



Connecting People to Effect Positive Change

**Between Offender Management and Reintegration:
The role of the Community and Voluntary Sector in high risk
offender transition from prison**



Connecting People to Effect Positive Change

IASIO STATISTICS

- **The Linkage Service**

- Prison in-reach guidance and placement service , for all offender categories
- Funded by the Probation Service and operational since 2000
- No. of persons referred = *17,335, No. of people reintegrated = 7,180
(* = 41,181 re-referrals of same persons)

- **The Gate Service**

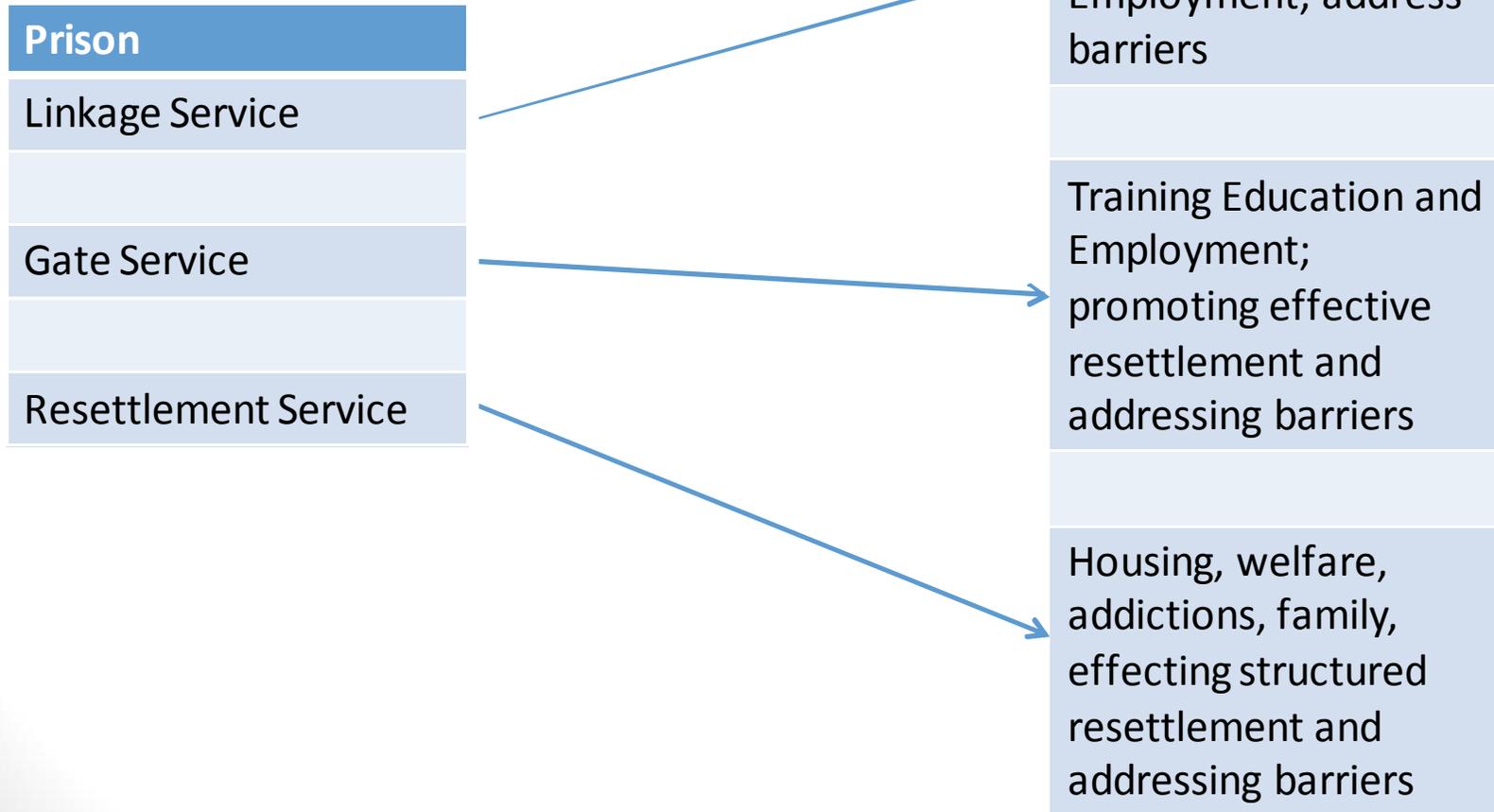
- Prison based guidance and placement service for all offender categories
- Funded by the IPS and in operation since 2007
- No. of persons referred = **4,491, No. of people reintegrated = 1,537
(** = 9379 re-referrals of same persons)

