clients.

The referral criteria, i.e. when women were eligible for referral were subject to considerable confusion, partly due to the inclusion of women 'at risk' of offending which is a vague and wide term. The problem of defining the 'at risk' group in the particular context of community services for women at risk of offending was highlighted in recent research by Hedderman, et al. (2008, 10, 22). The confusion in the WTS in North Wales over who should be referred was evident from interviews with WTS and referral staff. As far as we were able to ascertain, it was decided to include women on the WTS if they had identified needs on four or more of the 'offending pathways' or fewer if one of the needs related to offending behaviour.

4.2   Training

Training on WTS service provision was delivered in stages. At the beginning of the project, managers and staff were given an induction by the former project manager of the South Wales Turnaround Service. Following this, staff training for staff beginning after service start was basic and consisted of a short induction period (two to three days) which centred on paperwork, such as the referral process and the Meganexus system as opposed to case management and standards of support. The rationale for this approach was that the staff employed on WTS were professionals, they came from a similar role and background, and thus already had experience of case management and one-to-one support. Whilst this was true in that the staff had all previously worked in sectors to provide support for women, they were, for the most part, not from criminal justice backgrounds and had never provided services specifically aimed at reducing women's risk of offending or re-offending. Requirements of levels of staff training and/or qualification were not made explicit by commissioners. Training of support workers needs to be handled with care where vulnerable women and offenders are concerned. In hindsight possibly more focused training concerning the needs of women in, or at risk of being in, the criminal justice system might be valuable.

Organisations and professionals with no previous exposure to criminal justice clients or the criminal justice system need training and support to gain an understanding of both the complex workings of the criminal justice system and the women who offend. Only with such knowledge can they provide and understand the more intense needs many of these women present. NOMS Cymru had recognised the need and offered to provide some of this training, however, it did not reach the case workers who instead attended training with the Probation Service. Furthermore, although they were professional support workers they still need to be introduced into specific case management, beyond the requirements of the electronic case management system used for data collection, and the expected standards of delivery for WTS. The WTS management were diligent in providing data management

training but staff felt that systems concerning inclusion, referral, and exiting, had been less clearly communicated.

4.3   A system of case management

A good case management system underpins good service delivery; it is important to know what a service is doing when and how to monitor, review and, improve service delivery. The implementation of a comprehensive database which enables the 'press-of-a button' production of reports is a great asset to the WTS. The NWWC clearly understood the importance of this and should be commended for commissioning a full data management system. Their staff also spent a considerable amount of time carefully inputting data. However, the implementation of any database system comes with challenges. The frequent improvements and changes to the Meganexus system forced staff to re-enter data, change data, add and enter data retrospectively. This placed a significant burden on WTS staff and proved to be frustrating.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, up until the final stages of WTS delivery, the database provider failed to ensure accurate data reporting. It was only at this stage that the database began to bear fruit and deliver the benefits it was designed to provide. Unfortunately, as their contract was terminated the NWWC never enjoyed the full benefits of the time and money spent in establishing these good data collection procedures. Nevertheless, on a single file basis, once all the data was entered Meganexus proved to be a very useful tool by which management could follow and monitor a client's progress and the effectiveness of staff.

To begin with the WTS was managed by the same member of staff as the Women's Centre and there are some concerns that the rationales of the two, while they could be complimentary and should be mutually supportive, may have been blurred. The danger of 'diluting' a service for offenders by providing services to women with a range of different needs and some with little or no risk of offending has been identified by Hedderman, et al. (2008, 10) in relation to the Together Women projects run in the North of England. There was also a danger of manager overload which might have led to a decrease in proactive management and an increase in responsive and crisis-led management. This might have endangered the development and implementation of strategies, guidelines, and clear lines of communication. This issue was recognised as being a problem and nine months into the scheme, a new management and staff structure was introduced. The role of 'frontline service co-ordinator' was created to manage WTS staff.   The impact of this change was difficult to assess as the project came to an end shortly after its creation but it is likely that it would have proven to be a valuable change.

The issue of management is of particular importance in the context of staff turnover. Staff turnover is an obvious problem for any project dependent on establishing relationships between support worker and client. Without fault on the part of NWWC there was repeated staff turnover in relation to one post in the project, which had some detrimental impact on WTS clients though NWWC worked hard, and generally effectively, to minimise these problems. The staff turnover was a result of the project having to terminate employment during their probationary period with two members of staff. This meant that one of the outreach areas was only covered intermittently and that there was inconsistency of provision to the clients. When working with such vulnerable women consistency is essential in order to build trust. The risk of intermittent support needs to be very closely managed in order to avoid major problems. Unfortunately, despite efforts on the part of NWWC to ameliorate the problems in this project, one of the referral staff interviewees alleged that at least one client ended up in custody following a break in WTS provision. Therefore, whilst staff turnover may be unavoidable due to the difficulty of recruiting suitable staff; the uncertainty of funding, aggravated by the short-term nature of some funding, and the intensity and difficulty of the work it needs to be monitored and the clients must be carefully supported and managed throughout. This is always a complex and difficult situation and despite care perfect provision may not always be possible.

