

## Final Report

# Evaluation of the Prolific Offenders Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing (PORCH) Project

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Rebekah Southern, Jill Annison,  
Fiona Vicente & Adam Fisher

Socio-economic Research and Intelligence Observatory  
*A University of Plymouth Centre of Expertise*

SERIO, Research & Innovation  
University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon PL4 8AA

tel: 01752 232747  
fax: 01752 233813

email: [rebekah.southern@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:rebekah.southern@plymouth.ac.uk)  
website: [www.serio.ac.uk](http://www.serio.ac.uk)



## Executive Summary

- ❖ The Prolific Offenders Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing (PORCH) Project was launched, following a six month developmental phase, as a pilot project in the Summer of 2006. The premise of the pilot was that the provision of appropriate accommodation and support for prolific offenders would have a positive effect on reducing their offending behaviour. Its primary aim was to reduce the number and seriousness of crimes committed by prolific offenders. Secondary and tertiary aims were to maximise the effectiveness of existing housing services and to intervene more proactively at key points including arrest, remand, sentencing and release from prison to ensure that housing needs are addressed.
- ❖ Since coming to power in 1997, the Labour Government has focused on crime reduction and an important element of this has been the development of the Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) strategy. Within the overall approach there are three complementary strands namely, '*prevent and deter*', '*catch and convict*' and '*rehabilitate and resettle.*' The PORCH Project is situated within the '*rehabilitate and resettle*' strand in relation to PPOs.
- ❖ Many studies have illustrated the importance of accommodation in reducing re-offending. Within the Region, the South West Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan 2006-08 sees improving the housing outcomes of PPOs as a key priority. Thus the Project also fits within the regional agenda.
- ❖ In October 2006, the Social Research & Regeneration Unit (SRRU), now the Socio-economic Research and Intelligence Observatory (SERIO) was commissioned, in conjunction with Dr Jill Annison from the Criminal Justice Team at the University of Plymouth, to conduct an external evaluation of the PORCH Project. The evaluation has followed the lifetime of the Project, encompassing a baseline setting, interim evaluation and final evaluation stage. This report presents the key evaluation findings from the final stage of the evaluation.
- ❖ During the autumn of 2006 an evaluation plan was drawn up for the Project, utilising both primary and secondary research methods. The plan was developed through an iterative process in conjunction with the PORCH staff, and in a format that could be continued beyond the period of the external evaluation. The plan included the development of a set of performance indicators against which the progress and impact of the

Project could be measured over time together with a series of in-depth case studies with a selection of PORCH beneficiaries. The research team has also engaged in an on-going review of relevant documentation and research in this area to help contextualise PORCH and learn lessons from other interventions.

- ❖ The following twelve performance indicators were selected as measures of the Project's success:
  - ❖ (1) Number of referrals allocated and agreed referral mechanism operating.
  - ❖ (2) Increased stability in PPOs housing circumstances.
  - ❖ (3) Effective combination of interventions delivered in a timely sequence to PPOs, including smooth processing of referrals.
  - ❖ (4) Close match between housing need and accommodation provided.
  - ❖ (5) Reduction in offending rates of PPOs.
  - ❖ (6) Greater willingness by accommodation providers to offer tenancies to PPOs and so increase the pool of accommodation.
  - ❖ (7) Early resolution of problems for accommodation providers - providers to receive prompt and constructive response to issues raised.
  - ❖ (8) Development of a common housing risk assessment tool and referral document for wide use by accommodation providers.
  - ❖ (9) Consolidation of the role of PORCH into PPO Unit with Staff and PPOU working co-operatively towards solutions.
  - ❖ (10) Greater awareness of PORCH within the housing and criminal justice community.
  - ❖ (11) PPOs benefiting from the introduction of Closing A Revolving Door (CARD) mentoring if considered helpful.
  - ❖ (12) Project sustainability. The value of PORCH being demonstrated through the evaluation process and plans in place for its longer-term sustainability by the close of the funding period.

- ❖ The evaluation found that PORCH has positively impacted on a number of factors within its remit. A comprehensive referral and assessment process has been established for PPOs that is considered to be appropriate and effective by all staff and referral routes to the Project have been extended. Although 13 of the 66 clients assessed chose not to engage further with the project, a cumulative total of 34 beneficiaries had been successfully housed in accommodation that is suitable within PORCH terms of reference by the end of November 2007.
- ❖ The pool of available accommodation has also increased through the Project and PORCH staff have adopted a proactive approach to the support of the providers who have been engaged. This may be seen as one of the ways in which the Project really adds value to existing activity and the approach taken should lead to increased co-operation with providers in the future.
- ❖ The impact of the successful accommodation placements on beneficiaries' re-offending rates is not straightforward to assess. This is a notoriously difficult area to measure, particularly over such a short time frame. Police analyst data shows an overall reduction in the offending rates of those who have been identified as PPOs within the catchment area over the lifetime of the Project. Although it was initially intended to aggregate the re-offending rates of the PPOs actually engaged with PORCH over the same timeframe and compare the two groups this has not been possible within the parameters of the Project. Some clients did not come into contact with PORCH until late in its life span and the Project could not be expected to have had an impact on those individuals until they had started to work with them. Likewise, time spent in custody both prior to, and since the commencement of, the Project skew the findings in some cases. Hence aggregated figures would have been misleading. However, on an individual case by case basis, the data seems to be showing early signs that some PORCH beneficiaries may be '*slowing down*' their criminal activities. This was also borne out through the detailed case studies.
- ❖ A number of softer impacts have clearly been achieved. These include the progress that has been made in co-operative working between the relevant criminal justice agencies and the levels of awareness of PORCH amongst the criminal justice and housing communities. Indeed one stakeholder expressed the view that PORCH is now vital to the success of other agencies.

- ❖ The detailed case studies also demonstrate how the wide-ranging emotional and practical support that has been provided to individuals has had some highly positive outcomes including gaining greater stability in their accommodation circumstances; in maintaining accommodation through periods of crisis and vulnerability; and, in achieving greater confidence in managing their accommodation. It has also led in some instances, to a desire to move forward with other aspects of their lives such as training and employment. The needs-led intervention packages provided by the PORCH team have been warmly welcomed by the case study beneficiaries and appear to have '*made a difference*' even to those who have subsequently returned to prison and/or who have dis-engaged from the Project.
- ❖ Looking to the future, sustainability remains an issue for PORCH, as it does for many similar projects. Although sources of funding have successfully been accessed for the extension of various Project activities and continuation funding has been secured until September 2008, the Project's longer-term prospects are, as yet, unclear. The Project is currently in the process of merging with Closing A Revolving Door (CARD) which, it is anticipated, may better position them for future funding opportunities.
- ❖ Some areas for future consideration were identified through the evaluation. At a strategic level, the longer-term sustainability of the Project needs to be considered. Although it is anticipated that the CARD-PORCH merger may better position the Project for future funding opportunities, careful consideration will need to be given to the operationalisation of the new structures and daily working practices to ensure that the integrity of the Project is maintained.
- ❖ On a related note it is also suggested that careful consideration be given to the monitoring protocols for the merged Project. Issues around consistent record keeping and the effective monitoring of PORCH activities were highlighted at interim stage of the evaluation. Staff have subsequently worked hard to remedy this and, although not all of the evaluation team's recommendations have been taken on board, significant improvements have been made in this area. It will be important to ensure the consistency and accuracy of future record keeping across the merged Project to establish the evidence base for future evaluation. This includes the systematic collation and review of the recidivism data which should enable a more definitive assessment of impact over time.

- ❖ Operationally, a key area for future consideration appears to be the very intensive level of support that is often required in order for the PORCH staff to achieve the results that have been demonstrated through the case studies. Although the case study element of the research has also shown that the intensity of support in some cases diminishes over time, as the beneficiary gains greater stability, the resource implications of this level of activity should nevertheless be recognised in terms of the Project's forward planning.
- ❖ Also of note are the calls for a common client support plan to further join-up provision between the different agencies involved in resettlement. Although barriers to this have been identified, they do not appear to be insurmountable and it is suggested that this would be a positive development for the future.
- ❖ An associated point for PORCH's consideration relates to the cessation of staff support when an individual is removed from the PPO list. Staff are understandably reluctant to withdraw support entirely in these circumstances until they are confident that full resettlement has been achieved. This necessarily impacts on workload demands and it is suggested that protocols would be useful for managing any resulting tensions.
- ❖ Although not necessarily within PORCH's remit to resolve, the evaluation has also highlighted calls for greater clarity in terms of how the patchwork of offender accommodation fits together. This would appear to be relevant for consideration within the wider criminal justice community.

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## Glossary of Terms

ABH	Actual Bodily Harm
CARAT	Counselling, Advice, Referral, Assessment and Through-care Team
CARD	Closing a Revolving Door
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CPN	Community Psychiatric Nurse
CRO	Community Rehabilitation Order
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCPA	Devon and Cornwall Probation Area
EATS	Exeter Accredited Tenant Scheme
ECI	Exeter Community Initiatives
EDP	Exeter Drugs Project – Drug and Alcohol Service
ENDAS	East and North Drug and Alcohol Service
GOSW	Government Office of the South West
HMA	Housing Market Area
HMP	Her Majesty’s Prison
HOE	Housing Operations Executive
INCASE	National Probation Service system for recording detailed offender notes
IRIS	Intensive Recidivist Intervention Scheme
LSD	Lysergic Acid Diethylamide
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OMU	Offender Management Unit
P-ASRO	Prison – Addressing Substance Related Offending
PORCH	Prolific Offenders Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing

PPO	Prolific and Other Priority Offender
PPOU	Prolific and Other Priority Offender Unit
ROM	Regional Offender Manager
SERIO	Socio-economic Research & Intelligence Observatory
SRRU	Social Research & Regeneration Unit
SWAG	South West Accommodation Gateway

## Evaluation of the Prolific Offenders Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing (PORCH) Project

### Section One: Introduction

#### 1.1 Background to the Project

The Prolific Offenders Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing (PORCH) Project was launched, following a six month developmental phase, as a pilot project in the Summer of 2006. It aimed to create a '*floating support service*' for dealing more effectively with prolific offenders in Exeter, East and Mid Devon who are supervised by the Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Unit (PPOU) in Exeter. The pilot, which was due to run until February 2008, is an Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI) Project, in partnership with Exeter City Council, the National Probation Service, HM Prison Service, Devon Partnership NHS Trust and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary.<sup>1</sup> It intended to develop an offender focussed and holistic approach to prolific offenders that co-ordinates housing with criminal justice and treatment pathways. The primary aim of PORCH was to reduce the number and seriousness of crimes committed by prolific offenders. Secondary and tertiary aims were to maximise the effectiveness of existing housing services and to intervene more proactively at key points including arrest, remand, sentencing and release from prison to ensure that housing needs are addressed.

The premise of the Project was that the provision of appropriate accommodation and support for prolific offenders would have a positive effect on reducing their offending behaviour. Housing advice and assistance have been provided through individual casework, together with practical help, tenancy support and sign-posting to other relevant agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> Exeter Community Initiatives is a local social inclusion and development charity. The project is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office (via the Government Office of the South West), Exeter City Council, Devon & Cornwall Probation Area, Tudor and Lankelly Chase Foundation, the Worshipful Weavers Company and the National Council for Social Concern with in-kind support from the Devon Partnership Trust.

## 1.2 Some Definitional Issues

It is worth stating at the outset that the definition of a '*prolific and other priority offender*' (PPO) is not clear cut. Whilst several attempts have been made to identify persistent offenders and the volume of crime for which they are responsible, community programmes tend to adopt different definitions and no two definitions of persistence lead to the identification of the same individuals (Newburn and Hagell, 1994, cited by Moore et al 2006). Amongst a number of definitional issues is the fact that eligibility is defined locally within the Prolific and other Priority Offender Strategy with legislation requiring each Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to identify the 15-20 most prolific offenders within their area, relating to the types of crime most prevalent within that particular area (Moore 2006).

Potential offenders who are suitable for referral onto the PORCH Project are determined by a multi-agency Steering Group, which forms part of the CDRP. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.2.1 of the report.

It is also important to note the distinction between persistence and seriousness. Persistent offenders are not necessarily committing the most serious crimes (Moore et al, 2006) and the PORCH Project typically works with offenders who commit what might be termed '*nuisance*' crimes. Nevertheless, these crimes can have a considerable impact on their victims and the wider communities.

All offenders who have been referred to PORCH were adults and the Project worked with both men and women, including those in custody as well as those in the community.

## 1.3 Aims of the Research

In October 2006, the Social Research & Regeneration Unit (SRRU), now the Socio-economic Research and Intelligence Observatory (SERIO) was commissioned, in conjunction with Dr Jill Annison from the Criminal Justice Team at the University of Plymouth, to conduct an external evaluation of the PORCH Project. The evaluation has followed the lifetime of the Project, encompassing a baseline setting, interim evaluation and final evaluation stage.

The over-arching aim of the evaluation is to establish a robust evidence base from which to demonstrate any benefits deriving from the approach developed through PORCH for dealing with prolific offenders. As such, the emphasis is very much on impact. However, because the Project has chosen to commission a rolling programme of evaluation throughout its lifetime, the process has also been used to inform Project development (i.e. containing both formative and summative elements). Further, the research team has worked closely with the PORCH staff in conducting the evaluation in order to develop, with them, appropriate methods for future self-evaluation that can be embedded within the core staff team and utilised beyond the period of external evaluation. This report presents the key evaluation findings from the final stage of the evaluation.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Report**

The first two sections of the report provide the contextual backdrop to the evaluation project. Specifically, Section Two discusses the methodology underpinning the evaluation, together with the evaluation plan and specific data collection methods used, and Section Three provides a brief overview of the policy context within which the PORCH Project sits. Sections Three and Four present the evaluation findings from the primary research, focusing on achievements against the Project's performance indicators (Section Four) and the case studies that have been conducted (Section Five). The concluding section of the report draws together the evaluation findings, offering some suggestions for the PORCH team's consideration as the Project moves into a new phase of activity.

It should be borne in mind whilst reading the report that the full impact of this type of initiative often takes much longer than the duration of the current evaluation to realise.

## Section Two: Methodology and Methods

### 2.1 Introduction

Project and programme evaluations can be undertaken for many reasons and can serve different purposes. The individual requirements of any given evaluation, together with the policy context, usually determine the evaluation approach taken and the specific methods used. As highlighted in the introduction to this report, the over-arching aim of the present evaluation is to establish a robust evidence base from which to demonstrate any benefits deriving from the approach developed through PORCH for dealing with prolific offenders. As such, the emphasis is very much on impact and this section of the report describes how the Project's success has been evaluated.