- **The Resettlement Service**

- Prison based resettlement support service for all offender categories
- Funded by the IPS and in operation since 2011
- No. of persons referred = ***1,276, No. of people resettled = 351;
(*** = 2151 re-referrals of same persons)



The Bridge to the Community





IASIO's reintegration work

- Reintegration is an ideal, it assumes something to be re-established
- Much of 'reintegration' work is about creating new pathways
- Reintegration is more than resettlement, it is the connection to pre-existing or new social networks that offer positive outcomes
- Reintegration is also less than resettlement, in that it comes afterwards
- Reintegration is a process and one perhaps with no fixed point



IASIO's reintegration work

- As a process it is useful to imagine it as taking place along a spectrum – at one end the completely excluded and marginalised prisoner with often only strained relationships, and on the other, the integrated individual, which implies on-going support from non-criminal sources
- Prison is always a point of exclusion, a primary reference point in all re-integrative work.
- The process of reintegration starts in the prison and for those most excluded, it is often the criminal justice professional who is that first point of trusted contact

Reintegration





An ideal in reintegration?

The Ideal:

- Early intervention
- A trusting relationship
- Clear definition and assessment of risk
- A multi-d approach to identifying and addressing risk
- A multi-d approach to identifying and addressing needs
- A multi-d approach to identifying supports and strengths
- A motivated and engaged client
- Realistic resettlement and reintegration plan centred on client, ideally developed with the prisoner and accepted by him or her
- Said plan shared with and accepted by community based CJ and non CJ professionals

