

# LOW MOSS PUBLIC SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Prison population levels and high levels of reoffending following short prison sentences focuses attention on prison throughcare. This overview draws some of the unique learning from the Low Moss PSP and considers factors that made this model effective.

Lessons in  
Throughcare

## Introduction

The Low Moss Public Social Partnership (PSP) was launched as a collaboration between the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), community justice partnerships and third sector partners, with Turning Point Scotland (TPS) as the lead agency. It began operating from April 2013, and its initial goal was to test a new approach to supporting people on short-term (under 4 years) sentences in Low Moss prison, providing throughcare support to those not eligible for statutory throughcare. The PSP came to an end in April 2020, although a mentoring service will still be delivered through expansion of the New Routes PSP which provides a national throughcare support service for men.

The Scottish Government have focussed on prevention and rehabilitation in their drive to reduce reoffending, and throughcare support plays a significant role. This is achieved by supporting people with the practical and personal challenges that lead people into offending, and are often exacerbated by a prison sentence. The model of throughcare support was piloted via a series of PSPs.

Low Moss PSP was one of these, which was initiated by the Scottish Government Third Sector Division and aided through the national support structure of [Ready for Business](#). As an original PSP, the work at Low Moss has been much studied, with numerous reports published. [One such report](#) focussed on the PSP model itself, evaluating the Low Moss PSP along with five others, while another was an [independent evaluation](#) of the Low Moss PSP.

With a growing focus on improving prison throughcare, consideration of the key learning will be critical to any future, commissioned services. This overview will draw some of the learning from the Low Moss PSP and consider the factors that made this model work.

## Background

The Throughcare model that the PSP worked towards provided support for people in Low Moss, whether sentenced or on remand, before, during and after liberation, and so begins at the earliest stage while still in prison. The model of support was informed by a logic model, developed collaboratively by partners to define the detail of the PSP *inputs*, *outputs* and *outcomes*. While the full Logic Model can be found in Appendix 1, the table below provides a summary:

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence base</li> <li>• Staff time and commitment</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Facilities</li> </ul>	<p><i>Service provision:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and co-ordinating support (in prison and in the community).</li> <li>• Developing processes and information sharing</li> <li>• Awareness raising</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>	<p><i>System wide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved partnership working and co-ordination</li> <li>• Provision of effective support and alignment of services to meet service user needs</li> <li>• Improvements to specific services</li> <li>• Improved attitudes and understanding</li> <li>• Improved engagement with, and access to services for individuals.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>For individuals supported:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual needs and risk assessments</li> <li>• Case management, care plan development and support</li> <li>• Signposting and referral to other appropriate services.</li> </ul>	<p><i>For individuals supported:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved access to suitable accommodation, and the ability to sustain this</li> <li>• Improved attitudes, aspirations, understanding and behaviour linked to offending, personal skills and relationships</li> <li>• Improved physical and mental well-being</li> <li>• Reduced substance misuse and risk taking</li> <li>• Improved employability, education, skills, literacy and numeracy</li> <li>• Reduced reoffending and re-imprisonment</li> <li>• Effective reintegration</li> <li>• Improved services for people who serve short-term prison sentences.</li> </ul>

The evidence base demonstrated that the issues that those leaving prison faced were complex, but could be mitigated by effective throughcare support, which focused on the areas outlined in the outcomes identified for individuals, creating a pathway of support. Appendix 2 shows the service process map.

### **Staffing Model**

The service itself was delivered by a range of staff from the third sector partners and SPS. While the service manager was employed by TPS, there was also a co-ordinator from SPS, and so there was joint operational oversight of the project. This range of staff and management brought together a broad set of skills, expertise and professional networks, allowing staff to learn from each other as well as providing a breadth of skills that service users could benefit from directly. Staff were also able to access training from all of the partner organisations, which ensured all staff were equipped with a general understanding of the issues presented by service users regardless of their operational background. Much of this was accredited training, contributing to the personal and professional development of staff.