### 2.2 The Evaluation Approach

The PORCH Project lends itself to the conceptual framework used for the national evaluation of Health Action Zones. This combines '*realistic evaluation*' with a '*theories of change*' approach. A '*realistic*' approach to evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) recognises that a particular kind of strategy is required for programme or policy evaluation - one that does not aim to produce a causal account of the effectiveness of an intervention by looking to isolate the impact of various project or programme interventions from the effect of other factors. This is because there are likely to be too many interventions taking place, both outside and within the programme in question, to be able to state with any authority what causes a measurable impact. Rather, a realistic approach to evaluation seeks to develop an understanding of '*why a programme works, for whom and in what circumstances*'. Pawson and Tilley (1997) have also demonstrated how this approach can be used within a Criminal Justice Setting, with specific reference to a range of crime prevention initiatives.<sup>2</sup> Whilst many evaluations judge the success of such interventions primarily in terms of any reductions in the levels of custodial sentencing and/or reconviction rates (Moore et al, 2006), Pawson and Tilly's approach looks beyond the hard data to assess the processes underlying any change and also allows for measures of success

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<sup>2</sup> These include Laycock's (1985) evaluation of property marking as a means of reducing vulnerability to theft; Hope and Foster's (1992) evaluation of the Priority Estates Project's impact on crime; and, Pawson's own evaluation of an American Prison Education Programme.

to include 'softer' outcomes such as new ways of working. This is particularly important for the PORCH Project as it is recognised that:

*'...prolific offender projects are complex in terms of their multi-agency nature and the needs of their clientele. Their value should be judged beyond crime rates and cost-effectiveness, though these are of course important. Other criteria which should be taken into account include, on the one hand, health, educational and social benefits for participants and, on the other hand, improved multi-agency working and information exchange between project partners and improved intelligence on prolific offenders. Projects working intensively with prolific offenders might be best regarded as being of a maintenance nature – of buttressing primary desistance – rather than a short sharp intervention that acts as a cure-all...'* (Farrall, Mawby and Worrall 2007: 358-359).

'Theories of change' is the name given to an American approach to the evaluation of comprehensive community initiatives. It takes for granted that social programmes are based on:

*'...explicit or implicit theories about how and why the programme will work. The evaluation should surface those theories and lay them out in as fine detail as possible, identifying all the assumptions and sub-assumptions built into the program'* (Judge et al 1999).

A key element of this approach is that it encourages stakeholders involved in an intervention to make connections between the different components of their programme and how it works.

These approaches, which complement each other, have been developed to guide the assessment of social programmes operating in complex, open systems where it is considered inappropriate to use more rigorous, 'scientific' methods of evaluation - such as randomised control trials - which seek to determine cause and effect.

### **2.3 The Evaluation Plan**

Within this framework, during the autumn of 2006 an evaluation plan was drawn up for the Project, utilising both primary and secondary research methods. The plan was developed through an iterative process in conjunction with the PORCH staff, and in a format that could be

continued beyond the period of the external evaluation. The plan included the development of a set of performance indicators against which the progress and impact of the Project could be measured over time (see Section 2.3.1), together with an in-depth evaluation in the form of case studies of a selection of PORCH beneficiaries (see Section 2.3.2). The research team has also engaged in an on-going review of relevant documentation and research in this area to help contextualise PORCH and learn lessons from other interventions.

### 2.3.1 Performance Indicators and Baseline Setting

Working with the PORCH team, and utilising the work-plans and milestones that had already been established for individual members of PORCH staff, the research team initially developed a set of performance indicators against which the success of the Project can be judged. Consistent with Pawson and Tilley's (1997) approach, these included both '*hard*' and '*soft*' indicators which could be evidenced through a variety of sources. Specifically, the team has utilised valuable local data sources such as police data and probation records together with internal PORCH files to capture hard data, and an '*exit questionnaire*' was also developed to capture any changes in the circumstances and views of Project beneficiaries towards the end of their involvement with PORCH.

The hard data was supplemented with the findings from a series of stakeholder interviews in order to capture the '*softer*' accounts and perspectives of those involved, highlighting what has worked for whom and in what circumstances. This has included:

- ❖ PORCH Project managers/delivery staff (4);
- ❖ PPOs (through the case studies – see below) (7);
- ❖ PPOU/ Probation Staff (10- including EDP and ENDAS staff);
- ❖ Liaison Officer, HMP (Her Majesty's Prison) Exeter (1);
- ❖ Accommodation Adviser, (Her Majesty's Prison) Exeter (1);
- ❖ Strategic Housing Manager, Exeter City Council (1);
- ❖ Devon Supporting People staff (1);
- ❖ Coordinator for the Exeter Community Safety Partnership (1); and,
- ❖ Accommodation Providers (8).

A baseline position was established for each of the indicators selected, providing the research team with a clear '*starting point*' for the Project against which to chart any distance travelled over time. The '*hard*' indicators were updated in January 2007 and again at set intervals throughout the year, with a final assessment in November/ December 2007. Progress against the '*softer*' indicators has been determined through the interview process as the Project has progressed.

### **2.3.2 Case Studies**

In order to more fully understand the impact of the Project from the point of view of the offenders engaged, the research team has conducted a series of in-depth interviews with a selection of seven Project beneficiaries, which represents 10% of the projected number of beneficiaries to be assisted through the Project.

This qualitative aspect of the research focused on their expectations of, and satisfaction with, the Project and the level of intervention received, together with the perceived outcomes (positive or negative) that they have experienced as a result of their involvement. In order to triangulate the findings from this element of the research, a thorough analysis of their personal files has also been undertaken and the views of the relevant Project Workers have been garnered.

## Section Three: Policy Context

### 3.1 Introduction

Since coming to power in 1997, the Labour Government has focused on crime reduction and an important element of this has been the development of the Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) strategy. This initiative draws on Home Office research which indicates that:

*'Approximately 100,000 people (10 per cent of all offenders) are committing half of all crime in England and Wales at any point in time and a mere 5,000 people commit around 9 per cent of all crimes'* (Home Office 2003, 2004).

(Farrall, Mawby and Worrall 2007: 353)

However, it is important to recognise that this is a constantly changing scenario:

*'...the active offender population is not static, 20,000 individuals leave this pool every year and are replaced by another 20,000'* ([www.rpsouthwest.org.uk/Main/Default.asp?t=59&a=view](http://www.rpsouthwest.org.uk/Main/Default.asp?t=59&a=view)).

Within the overall approach there are three complementary strands namely, 'prevent and deter', 'catch and convict' and 'rehabilitate and resettle' ([www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppo/ppominisite.01.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppo/ppominisite.01.htm)). The 'rehabilitate and resettle' element is intended to provide interventions for such offenders in order to bring about change in behaviour and attitudes and 'to provide realistic routes out of crime' (Hancock 2007: 242).

The importance of this aspect of work is emphasised within the South West Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan 2006-08, which outlines the role played by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in identifying such offenders (NOMS SW 2006: 6). This level of engagement enables local areas to review and respond to:

- ❖ The nature and volume of crimes such offenders are committing;
- ❖ The nature and volume of other harm they are causing; and,
- ❖ Other local criteria taking into account the impact of the individual on their local communities.

([www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppo/ppominisiteO1.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppo/ppominisiteO1.htm))

The PORCH Project is situated within these national and regional strategies and, in particular, within the *'rehabilitate and resettle'* strand in relation to PPOs. Moreover, these developments and initiatives are situated in the context of the wider organisational changes that have taken place in this area of policy and practice over recent years. These include:

- ❖ The establishment of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in 2004, which is responsible for the strategic oversight and commissioning of work with sentenced offenders (see Hough, Allen and Padel 2006);
- ❖ The appointment of Regional Offender Managers (ROMs) who commission services at the regional level;
- ❖ The introduction of the NOMS Offender Management Model which standardises assessment and sentence planning processes (<http://noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/events/publications/strategy/offender-management-model-1.1?version=1>);
- ❖ The introduction across England and Wales of a standardized Offender Assessment System (OASys) *'intended to produce formal assessment of risk and need on which to base decisions about the allocation of service resources to individual offenders'* (Maguire and Raynor 2006: 23); and,
- ❖ The development of national and regional Reducing Re-Offending Action Plans and Strategies with seven pathways (including the Accommodation Pathway) ([http://noms.justice.gov.uk/managing-offenders/reducing\\_re-offending/reducing\\_re-offending\\_pathways/](http://noms.justice.gov.uk/managing-offenders/reducing_re-offending/reducing_re-offending_pathways/)).

### **3.2 Accommodation and Reducing Re-Offending**

Many studies have illustrated the importance of accommodation in reducing re-offending (Maguire et al, 2007; see also Elliott Marshall, Ramsay and Stewart, 2005). This is also reflected in the Home Office (2005) review of *'what works'* (Research Study 291 edited by Harper and Chitty) and has become increasingly accepted within policy circles. Nationally, prison service targets have been strengthened in this area and accommodation targets have been proposed for the Probation

Service (Maguire et al, 2007). Within the Region, the South West Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan 2006-08 sees improving the housing outcomes of PPOs as a priority (NOMS SW 2006: 27).

### 3.3 The Scale of the Problem

Although fully accurate data about where prisoners go on release from prison is unavailable, Home Office surveys indicate that around 30% of discharged prisoners return to the community without any accommodation in place, except perhaps a bed for the first few nights, and that over half do not return to 'permanent' accommodation (Niven and Olagundaye, 2002; Niven and Stewart, 2005 cited by Maguire et al, 2007). Based on data from a range of sources, Maguire et al's 2007 report on accommodation for ex-prisoners in the South West Region estimates that there are over 2,000 prisoners released into the South West who are in need of (and would welcome) greater assistance with housing. It also states that at least 600 of these would be keen recipients of accommodation linked with support services.

These statistics should be viewed in light of the crisis of available housing. The number of homes available for social housing has decreased over recent years as a result of Government Housing Policy at the same time as prices have risen dramatically within the housing market. Affordable housing is particularly problematic in the South West. As highlighted in the recent affordability and supply 2006 – 2011 document, entitled '*the South West's Housing Time Bomb*' (National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing, undated) the Region is the only one in the country with above average house prices, but below average incomes, a problem that is compounded by the continued growth of second or holiday homes.

Whilst these issues affect many vulnerable groups, there are particular problems facing many ex-prisoners which limit their access to housing, not least of which are the rules surrounding Housing Benefit applications which mean that benefits will only be paid up to 13 weeks from when they enter custody; local definitions of 'priority need' and the fact that private rented tenancy usually requires a deposit, together with rent in advance. These factors can also be compounded by the stigma of having been in prison, as well as the discrimination of providers towards ex-offenders (Maguire et al, 2007).

Further, these issues may be particularly significant for PPOs whose accommodation needs, according to a recent Home Office study based on OASys data, appear to be more strongly linked to their offending behaviour than is the case for other offenders (Dawson 2007). It is precisely these sorts of issues that the PORCH Project seeks to address and its successes to date are discussed in the following sections of the report.

## Section Four: Performance Indicators

### 4.1 Introduction

As highlighted in Section Two of the report, based on the work-plans and milestones that had already been established for individual members of PORCH staff, the research team has developed a set of 12 overarching performance indicators against which the success of the Project can be judged. These include output, outcome and process indicators, as follows:

- ❖ (1) Number of referrals allocated and agreed referral mechanism operating.
- ❖ (2) Increased stability in PPOs housing circumstances.
- ❖ (3) Effective combination of interventions delivered in a timely sequence to PPOs, including smooth processing of referrals.
- ❖ (4) Close match between housing need and accommodation provided.
- ❖ (5) Reduction in offending rates of PPOs.
- ❖ (6) Greater willingness by accommodation providers to offer tenancies to PPOs and so increase the pool of accommodation.
- ❖ (7) Early resolution of problems for accommodation providers - providers to receive prompt and constructive response to issues raised.
- ❖ (8) Development of a common housing risk assessment tool and referral document for wide use by accommodation providers.
- ❖ (9) Consolidation of the role of PORCH into PPO Unit with Staff and PPOU working co-operatively towards solutions.
- ❖ (10) Greater awareness of PORCH within the housing and criminal justice community.
- ❖ (11) PPOs benefiting from the introduction of Closing A Revolving Door (CARD) mentoring if considered helpful.
- ❖ (12) Project sustainability. The value of PORCH being demonstrated through the evaluation process and plans in place for its longer-term sustainability by the close of the funding period.

For each indicator, this section of the report discusses the Project's progress against the baseline position (September 2006), according to data supplied to the evaluation team by the PORCH staff at the most recent data collection phase (November/December 2007). The information is contextualised with reference to the findings from a series of stakeholder interviews that were conducted throughout the Project's life-span.

## 4.2 Progress to Date

### 4.2.1 Performance Indicator One: Number of Referrals Allocated and Agreed Referral Mechanism Operating

It is evident that the Project had almost reached its target number of referrals by the end of November 2007 with a comprehensive and appropriate referral process in place as can be seen from Table One.

**Table One: Performance Indicator One**

<b>Performance Indicator One:</b> Number of Referrals Allocated & Agreed Referral Mechanism Operating				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position Sept 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec 2007</b>
(a) 70 referrals allocated over lifetime of Project (30 PPOs managed at any one time).	PORCH files.	0 referrals at start of Project.	As at 01.01.07. a total of 31 cases received.	As at 30.11.07 a total of 66 referrals received.
(b) Appropriate and timely referrals coming through from the perspective of PORCH staff.	Stakeholder interviews and procedure documentation.	No mechanism in place at outset.	Comprehensive process for referral and assessment in operation.	Comprehensive process for referral and assessment in operation. Referral routes extended to include ENDAS, EDP and Police.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

The Project had, by the end of November, received 66 of the 70 anticipated referrals - with all 66 receiving some form of support - and the PORCH team expected an additional four to be achieved by Project close. This seems particularly likely since the referral routes were extended some time ago to include East and North Drug and Alcohol Service (ENDAS), Exeter Drugs Project – Drug and Alcohol Service (EDP), Prospects, the prison service via the PPO liaison officers and the police. The routes were extended to increase the early referral of PPOs:

EDP, for example, tends to be one of the first agencies that PPOs engage with as part of the arrest-referral process when admitted to police custody. More recently, PORCH's catchment area has also been extended to include Teignbridge in South Devon. The capacity for this expansion has come from Devon Supporting People monies in order to be coterminous with the Exeter Housing Market Area (HMA). Taken together these developments should ensure that the target number of referrals is achieved.