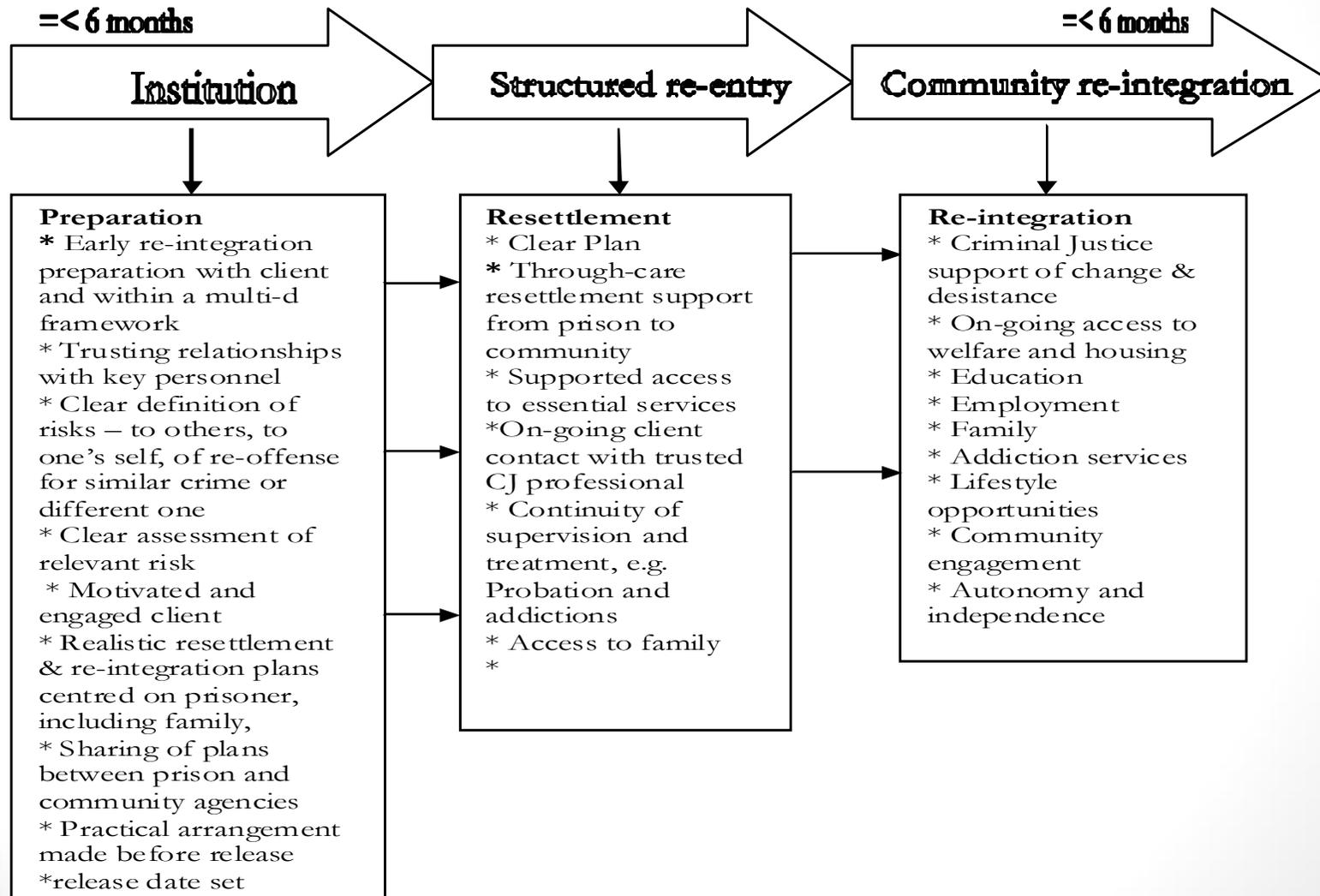


An ideal in reintegration?

The Ideal:

- Provision for the continuity of treatment from prison to community, e.g. sex offenders
- Clear role demarcations among CJ professionals
- Pre-release organisation of resettlement and reintegration (or steps towards it) arrangements, e.g. accommodation, medical, training education etc.
- Release timed to best achieve stable re-entry
- Community based actors and organisations notified of release date
- Process moves to the community

Ideal Reintegration?





Some cumbersome realities

Clients present with different capacities to engage of which there are **3 broad categories**:

- 1) those engaged
- 2) those able to engage but not engaged and
- 3) those unable to properly engage

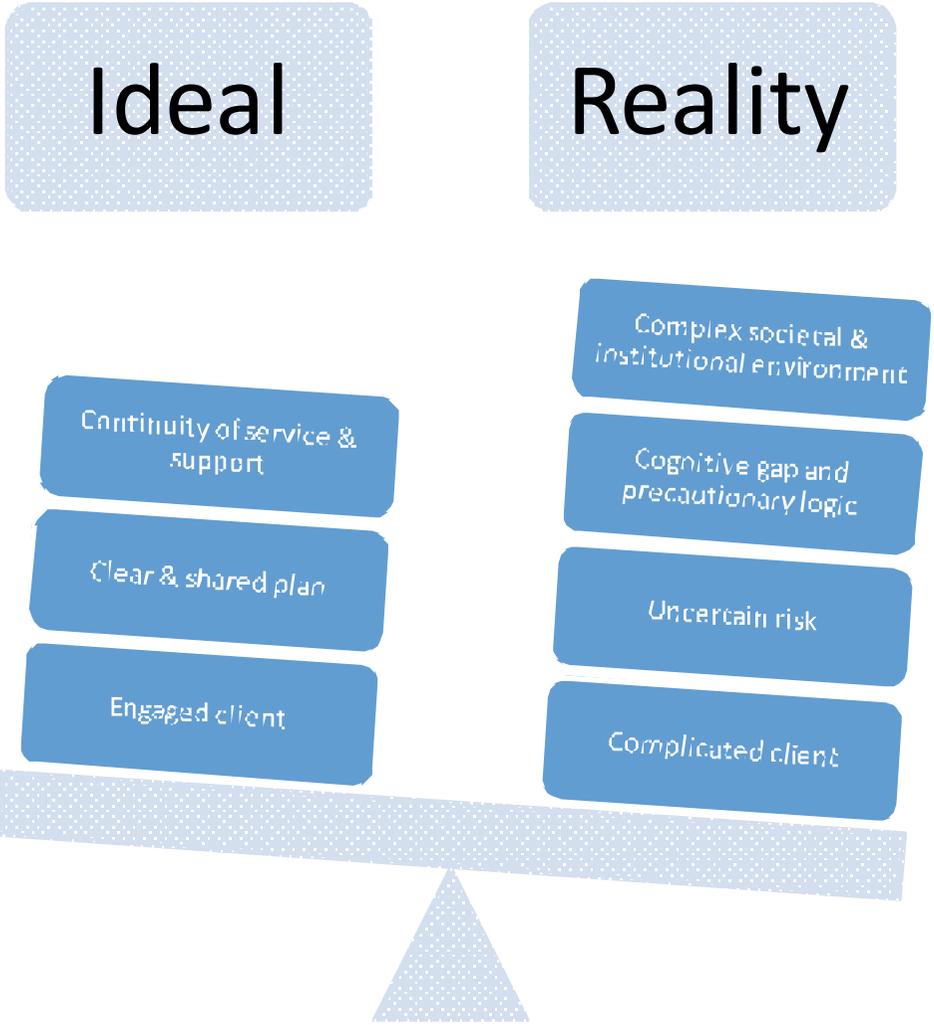
- Client risk can be uncertain
- Post release supervision orders effect the terms of re-integration but are not applied to every offender
- Institutions also have different capacities to engage around offender reintegration – e.g. prison mostly focuses on one side of the process, community organisations the other
- There is a ‘cognitive gap’ between the two, i.e. different ways of judging the offender and their circumstances