### **Co-location**

The PSP benefitted from having office facilities available within Low Moss which allowed staff to work together effectively. In addition to computer access within the prison, the PSP were able to share systems and so all staff had access to full information across the different recording tools, and the PSP had its own recording system which could be accessed by all staff. Shared office facilities also allowed more informal information sharing, and peer support for staff, making more effective use of the different skills across the team. Being based together also enabled a cohesive, team working ethos to be engendered.

### **Staff Access**

Non-SPS staff having access and freedom of movement within Low Moss was a benefit of this model. This is one main difference from other PSP throughcare provision, where providers are not based in the prison or work directly with SPS staff, and so require to arrange visits to see service users and have limited access within the prison itself. This free movement saved time and ensured the team were visible to people who could use the service. It also helped with staff working with the full range of services and resources that were available within the prison and could make full use of these and refer on to them easily. This helped reduce barriers, allowing ease of access. Staff also made themselves available during evening association time, where people had free time and could informally speak to staff and find out more about how the service could support them which greatly increased accessibility.

### **Personnel**

The Staff team were recruited to reflect the different demography of those who used the service which ensured approachability. The staff used assertive outreach, following up with people they had begun to work with and so earned a reputation of being reliable and sticking with people even if their engagement waned. The SPS staff also did not wear uniform while working as part of the PSP, which took away another potential barrier both with service users and the staff organisationally.

### **Information Sharing and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Preparatory work prior to the launch of the PSP ensured information systems were shared and staff all had access to relevant information across organisational systems. This enabled effective care planning and ensured duplication of assessment was avoided, thus service users were not required to go through the same information at different stages of their journey through prison and into the community. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by stakeholders, allowing wider information sharing (with consent) and ensuring services were wholly person-centred.

## **Awareness Raising Activity**

Preparatory work involved high-profile awareness raising activity both within and outside of Low Moss. Not only did this allow the staff team to gain an overview of all of the services they would need to liaise with and refer on to, but it allowed these services to gain an awareness of the PSP. It established effective relationships between the services that people need both within and out with Low Moss, service pathways were developed and it ensured the staff team were known to these key services.

## **Service Mapping and Pathways Work**

This awareness raising activity also enabled the staff to map out the services that were already providing support in communities, and so inform pathways. Gaps were identified at this stage which informed what the PSP should directly provide. This work resulted in a resource for the staff team to use, in identifying the services in each local area that could provide support for the issues their service users would face. Given the team worked over such a large geographical area, this information provided an important staff resource.

## **Governance**

There was ongoing partnership engagement at a strategic level, with the PSP Governance Group hosting regular stakeholder events, ensuring the service was integrated with prison and community services both at an operational and strategic level. This work continued throughout the lifespan of the PSP, maintaining relationships, linking with new services to meet individual needs, and sharing information across the team on complimentary services. The gap analysis assisted the Governance Group in informing what the service should directly provide. The Governance of the PSP has been highlighted as a success factor, with the service evaluation noting that the right people were on the governance group to ensure effective decision making, leadership and oversight.

## **Integration with Existing Services and Facilities within Low Moss**

Awareness raising work took place direction with the prisoners. While information was provided at the induction stage, the PSP focussed beyond induction and was able to take advantage of being based in the prison by using posters and fliers, as well as having a physical presence. This included a duty system, which allowed people to drop in during office hours 5 days per week. Ensuring that there was always someone there to respond to queries during these hours meant that the service could respond immediately when support was sought. If there were people who were not sure about approaching the duty service, it was also possible to chat informally to staff during evening association or ask any of the services they were engaging with about the PSP (as the PSP staff linked with all of the services that operated within the prison, such as chaplaincy services, psychology, nursing and addiction staff and the gym). The high profile of the PSP Team within the prison alongside awareness with all prison staff enabled cross referrals, and ultimately ensured the best support for people serving their sentences.