However, the interview process revealed some interesting issues around the identification of PPOs for referral onto the Project from the statutory agencies. As highlighted in the introduction to the report, potential offenders that are suitable for referral onto the PORCH Project are determined by a multi-agency Steering Group. This forms part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and decisions are made on the basis of information supplied by a range of agencies including Probation, the police, health, social services and the Local Authority with a Home Office '*tracking tool*' used for benchmarking purposes. Whilst in many ways the multi-agency approach to offender identification is a positive one (see for example, Dawson 2007), it was highlighted in interview that due to the '*nature of the beast*' decisions are not necessarily made on objective markers and the process was described by one interviewee as '*a bit of alchemy*'. Moore (2006) highlights the controversial nature of such arbitrary definitions, together with the issues surrounding the attempted targeting of persistent offenders which may result '*... in the detrimental labelling of a sub-group of offenders as innately criminal*' (Moore, 2006: 205). Although these issues are, to some extent, superfluous to the effectiveness of PORCH as a Project, they nevertheless raise interesting questions about whether the targeting is appropriate and effective.

A comprehensive process for referral and assessment has been drawn up for use once prospective PPOs have been identified. It has been in operation since September 2006 and was refined in January 2007 (target (b)). The evaluation team has been informed that this is used by all of the referral agencies and that the process is considered in principle, to be appropriate and effective as it allows for comprehensive information to be gathered on each offender. The process should also ensure that for those in custody, meetings with PPOs are able to be held well in advance of their release date in order that the accommodation selection process is carefully considered and, therefore, more likely to be successful.

At the Interim Evaluation it was pointed out that the success of the referral process in practice, however, relies upon referrals being received in adequate time to enable information to be gathered on individual PPOs and to allow accommodation selection procedures to be adhered to and, according to the stakeholder interviews, this did not always occur. It was highlighted that referrals could sometimes arrive with no definitive date of release which meant that, on occasions, release came suddenly with PORCH staff unprepared. Whilst it was acknowledged that in some instances cases were '*parachuted in*' with little warning for anyone in the PPOU, this was nevertheless seen as problematic particularly when dealing with complex criminogenic needs. It appears that these problems have been raised at appropriate meetings in order to agree a solution, and that improvements have been seen as the Project has progressed. However, the recent interviews indicate that protocols need attention to maintain effective practice.

#### **4.2.2 Performance Indicator Two: Increased Stability in PPOs Housing Circumstances**

Progress against this performance indicator has been less easy to establish at this stage. Although the pilot phase of the Project is currently drawing to an end, only 37 of the 66 referrals have, as yet, been closed as can be seen from Table Two. Further, only five exit questionnaires have been completed by those who have been closed due to successful placements.

**Table Two: Performance Indicator Two**

<b>Performance Indicator Two:</b> Increased Stability in PPOs Housing Circumstances				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position Sept 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec 2007</b>
Greater stability in housing circumstances for all 70 PPOs referred, determined at the point of their exit interview.	(a) PORCH files re: exit point.  (b) Analysed against the length of tenancy sustainment pre-PORCH taken from INCASE/OASys data and a narrative summary of the closed cases since previous reporting period.	By definition all offenders will have chaotic accommodation histories at the start of the Project.	Eight beneficiaries have, at least temporarily, been 'closed'.	37 of the 66 cases have been 'closed'.  29 clients currently supported (23 in the community, 6 in prison) of which 22 are in stable accommodation.  A total of seven exit questionnaires have been completed to date, five from those who have been successfully placed.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

PORCH records show a variety of reasons for the 37 closures to date:

- ❖ 13 chose not to engage further with the Project, after assessment, stating that they already had accommodation;
- ❖ Two inappropriate referrals were received (both having long sentences to serve);
- ❖ Seven have now moved out of the area;
- ❖ The whereabouts of one is unknown;
- ❖ Nine have returned to prison for more than six months; and,
- ❖ Five have been successfully housed and no longer require PORCH support.

Exit questionnaires have been completed by five beneficiaries who have been successfully placed and no longer require PORCH support, all of whom believe their accommodation to be suitable to their needs. All five had experienced particularly unstable accommodation circumstances pre-PORCH including periods of sofa surfing, time spent in drug-rehabilitation programmes and in short-term tenancies.

In terms of PORCH's current caseload, six are, at present, in prison and all but one of the remaining twenty three have been placed in some form of accommodation, and have therefore achieved greater stability in their housing circumstances. However, not all of them are in currently in the most appropriate accommodation for their individual needs and the team continue to work with them to achieve this. Anecdotal evidence gathered suggests that the degree of success is dependent upon the individual offender and the complexity of their personal circumstances.

#### **4.2.3 Performance Indicator Three: Effective Combination of Interventions Delivered in a Timely Sequence to PPOs, Including Smooth Processing of Referrals**

Performance indicator three includes several targets relating to the combination and delivery of interventions (Table Three). Overall, achievements against these targets has been variable and missing data has, in places, rendered it difficult to track distance travelled.

Table Three: Performance Indicator Three

<b>Performance Indicator Three:</b> Effective Combination of Interventions Delivered in a Timely Sequence to PPOs, Including Smooth Processing of Referrals				
Target	Evidence Base	Baseline Position Sept 2006	Position at Interim Evaluation	Position at Nov/Dec 2007
(a) An offender to be seen by PORCH 14 days after a referral is received if in a local prison, three weeks if further a-field.	PORCH records.	Mechanisms in place for referrals at start of Project.	Dates of receipt of referral and first contact being recorded. This information will be incorporated onto a database and / or spreadsheet.  Spreadsheet now operating, database still a few weeks away.	Offenders seen under two weeks – 28.  Offender seen between 2-3 weeks – 5, of which 3 were from local prisons.  Offender seen over 3 weeks – 10.  Not recorded – 13.  Referral made but no interview taken place - 10 .
(b) Inclusion of PORCH objectives in sentence plan.	Analysis of objectives in sentence plans.  Interviews with PORCH staff.	Alignment between PORCH and probation staff re: sentence plan being established.	All appropriate referrals backed up by accommodation objective in the sentence plans (In Reviews for those cases before October and in the Initial SP subsequently).	All referrals back up by accommodation objective in sentence plan (In reviews for those cases before October and the Initial SP subsequently).
(c) All offenders asked to complete a pre-referral questionnaire, a questionnaire at key 'milestones' and an exit questionnaire. 70% of beneficiaries reporting satisfaction with PORCH experience at exit stage.	Completed feedback forms.	Pro-forma in preparation.	Pro-forma in use as from January.	Of the 7 exit questionnaires completed, 100% have reported satisfaction with PORCH experience.
(d) Reduction in offenders' drug & alcohol dependency.	ENDAS data.	N/A.	ENDAS data inconsistently presented and CPN narrative unavailable.	Data currently unavailable due to ENDAS staffing issues.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

Although a system was put in place following the commencement of the Project whereby dates of receipt of referral and first contact could be recorded, at the Interim Evaluation stage, data was only available for six of the referrals. This indicated that, for three of them the date of the first meeting was *less* than 14 days after the date of referral and for the remaining three the date of the first meeting was *more* than 14 days after

referral. However, information was not supplied as to whether, at the time of referral, they were in a local prison or one further afield, meaning that progress in relation to target (a) could not be fully reported. A recommendation was made for the Project to maintain accurate records of referral and first meeting dates, together with the location of the offender's prison and to ensure that records are kept for a higher proportion of beneficiaries. This has subsequently been implemented and a detailed breakdown of the figures is as follows:

- ❖ Seen less than 14 days after receipt of referral:
  - Community – 18
  - HMP Exeter – 3
  - HMP Dartmoor – 5
  - HMP Channings Wood – 1
  - HMP Guys Marsh – 1
  
- ❖ Seen more than 14 but less than 21 days after receipt of referral
  - Community – 1
  - HMP Dartmoor – 2
  - HMP Channings Wood – 1
  - HMP Moreton Hill – 1
  
- ❖ Seen more than 21 days after receipt of referral
  - Community – 5
  - HMP Dartmoor – 3
  - HMP Exeter 1
  - HMP Leyhill – 1

The remainder were either unrecorded (13) or the referral has been made but the interview has not yet taken place (10).

Of the 43 referrals where data is available, 29 (excluding those in the community) were seen within the set time-span. The interview process revealed that where clients were seen outside of the specified time frame it is often due to that individual's lack of responsiveness and in one case an on-going refusal to engage, as well as the time needed to get an interview slot and occasionally health reasons. However, it can also be dependent upon the PORCH team's existing workload. Some prisons

have video conference links which can and have been used by the PORCH team for those further afield. However, the technology is not universally available at the present time.

Target (b) has, however, now been fully achieved. At the time of the Interim Evaluation a steady increase in the inclusion of PORCH objectives (i.e. those relating specifically to housing) within the sentence plans was noted, although at that time there was still felt to be some inconsistencies within the approach. However, in acknowledgement of the importance of the housing objective, contact with PORCH is now enforceable. The service offered is usually welcomed by clients and results in a high level of co-operation so that sanctions for non-compliance are rarely needed. The interviews suggested that this operational change was specifically made to align PORCH with *'key contacts from other disciplines within the PPO unit'*, which are enforceable and that this has improved the situation.

With regard to target (c), at the time of the Interim Evaluation pro-forma questionnaires had only recently been developed for use at the pre-referral stage, at key milestones and at the exit stage in order to monitor progression and levels of satisfaction with the PORCH Project and their usage was found to be somewhat patchy. Although efforts have subsequently been made to use the forms systematically, PORCH staff have noted the difficulties in administering the exit questionnaires to those who have moved out of the area or who do not wish to engage. They also have to rely on the co-operation of prison staff for those who have returned to prison. In total, only seven have been completed. More positively, however, of those seven, 100% reported satisfaction with their PORCH experience.

Finally, at the time of writing, there have been some difficulties in evidencing achievements in relation to target (d) in view of ENDAS staffing issues.

#### **4.2.4 Performance Indicator Four: Close Match between Housing Need and Accommodation Provided**

With a cumulative total of 34, the Project has achieved its target of 50% of cases being placed in suitable accommodation within PORCH terms of reference (Table Four).

**Table Four: Performance Indicator Four**

<b>Performance Indicator Four:</b> Close Match Between Housing Need and Accommodation Provided				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position Sept 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec 2007</b>
Close match between housing need and accommodation provided for 50% of all PPOs referred.	Pre-engagement questionnaire, Hub document & PORCH files (nb.OASys).	N/A.	17 in accommodation regarded as suitable within PORCH terms of reference.	22 in accommodation regarded as suitable in PORCH terms of reference.  Cumulatively 34 found or currently in suitable accommodation.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

During the interviews PORCH staff were asked to specify what they regarded as '*suitable accommodation*' within their terms of reference. This revealed that certain standards such as maintenance and cleanliness were applicable to all beneficiaries, but that other measures of suitability vary according to need. Indeed, interviews revealed that the Project takes a very offender-centred approach to accommodation placement. Thus, for example, a beneficiary with Deep Vein Thrombosis might be placed on the ground floor of a building to avoid excessive walking while an examination of a person's history, capability and stage of recovery from alcohol or drug dependency would also inform the nature of their accommodation. As highlighted in 4.2.2 above, although not all beneficiaries on PORCH's caseload are currently in the most ideal accommodation for their needs, it can in all but one of the cases, be regarded as suitable.

Finding the most appropriate accommodation was viewed by staff as being a fundamental, although time consuming, aspect of PORCH, both from the beneficiary's perspective, to ensure they are living somewhere that is safe and suitable for them, but also from the landlord's perspective in order that a longstanding relationship with PORCH might be sustained. Interviews with staff indicated that both the geographical location of the accommodation, and the type of accommodation offered tend to be important considerations here.

#### 4.2.5 Performance Indicator Five: Reduction in Offending Rates of PPOs

Performance indicator five is concerned with measuring PPOs' re-offending rates. This is vital for PORCH as it reflects one of the key aims of the Project. However, it is important to note the difficulties that are inherent in any attempts to measure re-offending. Whilst reconviction rates are a standard measure of re-offending, the shortcomings of this measure are well known (see for example, Le Vay's NOMS briefing paper 1/04; Merrington and Stanley, 2007). These include the time delay in being able to access data and the fact that they undercount *actual* offending; together with the fact that they are affected by changes in police and prosecution practice and are subject to technical difficulties such as offences being committed prior to an intervention but which do not reach sentence until after or during the intervention.

Notwithstanding these issues, as can be seen from Table Five, it was agreed that global recidivism data for the geographical area covered by the Project would be used as a crude measure of success, comparing rates for the 15 months prior to the establishment of PORCH with the rates during its 15 months of operation. The figures show an overall reduction in offending rates for PPOs during the lifetime of the PORCH Project.

It was initially intended, as a second measure, to aggregate the re-offending rates of the PPOs actually engaged with the Project and compare the two groups. However, this was not possible over such a short time frame. Most studies consider re-offending rates over at least a two year follow up period. Although it has recently become more common to use a twelve month follow up (Merrington and Stanley, 2007), even this has not been possible within the context of the PORCH evaluation. This is particularly important considering that whilst some clients engaged with the Project at its inception (which would have been the starting point for the aggregated data), many others did not come into contact with PORCH until much later in its life span and the Project could not be expected to have had an impact on those individuals until they had started to work with them. Likewise, time spent in custody both prior to and since the commencement of the Project would have skewed the findings in some cases.

**Table Five: Performance Indicator Five**

<b>Performance Indicator Five:</b> Reduction in Offending Rates of PPOs				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position September 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec2007</b>
(a) Crude measure = reduction in overall offending rates.  Comparison of figures for all PPOs in 15 months prior to start of PORCH and the period between the start of the Project and end of Nov 2007.	Police analyst data.	469 known offences committed between 01/06/05 and 31/08/06.	Data unavailable.	276 known offences committed between 01/09/06 and 30/11/07.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

What is more revealing is to consider the individual journeys of the PPOs who have engaged with the Project. Table Six below presents the data relating to those who have engaged with PORCH (and who have agreed for their data to be shared with the evaluation team and who signed the data protection protocol), showing each individual's known number of offences in the 15 months prior to the start of the Project, and their known number of offences between Project commencement and the end of November 2007. In light of the differentiated starting dates, columns three and four also show the date of their first engagement with the Project<sup>3</sup> and the known number of known offences since that date. The final column also shows any time spent in custody.

<sup>3</sup> Some PORCH clients have had sporadic engagement with the Project. The Table shows the date of their first engagement only; it does not include an analysis of subsequent time spent/not spent engaged with PORCH.