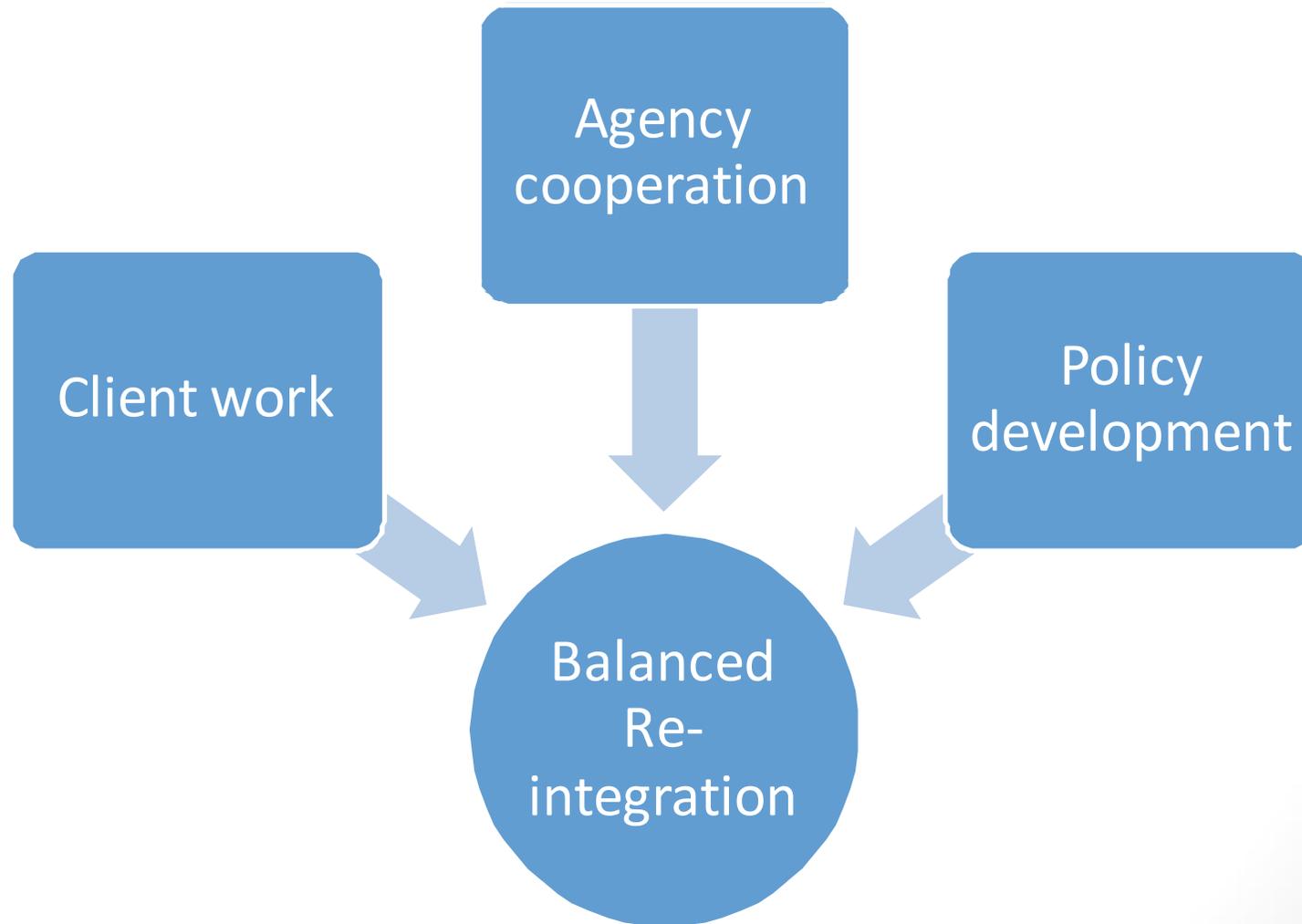
Some cumbersome realities

- This is known as precautionary logic the way thinking changes with the level of responsibility – the greater the responsibility for a client’s re-integration the more risk focused the practitioner
- There is an obvious gap in service provision between prison and community based agencies, which CJ professionals must navigate
- There is a not such an obvious gap in service provision within services, even those like ours that bridge the prison and the community
- Additionally, there can be a tension between what are otherwise good policies – child protection policies may complicate reintegration practice, e.g. even adult related offenders may be subjected to child related concerns and I refer here specifically to sex offenders
- Public perception is informed by media representation, which results in a tendency among the public to view all offenders as presenting an immediate threat.

Cumbersome realities vs. ideal reintegration



Achieving balance



Achieving Balance

Client Work

Effective service provision for engaged clients

Desistance focused interventions for those disengaged but able

Identify needs and strengths as well as risks

Encourage & motivate change

Tailored interventions for those unable to fully engage

Build the community into the release plan early on, both family & services

Imagine integration for each individual client

Agency Cooperation

Establish if there a lead agency in each resettlement, e.g. as arising out of post release supervision orders or distinct medical or psychological needs

Plan resettlement and reintegration within multi-d framework

Establish clear role boundaries between prison based agencies

Ensure confidential review process among prison based agencies

Manage contacts with community based organisations

Policy & Protocol Development

Establish release policies at prison level that inform release protocols and practice,

Establish referral protocols with training, and education providers in the community

Establish referral protocols with essential service providers, e.g. housing, addiction etc.

Engage media outlets, in particular national broadcast agency around the representation of offender issues, e.g. RTE audience council.

The Role of the Community and Voluntary Sector

Given the cumbersome realities, what is our role?

From the client perspective:

- In support of the risk management work of statutory agencies, provide desistance focused release planning with each client – develop approach goals (as part of multi d setting)
- Support and accompany each client during their release and in accessing essential services in the community – act as a bridge to the community
- Support and help develop the potential for independence and autonomy, e.g. through training, education and employment, and leisure or sporting activities
- Wean the client off criminal justice services and as soon as possible onto stable mainstream community based supports

The Role of the Community and Voluntary Sector

From the criminal justice perspective:

- Provide a source of potential trusting relationships for each prisoner
- Provide an informed support that enhances prisoner stability
- Provide a through-the-gate service to prisoners
- Provide a developed network of community supports and opportunities during the review and reintegration processes
- Inform core criminal justice agencies of opportunities and threats in the community, e.g. changes in recruiting practice among companies and training providers
- Act as an information conduit between community and criminal justice system
- Inform criminal justice policy development
- Enhance the release planning and resettlement process in each prison

IN SUMMARY

- As we have seen...what we have called 'Ideal Reintegration' above, is the product of balancing 3 different processes
- 'Ideal reintegration' can be recognised as a process taking place along a spectrum of potential exclusion
- There is an order to reintegration, 'Ideal' reintegration occurs after the more material and immediate needs of resettlement have been addressed
- IASIO believes that despite the complexity of the process(s) it is possible to come close to the 'Ideal' – reintegration policy, agency cooperation and client intervention can align to effect successful reintegration

SUMMARY cont'd

- However, we in IASIO also recognise that there will always be uncertainty, - the client group and the institution of prison are just too complex for it to be otherwise
- Each stakeholder has a stabilising role
- But for IASIO as a Community & Voluntary based organisation in Ireland, it is to bring the community and all its resources into contact with the prison and its prisoners. That is; to help the offender re-imagine themselves in the first instance (as much as possible), but also to create and maintain opportunities for progression to the community.

Thank you.