## **Duty System**

The duty system was a key difference compared to other throughcare models, and enabled a responsive and person centred service. A full mentoring service was central to the PSP, but the duty system allowed people to seek advice or support with specific issues, who would not need a full assessment, care plan and support package. This meant that many more people accessed support, and there was a tailored response. It also made the best use of staff time, with many people, who might have slipped through the net, being supported with immediate input during duty sessions. Throughout the lifespan of the service, more and more cases were completed at the duty stage, rather than commencing a full mentoring service, with in excess of 400 cases being successfully completed in this way every year from 2016 to 2019. More details on Table 1 Below:

**Table 1**

Cases successfully completed at Duty	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Number</b>	42	249	281	444	423	590	471
<b>Proportion of cases</b>	26%	46%	34%	47%	61%	76%	75%

It is believed that being based within the prison and having this duty system also added to the credibility of the service by those who would use it, with word of mouth being a big factor in this. In fact, over the lifespan of the service, self-referral was the most common referral source and accounted for between 43-55% of all referrals. Details can be found in Table 2 below:

**Table 2**

Self-Referrals	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Number</b>	168	349	396	443	271	379	321
<b>Proportion of cases</b>	55%	59%	45%	45%	43%	49%	54%

### **Intensive Throughcare Service**

At its core, Low Moss PSP was a mentoring service, providing a full assessment of need, which then informed and drove individualised care plans. The service worked with people from the earliest stage in their sentence and a named key worker would work with them throughout their period of engagement. The same key worker would then provide support through liberation and in the community until the care plan was complete or the service user no longer needed support, or moved on to a different service. This aspect of the Low Moss PSP is therefore similar to the other throughcare models provided by other PSPs or the Prison Throughcare Support Officers (TSOs), although there is no fixed timescale for move on from the service following liberation. This also allows flexibility to complete the agreed care plan, and contributed to the service reputation of being reliable, consistent and sticking with people.

### **Outcomes monitoring**

Also similar to the other throughcare services, the Low Moss PSP developed an outcomes monitoring tool to measure the impact of the service. This is informed by the outcomes identified in the initial logic model. TPS carried out a [full data review](#) at the end of 2019 which outlines the outcomes measured for the service since it began working with people. The outcomes are person-centric and include: criminal activity, psychological wellbeing, engagement, living situation, social functioning, physical health and substance misuse. It also analyses the number of returns to custody following engagement with the service, although it is not known if these relate to new offences, as a percentage are a result of historic offences. The PSP also endeavoured to work with anyone who returned to custody after working with them. Overall, the service demonstrated an improvement in personal outcomes and reduced levels of re-incarceration in the people they worked with, than the general prison population.

The initial logic model also outlined outcomes for the overall system which included:

- Improved engagement with, and access to services for individuals
- Improved attitudes and understanding
- Improved alignment to service user needs and provision of effective support
- Improved partnership working and co-ordination

While these system based outcomes were not part of the outcomes monitoring framework developed by the service, there is evidence that the unique partnership itself achieved improvements. The PSP partners worked together effectively to provide a service which has been used by several hundred people each year. There is evidence that the partners also improved attitudes and understanding, not just across the partnership itself, but the ongoing awareness raising work also improved the attitudes and understanding across wider agencies and organisations of the needs of people in and leaving Low Moss.