Table Six: Detailed Breakdown of PORCH Client Data

PPO Marker	Number of Offences Between 01/06/05 and Start of PORCH	Number of Offences Between start of PORCH and 30/11/07	Date of First Engagement with PORCH	Number of Offences Between First Engagement with PORCH and 30/11/07	Time Spent in Custody since 01/06/05
A	0	0	02/10/06	0	11/04/05 – 15/01/07
B	0	0	28/09/06	0	04/08/06 – 08/05/07
C	20	28	30/09/06	25	23/05/05 – 16/09/05 11/11/05 – 08/12/05 10/02/05 – 10/04/06 29/04/06 – 18/07/06 27/07/06 – 29/09/06 23/10/06 – 22/12/06 17/01/07 – 13/04/07 30/05/07 – 16/08/07 11/09/07 – 12/11/07 10/12/07 – date
D	2	0	09/10/06	0	05/09/05 – 06/09/05 25/11/05 – 24/11/06 03/02/07 – 30/07/07 11/10/07 – date
E	0	6	02/11/06	3	03/05/05 – 30/09/05 27/02/06 – 31/03/06 29/04/06 – 11/08/06
F	4	1	15/02/07	1	14/06/06 – 07/08/06 20/08/06 – 31/01/07 19/05/07 – 08/08/07
G	11	2	28/12/06	1	04/04/05 – 13/10/05 13/05/06 – 18/05/06 01/06/06 – 31/08/06 02/11/06 – 13/04/07 28/05/07 – 05/07/07 19/07/07 – 11/09/07 15/10/07 – 18/10/07

Table Six: Detailed Breakdown of PORCH Client Data (Continued)

PPO Marker	Number of Offences Between 01/06/05 and Start of PORCH	Number of Offences Between Start of PORCH and 30/11/07	Date of First Engagement with PORCH	Number of Offences Between First Engagement with PORCH and 30/11/07	Time Spent in Custody since 01/06/05
H	7	6	05/10/06	5	24/05/05 – 17/06/05 31/03/06 – 15/05/06 17/05/06 – 25/05/06 14/09/06 – 04/10/06
I	1	5	21/09/06	5	18/07/03 – 20/09/06 31/01/07 – 01/03/07 10/05/07 – date
J	0	5	02/11/06	0	07/11/03 – 22/07/05 29/09/05 – 10/05/06 25/05/06 – 24/02/07 28/05/07 – 06/07/07
K	1	6	05/04/07	4	–
L	0	0	05/07/07	0	16/11/01 – 26/03/07 31/08/07 – date
M	0	0	23/10/06	0	22/03/05 – 07/06/06 16/09/06 – 15/11/06 25/01/07 – 13/04/07
N	6	2	15/06/07	0	14/05/05 – 07/09/05 24/12/05 – 26/01/06 17/03/06 – 12/05/06 28/08/06 – 09/10/07
O	0	0	24/10/06	0	06/04/05 – 16/02/07 05/07/07 – date

Table Six: Detailed Breakdown of PORCH Client Data (Continued)

PPO Marker	Number of Offences Between 01/06/05 and Start of PORCH	Number of Offences Between Start of PORCH and 30/11/07	Date of First Engagement with PORCH	Number of Offences Between First Engagement with PORCH and 30/11/07	Time Spent in Custody since 01/06/05
P	10	0	21/09/06	0	15/11/05 – 22/11/05 06/06/06 – 09/02/07 14/03/07 – 14/05/07 18/07/07 – 05/10/07
Q	0	0	02/10/06	0	13/10/04 – 16/11/06
R	0	4	09/10/06	4	11/12/03 – 19/06/05 23/06/05 – 19/12/06 26/07/07 – date
S	0	9	12/10/06	2	14/05/05 – 12/12/05 11/01/06 – 30/03/06 02/05/06 – 14/07/06 25/07/07 – 04/10/07
T	7	1	01/02/07	1	04/08/05 – 28/09/05 29/07/06 – 03/08/06 08/08/06 – 11/08/06 29/09/06 – 14/02/07
U	9	14	01/10/07	0	01/08/05 – 04/03/05 08/10/05 – 17/02/06 26/06/07 – 06/09/07
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>N/A</b>

The more detailed data seems to show early signs that some PORCH beneficiaries may be '*slowing down*' although the time-frame of the research is rather limited in which to reach any conclusions. The concept of '*slowing down*' has been used by Roberts (2007) in his evaluation of the Intensive Recidivist Intervention Scheme (IRIS) in Oxford. He identified a group of '*desisters*' who showed dramatic reductions in known offending following their engagement with the Scheme; a '*slowing down*' group who had fewer and often less serious reconvictions than in their previous criminal careers; and, a group of '*persisters*' who were still criminally active, with a somewhat reduced volume of known re-offending but whose reconvictions tended to remain serious. PPO Markers 'C' and 'H' clearly fall into this final category. It would be beneficial to evaluate the more detailed data over a longer period of time, thus allowing for a more robust assessment of the Project's impact in this important area.

#### **4.2.6 Performance Indicator Six: Greater Willingness by Accommodation Providers to Offer Tenancies to PPOs and so Increase the Pool of Accommodation**

It is evident that progress has been made against performance indicator six over the lifetime of the Project, as indicated by Table Seven.

Table Seven: Performance Indicator Six

<b>Performance Indicator Six:</b> Greater Willingness by Accommodation Providers to Offer tenancies to PPOs and So Increase the Pool of Accommodation				
Target	Evidence Base	Baseline Position Sept 2006	Position at Interim Evaluation	Position at Nov/Dec 2007
(a) Increase in number of accommodation providers engaged over time.	PORCH internal records.	0 accommodation providers engaged at the outset.	11 accommodation providers engaged:  Exeter City Council – 2 East Devon District Council - 1 Mid Devon Council – 1 Prospects – 4 Goldmax – 5 Dave Ellis – 3 The Amber Foundation – 1 Howell Road Hostel – 2 Gabriel House – 2 Signpost – 2 Magna – 1  NB other placements have been made with family and friends but are not recorded here as 'providers'.	15 accommodation Providers engaged:  Exeter City Council - 6 East Devon DC – 3 Mid Devon DC – 1 Prospects – 7 Goldmax – 9 Dave Ellis 10 The Amber Foundation – 1 Howell Road Hostel – 2 Gabriel House -5 Signpost – 3 Magna – 2 Sanctuary HA – 1 DCPA approved Hostel – 2 Morwenna - 1 Oakfields – 3  8 additional providers have been willing to accept referrals but no placements have been offered.
(b) Increase in number of individual units available.		0 units provided.	24 units provided (see above).	55 units provided (see above).
(c) Number of new private sector landlords contacted against number of referrals made and accepted over time.		No landlords contacted.	5 landlords approached. 3 offered placements.	6 landlords approached 4 offered placements.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

There has been an increase in the number of accommodation providers engaged by PORCH over time (target a), with no engagements as at September 2006 and 11 engagements as at January 2007, rising to 23 by the end of November 2007 with an additional eight willing to accept referrals. Whilst these eight providers are supportive in principle, the lack of placements to date reflects the fact that no suitable prospective tenants have yet been referred. The eight who been willing to accept referrals but have not yet received placements are as follows:

- ❖ Monks Road;
- ❖ 49/50 Magdalene Road;
- ❖ Ashdown Lodge;
- ❖ Riverside Court;
- ❖ YMCA;
- ❖ Bridge Project;
- ❖ The Haven; and,
- ❖ Esther Community.

A number of the providers had not previously been used by Probation and can therefore be seen as truly '*new*' providers.

There has also been a concurrent increase in the number of accommodation units available (target (b)), from no units in September 2006 to 24 units as at January 2007 and 59 as at November 2007 which represents considerable success.

To date six new private sector landlords have been approached and invited to offer tenancies (target c). Two were declined by PORCH, one due to location and the other due to cost, and a further provider who had initially offered five bed-spaces withdrew as a result of a decision to sell the property. Two of the others are used regularly and the final provider has offered four bed-spaces subject to partnership working with another agent.

At the Interim Evaluation stage, PORCH had made most significant inroads with the private sector. It was felt at that stage that there had not been an increase in the *willingness* of other sectors to provide accommodation. This was attributed in part to the '*internal politics*' amongst other agencies, and in part to the fact that information was not shared between accommodation providers which could be used to showcase success stories and thereby induce an increased willingness amongst them to provide. More latterly, however, Local Authority support is perceived to be growing with a number of dedicated bed-spaces having been made available to PORCH.

Interviews with accommodation providers from across the different sectors have shown their willingness to continue to work with PORCH. However, a perception was expressed that, particularly for Local

Authorities, it would be more straightforward if PORCH's criteria were widened - both geographically and by working with anyone who had been released from prison (not just PPOs). These are likely to be addressed through future developments.

#### 4.2.7 Performance Indicator Seven: Early Resolution of Problems for Accommodation Providers – Providers to receive Prompt and Constructive Response to Issues Raised

Again systems have been put in place in relation to performance indicator seven as can be seen from Table Eight, and the Project's approach to work with accommodation providers may be seen as one of the areas in which it really '*adds value*' to existing local provision.

**Table Eight: Performance Indicator Seven**

Performance Indicator Seven: Early Resolution of Problems for Accommodation Providers – Providers to Receive Prompt and Constructive Response to Issues Raised				
Target	Evidence Base	Baseline Position Sept 2006	Position at Interim Evaluation	Position at Nov/Dec 07
(a) Acknowledgement of calls within one working day.	PORCH Log.	PORCH log set up to record calls and response.	Daily telephone log in place.	Daily telephone log in place.
(b) Out of hours response set up.	Internal records and PORCH log.	Exploration of Lawson House as an out of hours services.	Lawson House now set up and in operation. One query received.	Lawson House acts as out-of-hours contact One query received.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

Information provided shows that a log was set up to record calls from accommodation providers and the response to these calls (target a). However, the nature and speed of the response has not been detailed. It was suggested at the Interim Evaluation that the Project records information relating to this log so that the percentage of calls that have been acknowledged within one working day can be monitored. This has only recently been formally implemented. Hence supporting data is not available. However, interviews with staff suggest that as part of their good working practices they automatically respond to calls as soon as they are available.

The Lawson House Out-of-Hours Service (target b) was successfully set up to enable round the clock support to providers. The agreement with Lawson House allows PORCH landlords, as with CARD mentors, to make contact with the Lawson House Duty Manager 'out of hours' should this be needed. On receipt of a call, the Duty Manager would then act in an advisory capacity or refer queries on to a member of PORCH staff or, in the case of an emergency, to the police. However, this service has not been used to the extent that PORCH initially anticipated, having only received one query to date. The view expressed was that most issues can wait until the following day.

More generally, information gathered during interviews with both staff and providers revealed that the Project has adopted a proactive approach to the support of accommodation providers. Regular telephone contact is kept with providers and, where appropriate, meetings are held with individual providers to monitor the success of the placements and any emergent issues. In addition, PORCH staff make themselves accessible throughout accommodation placements and offer continuous support that can be accessed when needed.

From a provider point of view the open exchange of information around issues such as when a client returns to custody and risk assessment has been particularly welcomed. PORCH staff have also been commended by providers for being realistic in their expectations. Notwithstanding these highly positive findings, however, one accommodation provider in particular recommended implementing a better 'paper trail' for their placements and more generally it was suggested that further clarity is needed regarding how offender accommodation fits together. For example, how PORCH fits with other agencies such as Prospects and St Petrock's and its strategic fit with accommodation strategies. Although this may be beyond PORCH's individual remit to resolve, it should be borne in mind for future planning within a multi-agency context.

#### **4.2.8 Performance Indicator Eight: Development of a Common Housing Risk Assessment Tool and Referral Document for Wide-Use by Accommodation Providers**

The development of a common housing risk assessment tool and referral document was borne out of an identified need to consolidate the information exchange process between accommodation providers and

practitioners to reduce the duplication of information. However, there have been a number of changes to the way in which PORCH has addressed this performance indicator over time (Table Nine).

**Table Nine: Performance Indicator Eight**

<b>Performance Indicator Eight: Development of a Common Housing Risk Assessment Tool and Referral Document for Wide-use by Accommodation Providers</b>				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position Sept 2007</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec 07</b>
PORCH contribution to this process through Devon Supporting People team.	PORCH internal records.  Minutes of relevant forum meetings.	Lack of common housing risk assessment tool and referral document.	Membership of 'The Hoe' accommodation forum-as vehicle to progress the issue of common referral/assessment/risk tool.	SWAG to take forward common assessment tool. PORCH piloted but discontinued use.  PORCH to offer support to Homeless Collaboration Project.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

Information supplied at the Interim Evaluation stage indicated that PORCH did not have a fixed arrangement within Devon Supporting People's structure, and that the Project contributed to the formation of various strategic documents in relation to housing via the Housing Operations Executive (HOE) forum meetings. The stakeholder interviews at that point in time also indicated that there may have been other, more appropriate fora, in which to proceed with the common risk assessment and referral work and it was anticipated that some of it might be taken forward through ECI's Project Development Manager.

PORCH's relationship with Devon Supporting people remains unclear although it has received a substantial grant from their non-recurrent under-spend. However, more latterly the NOMS common referral form has been piloted by the South West Accommodation Gateway (SWAG). SWAG is a two year regional pilot project, funded by the Ministry of Justice, to test out the effectiveness of the Gateway model in meeting offenders' accommodation needs. It is intended to provide a single point of access to accommodation advice and support, based in the community within the following three areas: Plymouth, Dorset and Bristol. The Gateway services aim to reduce re-offending and crime by both preventing and reducing the homelessness of offenders in the community and on release from prison. This is to be achieved through

building strategic relationships with housing and housing support providers, including those from the voluntary sector; and seeking to influence access to accommodation. The South West was selected to run this pilot because of, amongst other things, the particular challenges it faces in relation to affordable housing.<sup>4</sup> PORCH was invited to participate in the common referral form pilot process. In the event, however, it was only used with five cases because it was perceived to be unwieldy in its first format and because it was not used locally by either Probation (for assessment) or accommodation providers (for referral). PORCH supports the concept and would consider re-engagement if it is in a more user friendly format and if providers accept it as a referral document. Current activity is underway in this regard.

A further development has also occurred in that PORCH will be able to offer support and assistance to the Homeless Collaboration Project. This seeks to streamline the assessment and referral processes into accommodation in the local area.

#### **4.2.9 Performance Indicator Nine: Consolidation of the Role of PORCH into PPO Unit with Staff and PPOU working Co-operatively Towards Solutions**

Information supplied to the evaluation team indicates that progress in relation to performance indicator nine has been substantial as can be seen from Table Ten.

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<sup>4</sup> information obtained from [www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/noms-regions/south-west/swag](http://www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/noms-regions/south-west/swag) and from SWAG newsletters at:  
[http://rrpsouthwest.org.uk/UserFiles/00000185\\_May%20Newsletter.doc](http://rrpsouthwest.org.uk/UserFiles/00000185_May%20Newsletter.doc) and  
[http://www.rrpsouthwest.org.uk/UserFiles/00000249\\_June%20Newsletter.doc](http://www.rrpsouthwest.org.uk/UserFiles/00000249_June%20Newsletter.doc) on 22/11/2007).