The WTS manager reviewed caseloads on a weekly basis. Overall caseloads hide variations in the intensity of support needed, but towards the end of the project, management had to introduce a waiting list and was actively working towards establishing rules for prioritising women with high levels of need. In addition to internal management, support case workers had access to counsellors for supervision once a month and they were able to contact the counsellor for more intensive support if necessary.

Similarly, to the discussion of training provision there was a lack of guidance from commissioners as well as local managers in relation to minimum standard of service provision, how to process a case, how to work towards successful exit of clients progressing well or closure of cases due to non-engagement, etc. Interviews with staff suggested that despite the weekly staff meeting, management expectations were not clearly expressed or communicated to staff. Whilst it is recognised that case management does not guarantee a good service nonetheless it sets a minimum level of service which each client should expect and each worker should deliver. It also supports movement through the service by setting milestones for clients. Such a system should have been in place and is even more

necessary to the new providers where the funding is even tighter than was previously the case.

5.   Conclusions

The conclusions that can be drawn from this evaluation, largely focussed on process rather than outcome, are set out under a series of headings. When reading the conclusions and the whole report it is important to bear in mind that it draws on rich qualitative data from a wide range of participants, including WTS staff, referral staff, and both focus groups and interviews with clients. Whilst no qualitative data is ever entirely representative, researchers made every effort to ensure that material was drawn from a cross-section of the women and staff involved in WTS.

5.1 Requirements of WTS

From the start of their contract the NWWC recognised that service delivery of Turnaround services is staff intensive and that to be effective the workers need to be based close to the women in order to permit them to respond to any crisis that may occur. They also realised that it is essential to build strong connections to the constantly changing local terrain of service provision to which clients can be referred. This is essential for trust to be built.

5.2 Delivery of Service

During the research period (1 April 2010 - 31 March 2011) the project attracted 137 clients, and over the whole period of its operation (1 May 2009 - 31 March 2011) it received 189 clients. The numbers increased steadily throughout the research period. It is clear from this that there was a need for this type of service in North Wales. With the changes in referral processes, simpler referral packs, new agreements with prisons and police, the number of referrals was likely to increase sharply. It is clear that many women in the area need the services provided by WTS. Interviews with clients and staff indicated that the WTS was generally accessing its target group and effectively meeting the needs of that group. Their ability to deliver on both these targets improved as the project progressed.

Partner and referral agencies welcomed the WTS and saw it as filling a gap and meeting a need in the North Wales area. They worked supportively and efficiently both to build the WTS and to ensure that it recruited the correct clients.

The women included in the WTS generally understood its aims and were grateful for the support it provided and the flexibility with which the workers delivered individual packages. Many clients maintained contact with WTS for a significant period and this reflected the

complex needs exhibited by many of these women. The staff, both NWWC based and outreach, were clear about their roles and the aims of the project, the centre-based staff felt that they were better able to deliver on these aims once they started to work on a semi-outreach basis. The referral agency staff were less clear about the aims of WTS and about who to refer and how to complete the complex referral packages. Once the packages were simplified their understanding of the project and willingness to refer began to improve.

5.3 Client Needs and WTS

As expected from the relevant research and academic literature, the women in North Wales presented with a wide variety and a large number of needs including: housing, substance misuse, and mental health. The women were generally positive about the WTS and the dataset also shows that many of their lives were considerably improved while they were in contact with the WTS. Where case workers were flexible in their support, responding to the needs of the clients and supported clients in their contact with other agencies, especially housing and social services, the clients were particularly positive about their work. This, along with a non-judgemental and positive approach made them feel genuinely cared about, giving them the foundations from which to build their own confidence and empowering them to build a new, more positive and non-criminal life for themselves. These positive assessments were borne out by the staff and the database, both of which showed that most clients had taken significant steps towards changing their lives and/or addressing their problems.

5.4 Developing the Service

The NWWC had learnt a lot from their experience of providing the WTS for North Wales. They developed a new service with a client group which was new to them and this presented a steep learning curve. They used their experience of working with women in need to good effect and, at the end of their contract, had excellent plans and had set in place strategies to further develop the Women's Turnaround Service and ensure that it served the 'right' clientele and that it reached a larger proportion of the target group. They wanted to respond creatively to the need identified by the WTS and to build on its success. They planned to further develop peer support groups and a new buddy scheme, where trained volunteers took on some of the support functions provided by case workers; each of these had been largely established towards the end of the service provision.