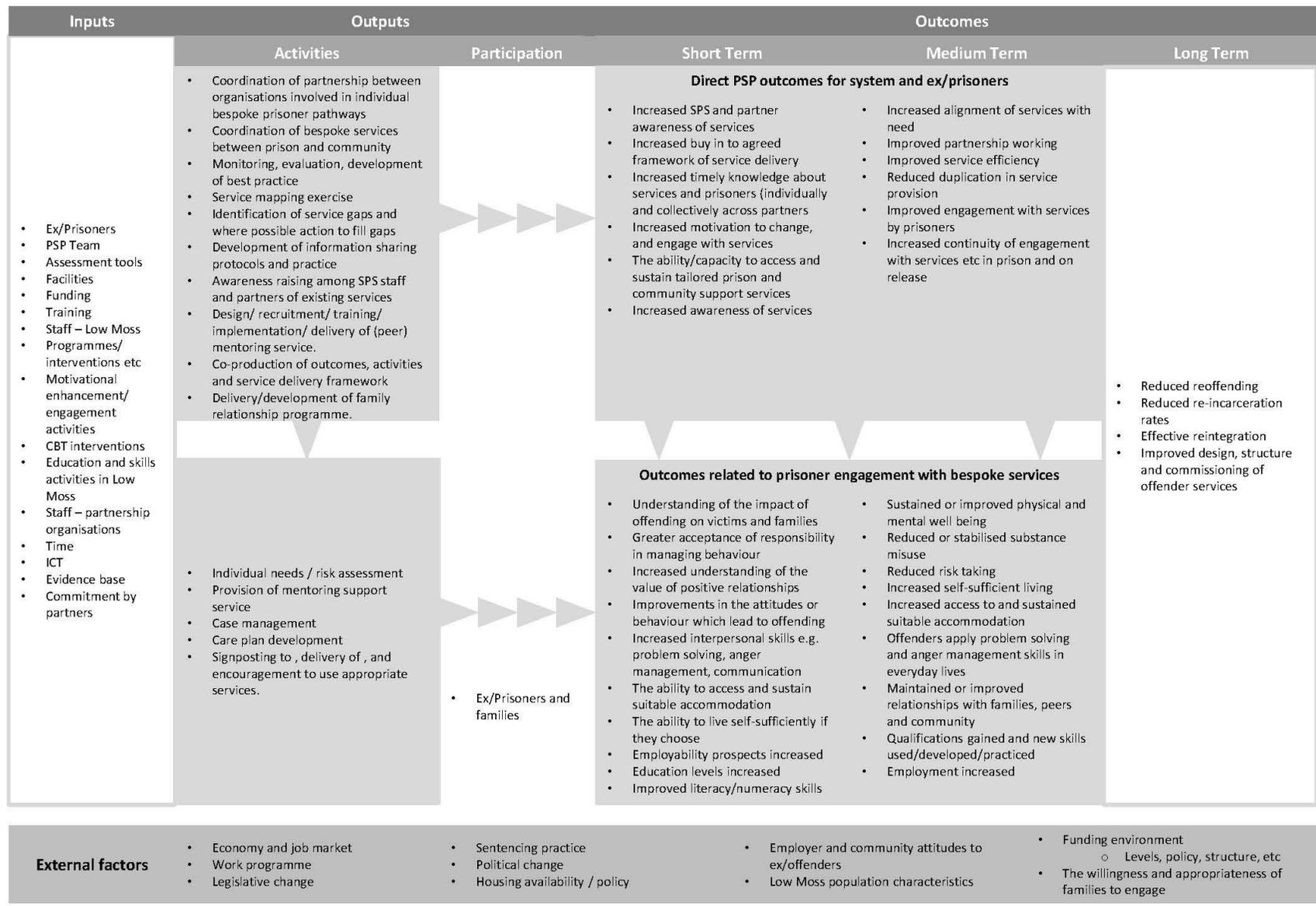
The co-ordination of the needs-led care plan also ensured better alignment to service user needs, augmented by the initial service mapping and pathways work that was carried. The very nature of the PSP also improved partnership working and co-ordination. While there is no quantitative data available to demonstrate the impact in these outcomes, staff feedback and partnership working arrangements do evidence improvement across these. A [service evaluation](#) was also carried out between 2013 and 2015, and while this is no longer current, the findings are still valid. This did provide evidence that the systems outcomes were being met. In Appendix 3 there are some stakeholder views of the PSP from individuals who were critical partners in the process.