**Table Ten: Performance Indicator Nine**

<b>Performance Indicator Nine:</b> Consolidation of the Role of PORCH into PPO Unit with Staff and PPOU Working Co-operatively Towards Solutions				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position Sept 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec 2007</b>
(a) Links developed and maintained between PORCH and PPOU through weekly meetings and monthly strategic level meetings.	Stakeholder interviews.	N/A.	Regular pattern of attendance at these meetings since September 06.	Regular pattern of attendance at these meetings since September 06.
(b) All PPO staff aware of how accommodation issues are processed.	Stakeholder interviews.	N/A.	All PPOU staff, including prison liaison officer are aware of PORCH and how it operates.	All PPOU staff, including prison liaison officer are aware of PORCH and how it operates.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

Weekly operational and monthly strategic level meetings are regularly attended by both PORCH and PPOU staff ((target (a) with PPOU staff being understood to have a sound awareness of PORCH and how accommodation issues are processed (target (b))). Interviews with stakeholders (both PORCH and PPOU staff) revealed that links between the two organisations and levels of co-operative working have developed steadily over time. Initially the difference in the approaches adopted by PORCH and the PPOU in providing accommodation support is understood to have caused a certain level of operational misunderstanding. However, over time clarification in relation to these issues has been reached. Although the perception was that they inevitably continue to have different *'mindsets'* at times it is acknowledged that whilst the different agencies might not think alike they should act together. This clarification has led to an increase in co-operative working and the level to which PORCH and the PPOU are understood to be taking a *'joined up approach'* to meeting offender needs. The role of the Community Support Worker is seen as particularly valuable here, acting as a conduit between the two.

The evaluation team understands that, currently, co-operative working takes place in relation to the inclusion of PORCH objectives in sentence plans and through the direct and indirect delivery of services. In relation to service provision, arrangements have been made for PORCH to be

responsible for the direct delivery of services relating to accommodation, although the interviews revealed the need for 'careful' discussions in this regard, particularly around the balance between housing considerations and risk assessment. Within this context PORCH also acts as a signposting organisation to other services which might include debt counselling and accredited tenancy schemes. Regular communication is also understood to take place between the PPOU and PORCH in order to update INCASE records.

The interview process likewise revealed a good basic understanding of the PORCH Project at the relevant levels within HMP Exeter and the prison is in receipt of regular updates from PORCH regarding its progress and latest news.

#### 4.2.10 Performance Indicator Ten: Greater Awareness of PORCH within the Housing and Criminal Justice Community

Considerable progress has also been made in relation to performance indicator ten (Table Eleven) as illustrated by the variety of promotional activities that have been undertaken in order to help increase the awareness of PORCH within the housing and criminal justice community.

**Table Eleven: Performance Indicator Ten**

<b>Performance Indicator Ten:</b> Greater awareness of PORCH Within the Housing and Criminal Justice Community				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position Sept 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec 2007</b>
Promotional activities.	Internal records. Personal development portfolios.	Formal support made at the launch by senior managers from:-probation, police, City Council, prison and mental health.	Presentation to HMP Exeter partnership event to launch the Offender Management Unit. Presentation to ECI Annual Review Meeting (public meeting). Participation in South Devon Residential Landlords Forum. Contribution to HMP Exeter OMU team meeting. Presentation to Government Office of the South West (GOSW) Criminal Justice Network Meeting.	Same as at Interim Evaluation plus attendance at: Accommodation Pathway Sub-group – HMP Exeter. DCPA Accommodation Forum. Regional PPO Conference.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

Since the launch of PORCH, at which formal support was offered by a number of stakeholders, presentations have been made to the HMP Exeter Partnership, ECI Trustees and Government Office for the South West. In addition, the Project is represented on the South Devon Residential Landlords Forum and has contributed at the Exeter Offender Management Unit (OMU) team meeting. More latterly, PORCH staff have attended the Accommodation Pathway Sub-group at HMP Exeter; the DCPA Accommodation Forum; and, led a workshop at a Regional PPO Conference. This is in addition to the several weeks spent at the commencement of the Project visiting appropriate agencies in the locality in order to explain the remit of PORCH and to increase awareness. PORCH will also be featured on the NOMS website and in a NOMS newsletter.

Evidence at the Interim Evaluation stage indicated that PORCH's reputation was being established and that the Project had received positive feedback at multi-agency events. The recent round of interviews has further confirmed the Project's role within the housing and criminal justice community. The perception was the Project has gained credibility because it is seen to be fulfilling its objectives and PORCH appears to be well integrated not only with Probation and the accommodation providers, but also with the drug treatment and many of the other agencies that work with PPOs. Indeed one stakeholder expressed the view that PORCH is vital to the success of other agencies. The role that they perform in stabilising their beneficiaries through accommodation and other support was perceived as enabling those individuals to more effectively engage with other agencies that they need to work with. Further, a view expressed was that this helps to reduce the workload of those other agencies as they jointly endeavour to break the cycle of offending.

When PORCH works in conjunction with other agencies a future consideration would be the development of a common client support plan to further '*join up*' provision. This would be shared by those involved and was raised by both PORCH staff and some external agencies. However, a barrier to implementation appears to be where such a document would be located.

#### 4.2.11 Performance Indicator Eleven: PPOs Benefit from Introduction of CARD Mentoring if Considered Helpful

Information supplied to the evaluation team indicates that considerable progress has also been made in relation to performance indicator eleven (Table Twelve) and it is acknowledged that the relationship between the two projects will develop further as a result of recent developments.

**Table Twelve: Performance Indicator Eleven**

<b>Performance Indicator Eleven:</b> PPOs Benefit from Introduction of CARD Mentoring if Considered Helpful				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline position Sept 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dec 2007</b>
Effective mechanism to make suitable referrals to CARD Project established.	Internal records.	Collaborative working but no formal referral system in place.	Total number of shared /referred offenders - 5.  Monthly combined team meetings between CARD and PORCH.  Combined Projects' Management Committee.  Referral form raised.  Joint Newsletter.	Total number of shared /referred offenders - 10.  Weekly combined team meetings between CARD and PORCH.  Combined Projects' Management Committee.  Referral form raised.  Joint Newsletter.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

By the end of November 2007, a total of 10 PORCH beneficiaries had been referred to the CARD Project. A pro forma is in use to record referrals and check their suitability. Combined team meetings between CARD and PORCH take place and the two Management Committees have now merged. As will be discussed more fully in relation to performance indicator twelve, this will be strengthened still further in 2008.

#### 4.2.12 Performance Indicator Twelve: Project sustainability. Value of PORCH Demonstrated through the Evaluation Process and Plans in Place for its Longer-Term Sustainability by the Close of the Funding Period

Less extensive but nevertheless still significant is the Project's progress in relation to performance indicator twelve as shown in Table Thirteen.

**Table Thirteen: Performance Indicator Twelve**

<b>Performance Indicator Twelve:</b>				
Project sustainability. Value of PORCH demonstrated through the evaluation process and plans in place for its longer-term sustainability by the close of the funding period				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Evidence Base</b>	<b>Baseline Position Sept 2006</b>	<b>Position at Interim Evaluation</b>	<b>Position at Nov/Dev 2007</b>
(a) PORCH to engage in active promotion of the Project to a variety of funders in the coming year.	PORCH internal records.	(a) Launch event at the start.	Bids pending to Community Safety Partnership and Hilden Trust. (See also Table Ten).	Bids to Community Safety Partnership Positive Steps Fund and Jamieson Bystock Fund both successful.  Bid to Devon Supporting People successful.  Favourable response from DCLG regarding plotting the implementation of good practice re: the Local Housing Allowance.
(b) Continuation funding secured.	-	Financial support during the pilot period from:-  Innovations Forum  Exeter City Council  Weavers Company  Tudor Lankelly Chase  ENDAS  GOSW  Devon and Cornwall Probation Area (DCPA)  National Council for Social Concern		Funding secured until September 2008.

Source: PORCH Evaluation 2007

The evaluation team is aware of several promotional activities in which PORCH staff have been engaged (target (a)), although the extent to which these activities have been conducted with prospective funders is not known. With regard to continuation funding (target (b)), some additional financial support has been accessed. £16,000 was secured from the Community Safety Partnership which has allowed for, amongst other things, expansion into Teignbridge. A further £9,550 was secured from the Exeter Positive Steps Fund and £3,000 from the Jamieson Bystock Trust. These contributions largely form the basis of PORCH's client Support Fund which is administered, and bound by, a protocol produced through the Project. It provides financial assistance for items such as deposits and rent in advance, bridging loans and basic essential equipment and has been very well received by beneficiaries. It is also an aspect of the Project that PORCH staff believe should be mainstreamed in order to reduce the impact of the immediate crisis if people leave prison without money.

Most significantly, an award of £152,000 has been secured from Devon Supporting People to continue both the PORCH Project and the CARD mentoring, as well as allowing for the appointment of an additional practitioner. However, this is a relatively short-term funding stream and the Project is only guaranteed to be sustainable up until September 2008. A current bid to pilot protocols for the implementation of the Local Housing Allowance, if successful, will bring in an additional £20,000. Although PORCH had also received an invitation to tender for a supporting role when individuals move on from Prospects, which would have brought in further funding, news has recently been received that all five pilots across the country are due to close in the Spring.

Future developments for PORCH include a merger with CARD early in 2008 to provide integrated housing and mentoring support. It is anticipated that this will increase efficiency in service delivery and open up further opportunities to work with those who are unsupervised, thus better positioning the Project in terms the Reducing Re-offending Action Pathways Framework and future funding possibilities.

Staff believe their longer-term exit strategy should be through mainstreaming, following a similar arrangement to the way in which drug treatment services have been incorporated into the criminal justice system. It is hoped that the evidence base provided by the current evaluation will assist with this development.

### 4.3 Discussion

Overall, the data relating to the performance indicators – which have been selected as measures of the Project's success – indicate that PORCH is positively impacting on a number of factors within its remit. A comprehensive referral and assessment process has been established for PPOs that is considered to be appropriate and effective by all staff and referral routes to the Project have been extended. Although not all of those who have been referred have wished to engage, a cumulative total of 34 beneficiaries have been successfully housed in accommodation that is suitable within PORCH terms of reference.

The pool of available accommodation is also increasing through the Project and PORCH staff have adopted a proactive approach to the support of the providers who have been engaged. This may be seen as one of the ways in which the Project really adds value to existing activity and the approach taken should lead to increased co-operation with providers in the future.

However, the impact of the successful accommodation placements on beneficiaries' re-offending rates is not straightforward to assess and the assessment has been hampered by the timeframe of the research. This is not uncommon. Worrall and Mawby's (2004: 285) examination of intensive projects for prolific/persistent offenders highlighted how existing evaluations '*have not provided overwhelming evidence of reduced re-offending....*'

A number of softer impacts have been achieved. These include the progress that has been made in co-operative working between the relevant criminal justice agencies and the levels of awareness of PORCH amongst the criminal justice and housing communities. Indeed one stakeholder expressed the view that PORCH is now vital to the success of other agencies. The role that they perform in stabilising beneficiaries through accommodation and other support was perceived as enabling those individuals to more effectively engage with other agencies that they need to work with. However, greater clarity has been called for regarding PORCH's position in relation to the patchwork of other similar groups and in relation to relevant regional strategies.

Looking to the future, sustainability remains an issue for PORCH, as it does for many similar projects (Worrall and Mawby 2004). Although sources of funding have successfully been accessed for the extension of

various Project activities and continuation funding has been secured until September 2008, its longer-term prospects are, as yet, unclear. Staff anticipate that the CARD-PORCH merger may better position the Project for future funding opportunities. Although the nature and scope of this merger is beyond the comment of the current evaluation, careful consideration will need to be given to the operationalisation of the new structures and daily working practices.

## Section Five: Case Studies

### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the case studies is to furnish an in-depth understanding of the impact of the Project from the point of view of its beneficiaries, focusing specifically (although not exclusively) on whether they have gained greater stability in their housing circumstances; whether their accommodation status has been maintained through periods of crisis and vulnerability; and, whether they have achieved greater confidence in managing their accommodation and an awareness of the repertoire of behaviour needed to sustain it. Unfortunately, hard data on the case study beneficiaries' re-offending has not been available due to data protection issues, however, anecdotal evidence is used in this section of the report to explore the Project's impact of other aspects of their lives, including their criminal behaviour.

The intention was to meet and interview the beneficiaries face-to-face on two occasions during the lifetime of the Project, the first being between March and May and the second in November/December 2007; to interview their relevant Project Worker along the same time-frame; and, to review their personal files. This typically includes a pre-sentence report, Hub documents, OASys forms, PORCH referral forms, case notes, correspondence notes, information relating to housing/benefit applications; and, exit questionnaires where appropriate.<sup>5</sup> All seven beneficiaries were interviewed between March and May 2007. However, due to circumstances beyond the control of the evaluation team, it has not been possible to re-interview beneficiaries four, five, six and seven in November/December. Their Project Workers have, however, been interviewed on both occasions and relevant files have been accessed.

It should also be noted that the case study findings, based on the first batch of interviews, have been presented in previous reports (case studies One to Three in the April 2007 Interim Evaluation Report; case studies Four and Five in the June 2007 Bi-Monthly Report; and, case studies Six and Seven in the October 2007 Bi-Monthly Reports). This final evaluation report summarises these findings and presents the

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<sup>5</sup> At the Interim Evaluation stage each file held an inconsistent selection of the aforementioned documents, which presented the evaluation team with difficulties in terms of compiling consistently thorough case studies.

journey undertaken by each of the beneficiary case studies since the initial meeting.

## **5.2 Beneficiary One**

### **5.2.1 History**

Beneficiary One is a 34 year old male who has been convicted for 45 offences since 1991 and has served two custodial sentences since September 2001. The nature of these offences ranged from shoplifting, burglary and theft from a vehicle to criminal damage, possession of illegal substances and Actual Bodily Harm (ABH).

Accompanying the series of criminal offences, Beneficiary One also has a long history of substance misuse spanning over two decades; this has involved the misuse of solvents, cannabis, amphetamine ecstasy, Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), and from the age of 22, the regular intravenous use of heroin occasionally combined with crack cocaine and benzodiazepines. Evidence garnered from the PORCH beneficiary files indicates that although Beneficiary One claims not to have a dependence on alcohol, the misuse of illegal substances has regularly been accompanied by the consumption of alcohol. The file shows that a recent criminal conviction was committed under the influence of heroin, crack cocaine and alcohol, which also suggests a link between substance use and criminal activity. In addition to the aforementioned convictions, at the time of the second interview with this beneficiary's Project Worker, it was evident that Beneficiary One has subsequently been convicted of theft whilst under the influence of alcohol, and had received a suspended sentence for this offence in May 2007.