The NWWC invested greatly in time and effort in designing and setting up a tailor-made case management system. They had worked with Meganexus to build this from scratch and tirelessly worked to improve the data management service. They had ironed out many of the

major problems and it was at the brink of becoming a reliable and powerful case management tool.

They were also actively improving the referral systems, having just gained access to HMP Styal and were negotiating access to HMP Drake Hall as well as being in discussions with North Wales Police about a referral procedure from custody suites.   Thus, at a stage where the WTS had grown, was embedding and setting in progress good plans at developing and strengthening the WTS service in North Wales, the NWWC was unsuccessful in the tender for the new all-Wales contract to provide WTS.

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Appendix 1: Timeline of the Women's Turnaround Service in North Wales

NWWC WTS Timeline

Jan 2008
WOW meetings begin

01 May 2009
WTS pilot begins at NWWC

29 Mar 2010
WTS evaluation official start date

20 Mar 2011
WTS cases are transferred from NWWC to KIM and waiting list handed over

Nov 2009
amended WTS contract issued to NWWC

11 Aug 2010
2nd outreach worker for North East Wales leaves

31 Mar 2011
WTS contract at NWWC ends

Nov 2009
work starts on Meganexus database

Sep 2010
contact with Styal prison established

Feb 2010
2 centre based case workers and 2 outreach workers appointed

Nov 2010
training for Styal entry for WTS staff

Dec 2010
NOMS award new 3 year contract to deliver WTS to 'Platform 51' who subcontracted to Kindness in Mind, based in Mold

01 Apr 2010
WTS official start at NWWC

15 Apr 2010
1st outreach worker for North East Wales leaves

01 Feb 2011
NWWC executive committee issue protocol stating that no new clients will be signed up to WTS

07 Jun 2010
2nd outreach worker for North East Wales starts

31 Mar 2011
WTS evaluation end date

01 Sep 2010
3rd outreach worker for North East Wales starts

14 Apr 2011
NOMS issues letter confirming transfer of WTS service from NWWC to KIM

Created with Timeline Maker Professional. Produced on 26 Mar 2012.

Appendix 2: Costs of Crime, estimates produced by the Social Exclusion Unit, 2002

Re-offending ex-prisoner
→ **Likely to be responsible for five recorded offences before**
→ Annual criminal justice costs **£65,000b**
→ Annual non-criminal justice costs around **£31,000c**
→ Plus annual costs of further custody: prison place around **£37,500d**; juvenile Youth Offending Institution around **£47,500e**; around **£130,000f** for Secure Training Centres

Housing not dealt with efficiently on reception
→ Personal rent arrears averaging **£600g**
→ Eviction proceedings costing the landlord at least **£1,500h**
→ **Ex-prisoner unable to access social housing on release**
→ Advice assessment and investigation, and placement in accommodation – **£350i**
→ Emergency accommodation – around **£1,300** per monthj
→ Typical cost of the initial resettlement of ex-prisoner with a history of rough sleeping – over

Employment not dealt with efficiently on reception
→ **And prisoner gains a criminal record**
→ **Ex-prisoner unable to get employment on release**
→ Unemployment costs per head (benefits and administration) around **£4,500** per claimantl
→ Similar losses in National Insurance contributions and taxes

Or out of work

Poor basic skills not diagnosed/ addressed in prison
→ **Ex-prisoner unable to compete for skilled jobs on release**
→ Gross annual earnings for those with no qualifications average **£14,092** for men, **£10,244** for women: for level 2, **£18,200** and **£13,052** respectivelym

Childcare responsiblilities not dealt with efficiently on reception
→ **Children taken into care**
→ Local authority care proceedings **£2,000–4,000n**
→ Annual cost of care around **£31,000p**
→ Each visit to parent costs an extra **£150q**
→ Foster care costs around **£10,000o** per year

Drug misuse problems not diagnosed/ addressed in prison
→ **Or dealt with, but progess lost through lack of aftercare**
→ **Community drug treatment**
→ Weekly cost around £53 for methadone programme, **£973** for NHS in-patient, **£567** for residential
→ Average drugs and health spend per person entering drug treatment agency in 2000/01 was around **£3,000s**

Mental health problems not diagnosed/ addressed in prison
→ **Community mental health treatment**
→ Weekly cost around **£119–350** for day care, **£1,008** for NHS in-patient, **£405** for local authority residential hostelt

Benefit claim not closed on admission to prison
→ Average benefit overpayment around **£650u**

40