## Summary

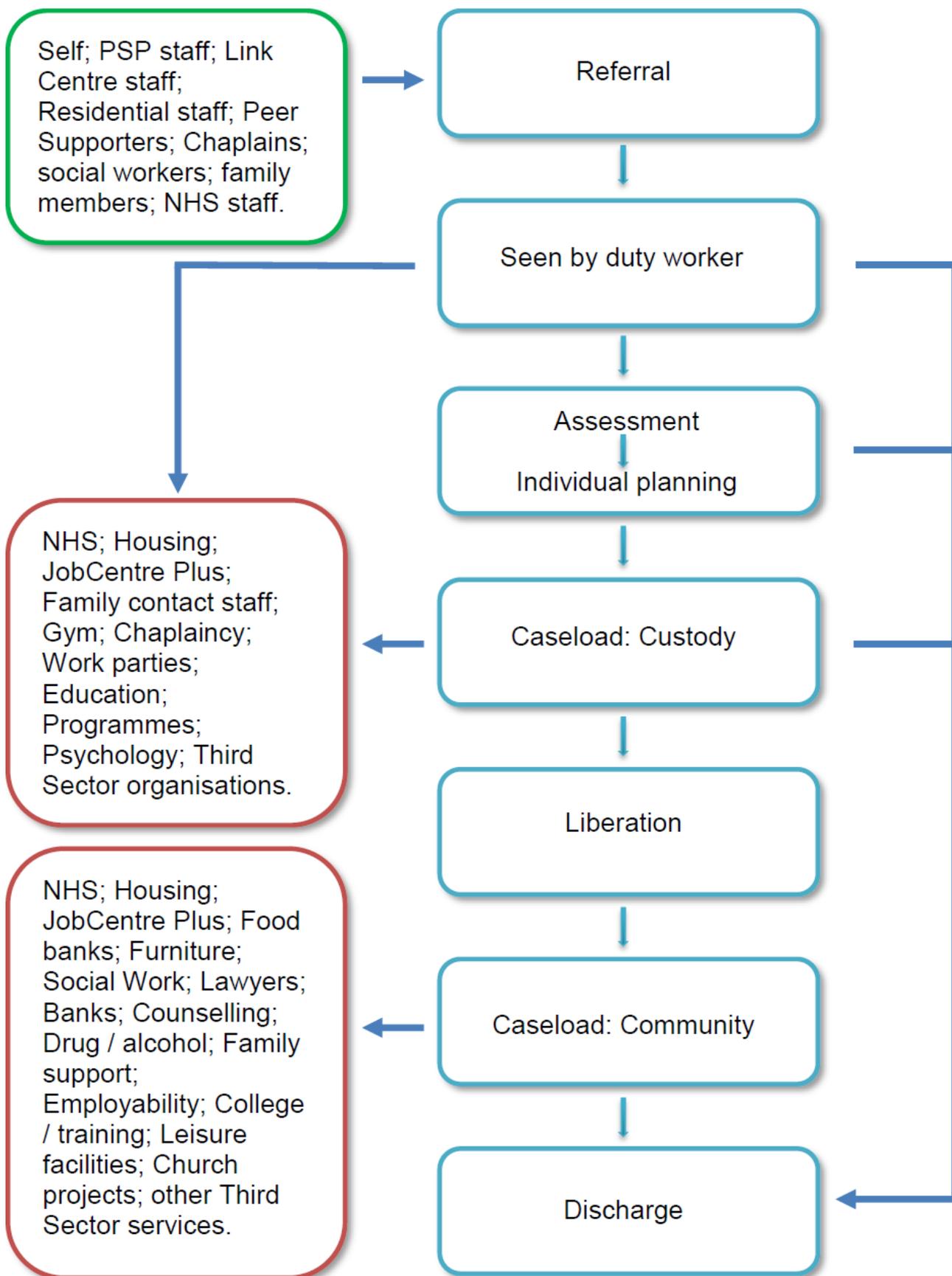
In conclusion, the Low Moss PSP has achieved improved outcomes for individuals and at a systems level over the course of its lifespan. The very distinctive, unique features of the Low Moss PSP have contributed to this success. These include:

- The initial work carried out across a wide range of invested partners to develop the **logic model** upon which the service was based.
- The **integrated staffing model**, which was strengthened by effective partnership working. The team were approachable and demonstrated the values and non-judgemental attitude to work well with those who used the service.
- The staff team being **based in the prison** and having ease of access within it allowed greater flexibility. It saved staff time, as visits did not need to be pre-arranged and the staff were on site and accessible to those who used the service.
- The **duty system** has demonstrated that there is a need for an advice and support service within the prison for people who did not need or want a full mentoring service. Many of the people who benefitted from this service had an immediate and satisfactory outcome via the duty service. This ensures that the number of people benefitting from the service is maximised and that staffing resources are used in an efficient way.
- The **data sharing** agreement and Memorandum of Understanding allowed for effective partnership working and avoided duplication in work, and ensured that people did not have to tell their story multiple times. This enabled staff from different organisations to access the main recording system, and information could be retrieved quickly when needed.
- **Effective governance** ensured the service was integrated with prison and community services both at an operational and strategic level
- The **outcomes monitoring framework** allowed the impact of the service on people to be monitored and ensured the service reviewed performance and amended practice to meet peoples' needs.
- **Flexibility in the programme length** allowed a more person-centred needs-led service, providing support for those with multiple barriers to reintegration in the community, rather than a focus on timescale.

# Appendix 1 – Low Moss PSP Logic Model



## Appendix 2 - The PSP Process



## Appendix 3 – What the Stakeholders Say

*As the Ready for Business lead for Strategic Public Social Partnership development in Scotland, it was my great privilege to have supported the Low Moss PSP from the outset and I remained on the Governance Group throughout its lifetime. Early stakeholder engagement focused on the problem we were seeking to address – reoffending and reconviction rates remained high; there was a lack of coordination in how prison based and community justice services were funded and delivered – all of which had a significant cost to the public purse as well as a significant impact on individuals, families and communities.*

*The opening of a new prison, HMP Low Moss, in 2012 provided a unique and significant opportunity for the public and third sector to come together to ensure services accessed by prisoners could be as effective as possible in reducing reoffending. The PSP model was identified as the most effective approach to this engagement and was adopted for the re-design of a throughcare pathway for convicted short-term prisoners and those on remand - enhancing coordination and continuity to person-centred flexible services. Acknowledging the need for a more joined up approach, as emphasised by both service users and agencies, Low Moss PSP worked hard to ensure public and third sector efforts in throughcare support were coordinated, tailored, purposeful and, above all, effective. The PSP was ambitious in scope but the core partners shared a willingness and desire to do something different!*

*The adoption of the PSP approach brought significant advantages to the service design and implementation process and I would suggest that some of the critical success factors were around: **A strong partnership ethos; Innovative model** – a unique “blank slate” approach to redesign helped individuals to dismiss pre-conceived ideas and really focus on the challenge in front of them; **Skills and knowledge pool** – broad skills across the partners were available to draw on as and when required; this included leadership, project management, service user engagement and analytical skills. Leveraging the collective knowledge of all partners helped identify and eliminate ‘blockers’ in the existing service delivery model, and to support the move towards a simpler more innovative service offering. **Holistic approach** – collaboration among multiple organisations across both public and third sector meant change could be translated into practice as the actors required were all involved. **Structure and control** - providers could engage with and freely participate in the development of a new service safe in the knowledge that the boundaries of the relationships were clear and Intellectual Property was not at risk. **Robust period of piloting** - allowed strategic, operational, and governance challenges to be identified and addressed in a safe environment. Iteration also allowed for the incorporation of service user feedback.*

*I think all partners always acknowledged the best route to sustainable funding for Low Moss PSP would be based on: successful implementation of the model (high quality practice and high levels of service-user engagement); demonstrable impact on reconviction rates; and evidence of savings for statutory partners. Despite robust monitoring and evaluation that pointed to Low Moss PSP being very effective across all of these areas, it saddens me that the PSP service has terminated. I sincerely hope the wheel is not being reinvented somewhere - as no single organisation or agency alone whether public, private or third sector has the solution to the multifarious and complex support needs required to tackle reducing reoffending. I would like to thank all partners and staff involved in the Low Moss PSP for allowing me to be part of the journey and the success.*

*Pauline Gordon*

*PSP lead for Ready for Business and Director, Social Enterprise Network Scotland*

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*Was it accident or design? Serendipity played its part through lots of people with a desire to do something different; a prison that wanted to operate differently and community and Government partners with the same view, leading to chance conversations that finally connected. The design came through shared ideas and the best of blend of disciplines to create a model.*