In addition to these long-term issues surrounding criminal convictions and substance misuse, Beneficiary One has experienced an unsettled accommodation history. Excluding time spent serving two custodial sentences Beneficiary One had resided in five different abodes since September 2001, and had spent a number of months during 2006 with no fixed abode before serving the most recent custodial sentence.

Beneficiary One was released from prison on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2006 and prior to this was referred to the PORCH Project through the PPOU. Beneficiary One's initial consultation meeting with PORCH staff took place on November 8<sup>th</sup> and following release from prison, Beneficiary One has maintained regular contact with the PORCH team.

### 5.2.2 Beneficiary One's Intervention Package

When he was interviewed in March 2007, the team was made aware that Beneficiary One had been provided with intensive support by the PORCH team. This included assistance with household budgeting, the completion of housing applications, and advice and guidance on avoiding relapses into substance misuse. Support was provided on a weekly and, at times, daily basis. More latterly, this intensive level of support has not been necessary and has focused more on practical assistance such as arranging house meetings and a rota system at his current place of residence to ensure that the house is clean and tidy, and providing guidance on training and further education.

### 5.2.3 The Impact of the PORCH Project on Beneficiary One's Housing Circumstances

At the time of the first interview, it was evident that Beneficiary One had experienced instability in his housing circumstances on release from prison. However, by December 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, accommodation had been secured for him in a hostel in Cullompton (Devon) which was maintained until March 2007. During this placement, Beneficiary One experienced a number of difficulties with the property manager, which were resolved through intervention by the PORCH team. Although this situation eventually culminated in him being found alternative accommodation, PORCH staff nevertheless perceived the experience to have had a positive impact:

*'[Beneficiary One] wanted to leave but we talked to [him] and said we have to do this in a positive way... I think [Beneficiary One] felt supported and otherwise [he] would have lost the accommodation... we wrote a letter of complaint and [Beneficiary One] managed to stay in the accommodation for a week longer and left feeling good'.*

The PORCH team played an important role in minimising the effect of this situation upon Beneficiary One's housing circumstances, and in his subsequent transition into alternative accommodation. Subsequently, this beneficiary was placed in supported housing in Exeter where he is currently residing.

Since the time of the first interview Beneficiary One has maintained stability in his housing circumstances. He has demonstrated his ability to pay his rent 'top-ups' on time and is currently looking to move into more independent accommodation. Although he perceives his current accommodation to be appropriate and stable, he has expressed a desire to move out of Exeter for reasons associated with his previous substance misuse and has indicated that responsibility for a more permanent transition into independent accommodation lies with him: *'I've got to do it for myself, I know that.'*

PORCH staff perceive that Beneficiary One's increased confidence and maturity mean that he is nearly at a stage where independent accommodation would be appropriate for him which is a highly positive outcome.

#### **5.2.4 The Impact of the PORCH Project on other Aspects of Beneficiary One's Life, including Re-Offending**

It was evident at the time of the first interview that Beneficiary One had experienced a number of problems after being released from prison. This included relapses in both re-offending<sup>6</sup> and substance misuse<sup>7</sup>, in addition to accumulating rent arrears despite efforts on the part of the PORCH team to support and educate him on household budgeting. Since then Beneficiary One is much more settled in his accommodation, paying his 'top-ups' and his patterns of re-offending and substance misuse have both decreased. He was convicted of an offence and received a suspended prison sentence in May 2007 but is not known to have committed any further offences since then and has remained out of prison for 14 months. In addition, Beneficiary One has remained drug-free since May 2007 and is keen to continue on this path:

*'I won't take heroin ever again, I'm really zero tolerance now, no drugs at all...I only offend when I'm on heroin.'*

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<sup>6</sup> During late March 2007, Beneficiary One had committed theft under the influence of amphetamines and alcohol.

<sup>7</sup> ENDAS urine test results reveal that there were six positive traces for amphetamine and benzodiazepines between December 2006 and February 2007.

Beneficiary One also appears to be dealing well with difficult issues in his life as exemplified by a recent situation that occurred at his previous place of employment. Specifically, Beneficiary One had gone to collect his script during working hours but had failed to inform his employer of this, which resulted in the termination of his contract. PORCH staff highlighted that his mature attitude enabled him to negotiate with the employer, whereas previously, his behaviour may have been more negative. Although this experience temporarily destabilised him, it has not had a negative impact on the maintenance of his accommodation, or his desire to continue his substance and crime free lifestyle.

These positive changes that have occurred have been noted by other agencies, including Probation and he has received a letter of commendation for his successes from the PPOU, which has boosted his confidence and desire to move forward.

Beneficiary One's licence will run out in May 2008, which will result in him being removed from the PPO scheme. Although this is seen as a highly positive result, PORCH staff have highlighted that it nevertheless presents certain difficulties concerning the continuation of their support since he will no longer be classified as a PPO. Until a solution to this is agreed, PORCH staff anticipate continuing to offer occasional support to help ensure that the transition to independence and full resettlement is gradual and successful.

### **5.2.5 Perceptions of the PORCH Project**

Beneficiary One has developed a good relationship with the PORCH team and stated his appreciation of the services that are offered by the Project at both the first and second evaluation interview. He recently observed that:

*'I need to move to the next stage, PORCH are helping with the transition by putting things in place...I'm trying to change as a person and I'm doing it for myself but PORCH definitely gave me the confidence'.*

He also made reference to the distinctive type of service offered by the PORCH Project which was deemed to be more effective than similar services offered by agencies such as Probation.

### **5.2.6 Summary**

To summarise, Beneficiary One has gained greater stability in his accommodation status having maintained his current accommodation since March 2007. Furthermore, this beneficiary has been placed in accommodation that is deemed to be appropriate to his needs, and is currently approaching a stage where a move to more independent accommodation will be suitable for him which represents a particularly positive outcome. Since being released from prison Beneficiary One's substance misuse and offending behaviour have decreased, he has remained drug free and has not re-offended since May 2007, and is keen to remain on this path. In addition, this beneficiary has maintained his current accommodation despite a recent time of crisis in relation to his employment. PORCH's support has been of an emotional and practical nature encompassing both guidance on accommodation-related matters and advice on how to address his substance misuse. As a result of this needs-led package of support, Beneficiary One has been able to gain a more mature attitude to dealing with any problems that have arisen. There is some evidence to suggest that without the accommodation support provided by PORCH, Beneficiary One's resettlement would have been less successful.

## **5.3 Beneficiary Two**

### **5.3.1 History**

Beneficiary Two is a 35 year old male whose criminal history began in 1986. Since then he has been convicted for numerous criminal offences including burglary (dwelling and non-dwelling), common assault, breach of a CRO (community rehabilitation order), possession of a Class B drug (amphetamine), and theft of a motor vehicle.

It has been noted in Beneficiary Two's Probation Case Summary Sheet (2005) that a past heroin addiction has acted as a trigger for offending behaviour. In addition, Beneficiary Two has used cocaine on a recreational basis and has been known to use cannabis.

Accompanying the series of criminal offences and substance misuse, Beneficiary Two also has a recent unstable accommodation history. Between 2002 and 2005 he had resided in eight different abodes excluding time spent in custodial sentences. Prior to 2002, Beneficiary Two's accommodation history had greater stability: from the age of 18

years old he had resided with a partner for a period of ten years and during 2000-01 had lived in a flat with another partner for a period of six or seven months. Subsequent to the latter relationship ending Beneficiary Two was made homeless.

Beneficiary Two first met with the PORCH team in October 2006 whilst serving a long-term custodial sentence. During this inception meeting it was revealed that he was apprehensive about being released from prison. These concerns arose from previous experiences where, on release, Beneficiary Two had re-engaged with associate drug users and street homeless people which led to a relapse in substance misuse and re-offending behaviour. Beneficiary Two was released in February 2007. However, he has subsequently been recalled for missing an appointment with his Probation Officer and will be released in February 2008. The second interview with Beneficiary Two in November 2007 took place in prison.

### **5.3.2 Beneficiary Two's Intervention Package**

The evaluation team first met with Beneficiary Two in March 2007. At that point in time, it was evident that he had fully engaged with the PORCH Project and had been successfully placed in temporary accommodation on release from prison. At that stage he had been provided with a range of support by the PORCH team including with housing benefits and applications. Since then Beneficiary Two has been offered guidance on further education and the PORCH team have signposted him to agencies such as West Country Training.

However, Beneficiary Two relapsed into heroin use, temporarily disengaged from the PORCH Project, and, as highlighted above, was subsequently recalled to prison in June 2007 for missing an appointment with his Probation Officer. PORCH staff have visited Beneficiary Two in prison to discuss the support and opportunities for accommodation placements on his release and are confident that he will fully re-engage with the Project. As one PORCH staff member stated *'in his mind it is a given that he will work with us again'*.

### 5.3.3 The Impact of the PORCH Project on Beneficiary Two's Housing Circumstances

Beneficiary Two's initial accommodation placement was perceived as a major achievement for him. As one PORCH staff member claimed:

*'[Beneficiary Two] is prone, if in the wrong company, to go off the rails a bit and if we hadn't found the accommodation [he] would have been squatting in Exeter with known drug users and would have started using again. [As a consequence] Beneficiary Two would have found it more difficult to stick to his licence'.*

Following this initial temporary placement, Beneficiary Two was subsequently moved to privately rented accommodation in Exeter and his Project Worker was confident that it would have eventually led to long-term stable accommodation on an independent basis. Interviews with PORCH staff revealed that, up until his return to prison, despite some relapses in substance misuse, Beneficiary Two was demonstrating greater confidence in managing his accommodation compared to other beneficiaries. He had completed the Exeter Accredited Tenant Scheme (EATS) whilst serving a custodial sentence, thus providing training in the skills needed for independent living and an awareness of the repertoire of behaviour needed to maintain accommodation.

### 5.3.4 The Impact of the PORCH Project on other Aspects of Beneficiary Two's Life, including Re-Offending

Evidence suggests that, up until Beneficiary Two's relapse, temporary dis-engagement with the Project and return to custody, he had achieved some stability. He recently stated that *'I was definitely feeling more stable, and that was down to somewhere to live'*.

Furthermore, prior to being recalled to prison, Beneficiary Two had engaged with West Country Training through the PORCH Project, and was looking forward to gaining his fork lift driver qualification.

Although Beneficiary Two has returned to custody, PORCH staff remain positive about the impact that the PORCH Project has had, and will continue to have on him. As his Project Worker commented:

*'We impacted on him emotionally, we won him over and when we visited last time he was chatty and interacting, this shows a difference in him'.*

In addition:

*'Since he has been back in prison, he is now doing all the courses which he wasn't doing before'.*

### **5.3.5 Perceptions of the PORCH Project**

At the time of the first interview, Beneficiary Two was fully satisfied with the Project and testified to the efforts made by the PORCH team to support offenders in gaining/maintaining accommodation. Indeed, Beneficiary Two claimed *'...whatever needs doing, they sort it out for you... they are a wicked service'*.

Since that point in time, Beneficiary Two has commented on the positive accommodation support offered by the PORCH team, which has been the key element of support that has been lacking in his previous experiences with other agencies. In addition, he has highlighted the PORCH staff's ability to signpost to other agencies if they are unable to provide a particular area of support.

Evidence taken from interviews with both Beneficiary Two and his Project Worker indicates that the added value of the PORCH Project for this beneficiary has been the continuity, sense of assurance and knowing what to expect from the PORCH Project which has strengthened his resolve.

### **5.3.6 Summary**

Beneficiary Two was successfully placed in suitable accommodation on release and as a result, has gained a degree of stability in his housing circumstances, having maintained his accommodation from February to June 2007. In addition, the support afforded to him by the PORCH Project has resulted in him gaining greater confidence in managing his accommodation. Although this beneficiary has been recalled to prison, the evaluation team is aware that prior to this he was able to maintain his accommodation during periods of vulnerability. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that PORCH's accommodation support, capacity to signpost to supporting agencies, and ability to impact on him emotionally, has contributed positively to his changed behaviour. He has not reoffended since his engagement with the PORCH team and it is anticipated that he will re-engage with them on release.

## 5.4 Beneficiary Three

### 5.4.1 History

Beneficiary Three is a 39 year old male who was released from prison in August 2006, with a nine month period of licence supervision after serving a custodial sentence for joint robbery. Beneficiary Three first presented in court at 17 years of age and has numerous convictions to date ranging from dishonesty, theft and burglary to vehicle related offences, criminal damage, affray and assaults (one of which was within a domestic context towards a partner). In addition to the aforementioned convictions, at the time of the second interview with this beneficiary's Project Worker, it was revealed that he had subsequently received a conditional discharge for a public order offence in November 2007.

PORCH files reveal that Beneficiary Three has had a long-term issue with alcohol abuse spanning over two decades. Furthermore, it has been suggested within Beneficiary Three's 2005 Pre-sentence Report that 85-90% of the offences committed by this individual were '*fuelled*' by alcohol and that this appears to encourage him to commit more serious offences. Beneficiary Three's last conviction acts as an example of the link between offending behaviour and alcohol abuse. The circumstances behind this last offence included the collection of cannabis from a drug dealer's property whilst he was under the influence of alcohol, which then resulted in a fracas and robbery. Although there have been periods where the consumption of alcohol has been under control and Beneficiary Three claims not to have a dependence on alcohol, relapses in substance misuse have been a common occurrence. Accompanying these issues, Beneficiary Three has a history of cannabis and amphetamine use.

Beneficiary Three's recent accommodation history also reflects housing instability. Prior to 2002, he had maintained accommodation in a number of locations including the parental home and shared accommodation with a previous partner. In 2002, the relationship broke down and Beneficiary Three '*sofa surfed*' up until October 2006, not including the time spent in custody for the last offence.

Evidence taken from his Referral Form and Hub document (2006) suggests that Beneficiary Three's accommodation issues between release from prison and PORCH intervention were causing some difficulties.

Although the PORCH referral process ideally involves PORCH staff obtaining a referral from the PPOU, and subsequently engaging with the offender prior to their release, with Beneficiary Three it did not operate in this manner; a referral was not made until late September, by which time his accommodation situation was impacting negatively on other areas of life, thus potentially increasing the likelihood of re-offending.