*Interestingly this blended approach never stopped and created some great systemic and individual outcomes. This blended model of prison officers and community specialists coming together to deliver a service that had unique elements that were not constrained by physical access or arbitrary time bound service restrictions to the service users. When I look at the developments over the past eight years from inception to closure, I am left with some disappointment that it had to end.*

Michael Stoney  
Governor 2011-2015

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*I arrived as Governor of HMP Low Moss in September 2015. The PSP had already been in place for 3 years and was well established under the leadership of Michael Stoney and Sharanne Findlay. On my second day in post I had to do an interview for a documentary series being filmed in the prison called Prison: First and Last 24 Hours. When that interview was shown, in the very first episode of the series, it was framed around a PSP supported liberation for a man named Paddy. There were 2 PSP staff supporting Paddy – Robert and Heather – right away I knew that what they were offering was something very special.*

*Paddy put a lot of what had helped turn his life around down to the support he had from John, another very impressive PSP practitioner. Again I was able to see first-hand how the PSP had helped someone make a new life for himself after spending most of the first 20 years of his adulthood coming in and out of prison. So right away I was able to see how successful the PSP was in supporting people coming out of prison on a case by case basis.*

*After that initial impression was created I got to know the organisations and people who were the lifeblood of the project and the driving force in making it work. SPS staff, some of whom I knew, were there working alongside colleagues from SACRO and Action for Children, with Turning Point Scotland staff who also provided the leadership within the group. It was impossible not to be impressed by the passion and commitment the PSP team had for the work with clients.*

*Behind the client facing service it was also very impressive to see the selfless way in which Community Justice Authorities, local authorities, charities and other third sector and public sector partners worked together to create the space and time for the client facing staff to work their magic. All of this was covered in great detail in a very positive evaluation report by Reid Howie Associates published in March 2016. The day that evaluation report was published was one of the best days of my career.*

*For me to get the chance to work with people behind the scenes, demonstrating the highest calibre, was an honour and a privilege. It was also a lot of fun. Some have retired and some have moved on to pastures new, but as long as Scotland has people of this quality and enthusiasm working for it then we can only look forward to improving people's lives and enhancing the overall quality of life in the country.*

David Abernethy  
Governor August 2015 to July 2017

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*The Low Moss PSP partnership was a live example of the tremendous synergy brought together when agencies brought their uniqueness together with the one objective at its core of providing care for people leaving custody. The objective was not unique, this had been done many times before, however the approach was.*

*Throughout my time as Governor in Charge of HMP Low Moss between July 2017 – January 2019 I had the privilege of witnessing the partnership that had developed, continue to provide hope, care and practical solutions to a group of people leaving custody. The partnership approach took the skills of prison officers and third sector workers and enabled them to share these, creating a synergy I had never seen before. This approach was recognised and appreciated by the service users and I was astounded by the positive outcomes that were achieved.*

*The downside was the uncertainty that comes with year on year funding. This impacted on the workers who struggled with the lack of employment certainty and eventually resulted in a reduced service. Had this been avoided the outcomes would have been so much more than the already impressive ones that had been achieved.*

*The legacy of this partnership still exists in some ways. Prison staff, both those who worked in and with the PSP, have been left with a much greater knowledge of the struggles and difficulties faced by those leaving custody. Networks have been developed and contacts made. Hopefully these will continue to service some of the needs faced by people, especially in this uncertain world we are all facing.*

*If this model of partnership were to exist again in the future, I would wholly support. I can't thank all the staff who worked in the PSP enough, no matter what organisation they came from, as I have no doubt they were responsible for giving a great number of people leaving custody a far better chance than what they would have managed on their own.*

Sharanne Findlay  
Governor July 2017 – January 2019

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*My first impression of the PSP, coming in as Governor, was there were no barriers between the different groups of staff, there were no lines of delineation, they simply worked as an integrated team. It was equally clear that the prisoners who engaged with the service openly acknowledged that they benefitted from the support on offer. Whilst appearing low key, the one aspect of the provision that had the biggest penetration was 'duty work', the number of prisoners engaged was impressive and the feedback received, from those that accessed the service, was that they felt more relaxed as they felt their concerns or anxieties had been addressed, thereby allowing them to become more settled.*

*In my time the one aspect that was frustrating was the fact the funding for 2019/2020 was only approved on the eve of the renewal date, which clearly caused significant stress and anxiety amongst our third sector colleagues.*

Jim Farish  
Governor January 2019 – Present

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*The PSP quickly became an integral part of the wider Low Moss team. At its core the PSP shaped and influenced the views of both SPS staff and the prisoners' belief about what could be facilitated and supported to improve the transition from prison back into the community. One of the true strengths of the PSP was its ability to take our most complex case and start them on the journey back to being a citizen. This role crossed the borders and blurred the lines of responsibility to such an extent that to the users and external agencies it was almost impossible to differentiate who was SPS staff and who was a partner agency.*

*The operational sub group provided a forum where partners played a proactive role in supporting the PSP deliver the business, it provided a forum whereby delivery problems could be shared and solutions formed. At the beginning this operational forum of likeminded and invested supporters was pivotal in breaking down the inevitable barriers that were highlighted.*

*The Steering/Governance group provided the PSP with a strategic group of senior leaders from key local agencies, these agencies had pledged their support to the goals of the PSP. During the Journey of the PSP this Governance framework provided a forum for committed and motivated leaders to take action to support the delivery goals of the PSP.*

Paula Arnold  
Current Interim Governor

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*The Low Moss PSP was ground breaking in so many ways. From the unique partnerships forged from a genuine commitment to change which created it, through to the previously unthinkable working arrangements which delivered such positive outcomes it set a positive landscape for future supports to a very vulnerable and challenging population. Whilst there is always disappointment when a service ends, the Low Moss PSP achieved its primary objective of showing what was possible and achievable through public sector and voluntary sector bodies truly coming together in the spirit of collaboration.*

Craig Winter  
Director of Business Development & Improvement, Turning Point Scotland

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*The Low Moss Public Social Partnership was an affirmation of many aspects of best practice. It affirmed the potency of a genuine blended collaboration of partners, from inception and design, through to delivery and continual fine-tuning. It affirmed the importance of a person-centred approach to working alongside individuals in planning their journey from custody to community. It affirmed the value of investing in good throughcare, which paid dividends for the individuals who benefitted, their families and communities.*

*It is perhaps though the unique design of Low Moss which I cannot shake from my conscious sense of what works well in throughcare. A mixed discipline of prison and community staff, worked as a single, unified team. Complete access to the prison for the team made it accessible in ways other services envied, and allowed out of hours and more informal contact. An accessible duty system offered a broader range of support, information and advice than would normally have been the offer in throughcare arrangements.*

*The real picture of the PSP was in meeting the team. It was not just the dedication and energy, but the inability to distinguish the prison officers from the community workers. The singularity of a team, with a breadth of expertise gave Low Moss a unique asset which was demonstrated in the performance reports.*

Tom Jackson  
Chair PSP Governance Group, 2012-2017

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*The Low Moss PSP has shown how partnership working can provide an enhanced and seamless service to prisoners from their time in prison to supporting them to re-integrate within their communities. It was evident that all parties were fully committed to delivering a quality service which focussed on the individual's needs.*

*The flexible and innovative approach in delivering the service at the point of need has clearly been shown. The use of the duty sessions provided greater access to the service which improved prisoner's awareness of the help available to them. The increased access to areas within the prison for the staff team also provided an enhanced the service that addressed the prisoners immediate needs.*

*Having met the whole team their commitment to supporting the individual from prison to their community is evident. The expertise across the partnership has been fully utilised to provide that 'one team' approach which has clearly benefitted the individuals who have accessed the support of the team.*

*There are a number of valuable lessons to be learned from Low Moss PSP in shaping the Throughcare services of the future.*

Morag Sweeney  
Chair PSP Governance Group, 2018 – 2020

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