#### **5.4.2 Beneficiary Three's Intervention Package**

Beneficiary Three has consistently engaged with the PORCH team since his referral. At the time of the first evaluation interview, it was evident that the team had provided him with regular support on a weekly and sometimes daily basis. Indeed, it was suggested that this particular beneficiary had received an especially high level of intervention from the PORCH team. Practical assistance had been provided in securing housing benefits, completing Housing Register Application forms and co-ordinating and attending accommodation site visits and a high level of emotional support was also being given.

Positively, the most recent interview indicates that this intensive level of support is no longer necessary for Beneficiary Three. Support currently includes practical assistance with his new tenancy and offering guidance on how to avoid relapsing into substance misuse.

#### **5.4.3 The Impact of the PORCH Project on Beneficiary's Housing Circumstances**

At the time of the first evaluation interview in March 2007, Beneficiary Three had been residing in a hostel in Cullompton since October 2006, which was being successfully maintained. However, his stay in Cullompton highlighted his inability to manage independently, specifically in terms of budgeting, this resulting in rent arrears. Although he was beginning to demonstrate an awareness of the 'rules' associated with maintaining accommodation, specifically regarding the need to sustain a level of cleanliness in the property, at that point in time evidence suggested that he was particularly dependent on PORCH staff in terms of his ability to 'cope'.

Since then, Beneficiary Three has moved from his temporary accommodation in Cullompton to a secure tenancy through a housing association and has become much more independent. His interaction

with the PORCH Project has consequently reduced and during the recent interview he described PORCH as simply providing him with a 'safety net' which is a highly positive outcome. The move from Cullompton represents a particularly important milestone for Beneficiary Three as this has moved him away from previous drug-related associates and he has set himself a target of staying in his present accommodation for a further three years.

#### **5.4.4 The Impact of the PORCH Project on other Aspects of Beneficiary Three's Life, including Re-Offending**

Evidence garnered from the first interview suggested that Beneficiary Three had not re-offended since being accommodated in Cullompton and PORCH staff had noted that the provision of accommodation had been a particularly 'stabilising' factor. According to Beneficiary Three himself:

*'...if you haven't got somewhere to live you will re-offend. I can say of three of four people who would be back in jail if they didn't have a roof over the head. Accommodation is somewhere where you can have five minutes of thinking time; if they don't have somewhere to stay they go and commit a crime'.*

Despite a recent a public order offence in early November 2007 for which he was given a conditional discharge, this remains the case. Beneficiary Three highlighted the multi-agency package of support that he receives in this regard:

*'With the combination of support from PORCH, a place to stay, and probation, it really stops you from offending'.*

The interviews also highlighted the important role that PORCH have had in relation to Beneficiary Three's struggle with his amphetamine use, and his gradual move away from this part of his life, both geographically, and emotionally. As his Project Worker highlighted: *'...we were there to help him move to a crime free life'.*

Beneficiary Three is also currently engaging with other agencies including Addaction<sup>8</sup> but has been particularly grateful for the PORCH Project's ability to provide him with support throughout any setbacks:

*'...they just give you that extra support, when you mess up they give you second chances'.*

#### **5.4.5 Perceptions of the PORCH Project**

When Beneficiary Three was initially interviewed he spoke of the PORCH team's holistic service. And he also made reference to the positive working relationship between the PORCH Project and PPOU as well as between the PORCH team and accommodation providers. Beneficiary Three's current perceptions of the PORCH Project relate specifically to the successful accommodation support that they have provided, as well as the *'personal touch'* offered by the team despite what he perceived to be the limited resources available to them.

#### **5.4.6 Summary**

It is evident that Beneficiary Three has gained greater stability in his accommodation status and is currently residing in accommodation that is deemed to be appropriate to his needs. Despite initial difficulties with maintaining accommodation independently, having relied heavily on the PORCH team in terms of his ability to *'cope'*, this beneficiary has maintained his accommodation since October 2006. Moreover, Beneficiary Three has reached a particularly positive milestone in that he has moved to more independent accommodation and is currently provided with less intensive support from the PORCH team. PORCH's initial level of support provided him with both the practical and emotional guidance that has enabled him to progress to more independent accommodation and address his substance misuse. Notwithstanding Beneficiary Three's recent public order offence, he has remained out of prison since August 2006 and considers the multi-

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<sup>8</sup> Addaction is a charity that provides treatment, help and advice about drugs and alcohol for young people and adults with services all over the UK. Specifically, Addaction provides outreach service and throughcare and aftercare services. The outreach service seeks to make contact with hard-to-reach groups of substance misusers including the homeless, sex workers, young people and those not accessing site-based services.

agency support that he has received as having had a particularly positive impact in relation to his re-offending behaviour.

## 5.5 Beneficiary Four

### 5.5.1 History

Beneficiary Four is a 32-year-old male who completed a custodial sentence for theft in October 2006 with an 18 month Community Supervision Order. He was first convicted at the age of 17 and has numerous convictions for acquisitive crimes, criminal damage, possession of drugs, driving offences and dishonesty. However, according to his OASys forms (2007) his crimes have been predominantly acquisitive to fund his long-term heroin addiction.

Beneficiary Four's previous attempts to engage with drug support services have only been successful for limited periods of time. Evidence indicates that this is because his regular prison sentences have given him insufficiently long periods in the community to consistently engage with support services. He also had a history of *'violence'* and *'using offensive language'* that made drug support workers and local pharmacies reluctant to work with him. However, he demonstrated a renewed commitment to overcome his addiction by requesting a custodial sentence when he last presented in court.

At the time of his referral, this beneficiary also had an unsettled accommodation history that (at times) had caused difficulties for others. Apart from various custodial sentences, he had five changes in his place of residence and two periods of having *'no fixed abode'* between 2001 and 2006, as well as an unsuccessful attempt to return to his parental home. When Beneficiary Four left prison in October 2006 he initially lodged in the home of an acquaintance with mental health difficulties. However, the acquaintance's Community Psychiatric Nurse felt this arrangement was having an adverse effect on the acquaintance's mental health, which resulted in Beneficiary Four *'sofa surfing'* and being of no fixed abode for several months.

Beneficiary Four's referral to PORCH did not occur until after his release from prison and by this point in time he had deteriorating ill-health caused by heroin use, epilepsy and deep vein thrombosis, and was recorded as being *'malnourished and underweight'* by PORCH staff.

### **5.5.2 Beneficiary Four's Intervention Package**

At the time of the evaluation interview in April 2007, Beneficiary Four had not been placed in accommodation but had been referred to a number of agencies including to the Street Homeless Outreach Team, St Petrock's and East Devon District Council's Housing team. Difficulties were experienced in placing Beneficiary Four in suitable accommodation because he was based outside of Exeter and because of his continued substance misuse which prevented him from being accepted by a hostel or dry house. However, assistance was provided in completing housing applications and applying for his birth certificate. At the time of this evaluation interview he had just been offered a council flat and was waiting to move in and PORCH staff were sourcing furniture for him. Other support offered at that time included encouraging Beneficiary Four to discuss and address the historical family issues underpinning his previous substance misuse and offending behaviour; helping him through communication with his GP, negotiating with ENDAS to provide a drug screening service and finding a pharmacy that would serve him.

This intensive level of support has reduced over time and Beneficiary Four's interaction with the PORCH Project currently only occurs as and when it is needed. This consists mainly of advice over the phone when he has any specific problems. However, they have advocated for him and mediated between him and the council around his tenancy.

### **5.5.3 The Impact of the PORCH Project on Beneficiary Four's Housing Circumstances**

As stated above, at the time of the April 2007 evaluation interview Beneficiary Four was waiting to move in to a council flat. As it has not been possible to re-interview this individual the evaluation team has been unable explore the impact of the accommodation placement with him or to discuss the practicalities surrounding his tenancy. However, the team is aware that the placement has been successful and that his tenancy has been maintained.

#### 5.5.4 The Impact of the PORCH Project on other Aspects of Beneficiary Four's Life, including Re-Offending

By the time of the April 2007 interview with Beneficiary Four, he had had four months without committing any known offences, and was successfully controlling his substance misuse. Furthermore, interviews with PORCH staff indicated that positive changes had been noted in his attitude, behaviour and health, with both parties attributing this to the support that PORCH had provided:

*'He realises what we have done and really does appreciate what we do because there is no way in the world that he could have done that, we've struggled to do it, but to see the impact that that's had...[he] is interacting with the agency more, doesn't miss appointments and is on top of the script, and is doing everything right'.*

*'When I first met him he looked close to death, he has epilepsy, was emaciated, his arms were a mess, and today he looks healthy because things have started going in the right direction'.*

Beneficiary Four said at that time that support from the PORCH team, Probation and ENDAS, had combined to enable him to stop offending and had prevented him from becoming homeless:

*'I don't commit crime anymore because of the support I've received from probation, PORCH and ENDAS. That said, I also want to stop in myself, although if it wasn't for them I'd be screwed and on the street'.*

Although it has not been possible to re-interview this beneficiary, evidence from his Project Worker indicates that his overall attitude has continued to improve in that: *'he is now facing problems instead of running away from them'*. Evidence taken from Beneficiary Four's exit questionnaire (September 2007) similarly revealed that he considers the PORCH Project to have *'helped on the road to recovery'*, and has increased his confidence which will enable him to deal with any future issues. He wrote that *'having a home leads to a stable frame of mind'*, (Exit questionnaire 2007:2) and he has not been back to court since his engagement with the Project.

### 5.5.5 Perceptions of the PORCH Project

Beneficiary Four said that he had low expectations of the PORCH Project at the time of his referral:

*'I didn't think I'd get anywhere to live because I'd been messed around before'.*

However, at the time of the April evaluation interview he commended PORCH for all that they had done for him, highlighting the *'holistic'* nature of the support they provide, suggesting that *'they [PORCH] work so hard because they care'*. Furthermore, his completed exit questionnaire (September 2007) indicates that believes he would have been back in prison without PORCH's support.

### 5.5.6 Summary

Beneficiary Four has clearly gained some stability in his housing circumstances having maintained his accommodation since April 2007. Despite a number of initial problems with placing this beneficiary due to his substance misuse, the PORCH team have provided an intensive level of support that has enabled him to maintain his accommodation through periods of vulnerability. PORCH's holistic support has positively impacted on this individual resulting in him *'now facing problems instead of running away from them'*. This beneficiary is not known to have re-offended since first engaging with the PORCH Project.

## 5.6 Beneficiary Five

### 5.6.1 History

Beneficiary Five is a 26-year-old male who has committed a number of offences since 1997. These include aggravated burglary, criminal damage, driving offences and dishonesty. At the time of his PORCH referral in February 2007, he had had just finished serving two years for burglary and theft, and was starting a seven month supervision licence (OASys documents, 2007). Beneficiary Five's offending behaviour has been predominantly acquisitive to fund his addiction to heroin, which is thought to be rooted in family problems (Pre-sentence Report, 2005; OASys documents, February 2007).

Although he engaged with the CARAT in prison, he had failed all attempts to stop misusing substances and this undermined his ability to maintain a stable accommodation status. He had been asked to leave drug free establishments because he continued to take drugs.

Beneficiary Five has resided in a series of *'bed and breakfasts'* since the age of 14. Indeed, between 2001 and 2007 he had lived in 11 different residences, not including various prisons. In addition, he has spent time in a number of dry houses and relapse prevention programmes including C-far, an intensive programme of rehabilitation and support for young adult persistent offenders. At the time of the last offence and upon his release from prison, this beneficiary was homeless.

He first engaged with the PORCH team in mid February 2007 by arriving unexpectedly at the PORCH office with no referral in place and having recently used illegal substances.

### **5.6.2 Beneficiary Five's Intervention Package**

Due to the informal circumstances surrounding Beneficiary Five's engagement with PORCH, staff were initially unable to place him in accommodation. However, hostel accommodation was secured for him four days after the initial contact. Subsequent placements have also been achieved. Other support has included providing essential items of clothing and bedding and making sure that he attends necessary appointments. At the time of the April 2007 evaluation interview, PORCH staff were encouraging him to discuss how his personal feelings about his disadvantaged upbringing relate to his substance misuse to help him break his cycle of addiction. However, as will be described more fully below, this beneficiary has now largely disengaged from the Project.

### **5.6.3 The Impact of the PORCH Project on Beneficiary Five's Housing Circumstances**

The research team met with Beneficiary Five in March 2007. At this point in time, neither he nor his PORCH Project Worker considered the hostel accommodation that he was in to be suitable for him:

*'[the hostel] was our only option, which looking at it now it is a holding tank for addicts. He is not going to progress [whilst in the hostel] but*

*the interaction he has had with us has been amazing*'. (PORCH Staff Member).

The hostel was viewed as a temporary measure but PORCH staff perceived the chances of securing something more suitable to be largely dependent on Beneficiary Five's ability to overcome his substance misuse.

Recent interviews with PORCH staff have confirmed that in the event, supported accommodation was secured for this individual. However, whilst he was residing in the supported accommodation he was recalled to prison in May 2007 for failing to keep in contact with his supervising officer. On release, he re-engaged with PORCH and requested a '*clean house*' which was subsequently found but Beneficiary Five became re-acquainted with old drug associates and developed a substantial addiction to illicit drugs. Since then, Beneficiary Five has disengaged from the PORCH Project and is only seen on a sporadic basis.

Although the research team have been unable to fully evaluate Beneficiary Five's ability to maintain his accommodation, evidence garnered from interviews with PORCH staff indicate that without the intervention, he would have been likely to have had longer periods of being street homeless.

#### **5.6.4 The Impact of the PORCH Project on other Aspects of Beneficiary Five's Life, including Re-Offending**

At the time of the March interview, Beneficiary Five indicated that the advice and information provided by the PORCH team was likely to reduce his risk of re-offending. Furthermore, he had started considering other aspects of his life: *'I'd like to stabilise my housing first and then possibly go to college'*.

PORCH staff perceive that, although he has currently disengaged, the previous support offered to him may still have an impact and that he will, in time re-engage:

*'He tends to surface now and then, and now it's about slowly building up the relationship with him...we are like his invisible blanket of support'*.

### **5.6.5 Perceptions of the PORCH Project**

There is limited evidence about Beneficiary Five's perceptions of the PORCH Project, other than at the time of his March interview in which he stated that he was satisfied with what the Project was intending to offer.

### **5.6.6 Summary**

To summarise, despite the PORCH Project's efforts in supporting Beneficiary Five, he has been unable to gain greater stability in either his accommodation status or his substance misuse problems and has now disengaged from the Project. From the time of first engagement, the PORCH team experienced a number of difficulties with placing this individual due to his long-term substance misuse and inability to address the issue. More positively, the PORCH team maintain that the support offered to him has not been in vain and that without the intervention he would have had longer periods of time being street homeless. They remain optimistic that Beneficiary Five will re-engage with the Project sometime in the future.

## **5.7 Beneficiary Six**

### **5.7.1 History**

Beneficiary Six is a 34-year-old male who received a custodial sentence in 2004 for aggravated burglary in a dwelling. He was first convicted at the age of 21 and has committed a number of crimes resulting in a three year custodial sentence in 1998, and a two year Community Rehabilitation Order (CRO) in 2002. According to his OASys forms (2006), the offences have been predominantly acquisitive in nature and have been borne out of a need to fund a long-term addiction to illicit substances including cannabis and heroin.

Whilst serving his custodial sentences, Beneficiary Six has engaged with a number of drug support programmes with the aim of reducing the risk of relapse. These have included working with the CARAT team, and undertaking the P-ASRO (Prison – Addressing Substance Related Offending) programme.<sup>9</sup> However, previous attempts to avoid relapse

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<sup>9</sup> P-ASRO is a programme delivered through prisons for offenders with a history of substance misuse and includes 20 sessions undertaken over a period of six weeks. Offenders take part in a

have been hampered by a number of factors including the loss of employment, accommodation, and family support. Beneficiary Six's OASys forms (2006) highlighted that prior to the 2004 conviction, he had sustained a drug-free lifestyle, was in full-time employment and was residing in a bed and breakfast, however, when he was unable to afford this type of accommodation any longer, he relapsed into substance misuse and offending behaviour.

Beneficiary Six has had an unsettled accommodation history. Between 2002 and 2006, he resided in three different abodes, excluding time spent in custodial sentences, and was of no fixed abode between 2002 and 2003. In addition, this beneficiary was known by the PPOU to have had an unsettled and transient childhood, which may have contributed to his substance misuse, offending behaviour, and recent unsettled accommodation history. However, it is also of note that Beneficiary Six demonstrated a willingness to obtain more settled accommodation by completing housing application forms to a number of housing groups including Signpost whilst he was in prison.

Despite engaging with PORCH, Beneficiary Six has now returned to prison for committing burglary in a dwelling having received a 48 month custodial sentence commencing in August 2007. Evidence taken from the interview with his Project Worker indicates that this re-offending behaviour may in part be due to his substance misuse but also from taking pleasure in being identified as a '*prolific offender*'. It has not been possible to re-interview him.

### **5.7.2 Beneficiary Six's Intervention Package**

Beneficiary Six was released from prison in December 2006 having had an initial consultation meeting with PORCH staff at the end of October. He initially attempted to secure accommodation independently of the PORCH team, albeit with parental support, however, this was unsuccessful and a number of discussions took place regarding the suitability of particular types of accommodation for him. Of note at this time was his desire to manage independent accommodation, whereas PORCH staff perceived that he would be better suited to shared living accommodation. PORCH staff subsequently made several

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number of varied sessions including psychometric tests, and are referred to the project via the CARAT team or through self-referral.

accommodation referrals for him, including to Signpost, Oakfields, and Prospects, eventually resulting in a successful placement in a shared house.

Other support included negotiating with ENDAS to enable him to undertake drug screening; assisting with the completion of housing benefit forms; supporting him with some specific health needs including accompanying him to the GP and 'advocating' for him when he was almost breached by Probation. Financial assistance was provided for him through the PORCH Client Support Fund, and staff had assisted him through guidance in relation to employment and through general emotional support. As Beneficiary Six stated:

*'They [PORCH] are totally different. I thought they would just help with accommodation but they have done everything else, they have put me in touch with West Country Training, managing my medication, helped me to talk to ENDAS'.*

More latterly the support offered by the PORCH team has been directed at Beneficiary Six's family, providing drug education which is perceived to have impacted positively on them, as well as their relationship with the beneficiary.

### **5.7.3 The Impact of the PORCH Project on Beneficiary Six's Housing Circumstances**

When members of the research team met Beneficiary Six in March 2007, it was evident that he had maintained accommodation in a shared house since February. Both he and the PORCH staff interviewed perceived this to have led to greater stability in his life and, despite earlier misgivings, both were agreed that the decision to place him in shared accommodation was appropriate. As highlighted by a member of the PORCH team:

*'I think for [Beneficiary Six] putting him in a shared house was a good option because he is independent to a point, but at the same time at the moment he doesn't have bills to pay, he has got the top up but he does not have that sole responsibility for the property and that's why he is more successful now'.*

#### **5.7.4 The Impact of the PORCH Project on other Aspects of Beneficiary Six's Life, including Re-Offending**

At the time of the March interview, Beneficiary Six had relapsed into substance misuse although PORCH's intervention and referral to ENDAS had ensured that his accommodation status was secured through this period of crisis. Beneficiary Six perceived the accommodation to have had a positive impact on his life and to have motivated him to consider seeking employment. He had not re-offended since his release the previous December and highlighted the support provided by the PORCH team as a contributory factor in this. PORCH staff had also noted positive changes in Beneficiary Six's general behaviour, attitude, and receptiveness to the Project.

Unfortunately, Beneficiary Six has re-offended in the intervening period and is currently serving a four and a half year sentence for burglary. However, staff have noted the length of time between this and his previous conviction which is thought to represent an achievement for this individual.

#### **5.7.5 Perceptions of the PORCH Project**

At the time of the March interview, Beneficiary Six was positive about the PORCH Project and the level of support provided.

Evidence taken from his exit questionnaire (September 2007) indicates that he appreciated the ability to engage with the Project whenever he felt the need to. However, he highlighted a perceived need for PORCH to create a drop-in centre containing other facilities such as those related to gaining employment (Exit Questionnaire 2007:9).

#### **5.7.6 Summary**

Beneficiary Six is currently serving a four and a half year custodial sentence. However, the case study shows that he was able to maintain his accommodation from February to August 2007, including during periods of crisis relating to substance misuse. Also of note is the length of time between this most recent offence and his previous conviction which is an achievement for this individual. In addition to the support that he has received from the PORCH team, Beneficiary Six's family have

recently been provided with support including through drug education, which demonstrates the added value of the Project.

## 5.8 Beneficiary Seven

### 5.8.1 History

This beneficiary is a 45-year-old male whose criminal history began in 1979. Since that time, he has been convicted of a number of offences including drug offences, theft, offences against property, and fraud. At the time of his referral to PORCH in September 2006, Beneficiary Seven was serving a four year custodial sentence for burglary in a dwelling. In addition, this beneficiary has a long-term addiction to opiates and has been described as '*institutionalised*' due to long spells in prison (PPO Unit notes; October 2006).

Beneficiary Seven has engaged with a number of drug support services including the CARAT team, ENDAS, and the P-ASRO programme. In addition, he has previously engaged with a drug detoxification programme and has had substitute prescriptions. Although Beneficiary Seven has expressed a desire to avoid relapsing into substance misuse, PPO Unit notes (October 2006) indicate that he was recalled back to prison whilst out on licence due to a relapse in substance misuse.<sup>10</sup> Documentation indicates that this relapse into substance misuse was triggered by a number of family-orientated personal tragedies which occurred both at the time of his initial arrest in 2003, and whilst serving his most recent custodial sentence.

Evidence suggests that he has also experienced particularly unstable accommodation circumstances. Between the periods of September 2001 and May 2006, Beneficiary Seven has resided in seven different abodes, not including three periods serving custodial sentences in 2003, 2004, and 2006.

Beneficiary Seven was first visited by PORCH staff in September 2006. At this time, he highlighted concerns about being released, expressed remorse at the crimes he had committed, and apprehension about his

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<sup>10</sup> Subsequent to the research team receiving this beneficiary's Client file, further discussions with the PORCH staff team revealed that Beneficiary Seven was recalled on licence firstly in March 2006, and then in August 2006. As a result, this beneficiary continued his custodial sentence until the original release date of May 2007.

vulnerability regarding a relapse into substance misuse. This initial meeting enabled PORCH staff to assess the most appropriate types of support and accommodation placements for him based on his vulnerability. As one PORCH staff member commented:

*'...he was on a rotational cycle in terms of crime, he has been in the system for some time so we needed to get to know him more than maybe some of the younger offenders and look at what would be the best ways to support him, he is a needy chap so we did the forms, looked at other places in terms of peers and location'.*

The research team initially interviewed Beneficiary Seven at the prison in which he was serving his sentence, just prior to his release and followed this up by interviewing his Project Worker when he had been released and in accommodation for a week. Although it has not been possible to re-interview him as a result of his disengagement from the Project, his Project Worker was interviewed again in December 2007.

### **5.8.2 Beneficiary Seven's Intervention Package**

Members of the PORCH team made several visits to the prison whilst Beneficiary Seven was serving his most recent custodial sentence. The suitability of different types of supported accommodation for this beneficiary was carefully assessed over this period of time, and housing applications for accommodation at Prospects and Pynes Hill were subsequently completed.

In addition, the PORCH team provided Beneficiary Seven with a continual level of emotional support which assisted him to come to terms with some particularly traumatic personal events. They also responded to his requests for relapse prevention work. Beneficiary Seven also received support from other projects and agencies including PORCH's sister Project CARD, ENDAS and the PPO Unit.

Interviews with the PORCH team in December 2007 indicate that subsequent placements for Beneficiary Seven have been secured and that the same level of support has been offered. However, he has slowly disengaged from the Project.

### **5.8.3 The Impact of the PORCH Project on Beneficiary Seven's Housing Circumstances**

When the research team met this beneficiary in May 2007, the impact of PORCH on his housing circumstances was yet to be determined. The recent interview with his Project Worker indicated that when he was initially housed, he demonstrated an ability to maintain his accommodation despite experiencing crisis and vulnerability due to his substance misuse. However, it transpires that he was unhappy in this initial accommodation, resulting in the PORCH team securing first one and then a second alternative. However, Beneficiary Seven's substance misuse has subsequently deteriorated and PORCH staff were left with no option but to give him notice to leave his current accommodation in November 2007. He is currently residing with a family member.

### **5.8.4 The Impact of the PORCH Project on other Aspects of Beneficiary Seven's Life, including Re-Offending**

Beneficiary Seven's key focus on release from prison appeared to be on preventing further relapses in his substance misuse. At the time of the May 2007 interview he was intent on avoiding previous acquaintances with substance misuse problems, and had been particularly proactive in requesting support which resulted in a referral from the PORCH team for '*relapse prevention work*' through the Exeter Drugs Project. However, the recent interview with PORCH staff revealed that his substance misuse has deteriorated which has left them deeply saddened.

More positively, despite the substance misuse and largely withdrawing from the Project, the research team is unaware of any police intelligence to suggest that Beneficiary Seven has committed any further offences which is a highly positive outcome. As one PORCH staff member highlighted:

*'He has achieved more this year than anyone thought he would and has stayed out of prison for over six months'.*

### 5.8.5 Perceptions of the PORCH Project

At the time of Beneficiary Seven's referral, his expectations of the PORCH Project were relatively low:

*'I just thought at first that it was another housing programme offering me promise after promise'.*

However, the interview with him earlier in the year highlighted his appreciation of PORCH's non-enforcement culture:

*'It is structured better, I'm not the only person they come to see here [at the prison], and other people think that as well. [Agency X] has a stigma attached because it is about enforcement. PORCH is different'.*

### 5.8.6 Summary

In summary, Beneficiary Seven has been unable to gain greater stability in his accommodation status and has recently been given notice to leave his most recent accommodation placement. Despite the range of support provided by the PORCH team in an attempt to address his substance misuse, coupled with the beneficiary's own desire to avoid previous acquaintances with substance misuse problems, he has nevertheless relapsed, resulting in the loss of his accommodation. More positively, Beneficiary Seven is not known to have re-offended since his release.

## 5.9 Discussion

In line with the findings presented previously, this report has provided evidence to demonstrate how PORCH's needs led intervention packages have supported individuals in gaining greater stability in their accommodation circumstances; in maintaining accommodation through periods of crisis and vulnerability; and, in achieving greater confidence in managing their accommodation. The emotional and practical support provided by the PORCH team has been warmly welcomed by its beneficiaries and appears to have '*made a difference*' even to those who have subsequently returned to prison and/or who have dis-engaged from the Project.

In terms of any related impact on re-offending, as with the hard data, the case studies show that some beneficiaries may be '*slowing down*' (Roberts 2007). However, they also indicate some '*desisters*' which was not apparent from the hard data. Roberts' study found that the desisters had shown significant lifestyle changes alongside the reductions in re-offending which is qualitatively reflected in the small beneficiary sample from PORCH. PORCH staff work holistically with beneficiaries to address other areas of resettlement including health, educational and social issues, alongside accommodation and re-offending. The case studies show how support has been provided to address personal traumas as well as substance misuse with some highly positive outcomes including in some instances, a desire from the beneficiary to move forward with other aspects of their lives such as training and employment.

However, as has been highlighted in previous reports, a number of the case study beneficiaries have received a very intensive level of support from PORCH, in their endeavours to achieve these results. This type of support is resource demanding and necessarily impacts on overall workload issues. This fact should be recognised in terms of the Project's future developments and sustainability.

A final point for future consideration here relates to the cessation of PORCH support when a beneficiary is removed from the PPO list. This will be especially relevant for Beneficiary One when his licence expires in May 2008. Although he currently requires less intensive support than has previously been the case, staff are reluctant to withdraw support entirely until they are sure that his full resettlement is successful. Protocols would be useful here for managing such a gradual transition whilst balancing other workloads demands. It is helpful that PORCH is not bound by statutory requirements and can exercise discretion in this issue.

## Section Six: Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

This report has provided a comprehensive overview of the PORCH Project's key achievements during its fifteen months of operation. This has been developed by monitoring the distance travelled against a series of performance indicators that were established by the evaluation team at the outset of the Project in conjunction with PORCH staff, and also through an examination of seven detailed '*case studies*'. This concluding section of the report brings the findings together with some suggested actions for the PORCH team's consideration as the Project moves into a new phase of operation.

### 6.2 Key Achievements

The evaluation has provided evidence to show that the PORCH Project is positively impacting on a number of factors within its remit. Over its lifetime, a cumulative total of 34 beneficiaries have been successfully housed in accommodation that is suitable within PORCH terms of reference and staff have been successful in working with those individuals to maintain their accommodation status, including through periods of vulnerability.

The pool of available accommodation is also increasing through the Project, with 23 accommodation providers having been engaged by the end of November 2007. Initial successes were most evident with the private sector, but more latterly Local Authority support is perceived to be growing with a number of dedicated bed-spaces having been made available. PORCH's proactive support for the providers who have been engaged has been widely welcomed and this may be seen as one of the ways in which the Project really adds value to existing activity.

Unfortunately at this point in time, the impact of the accommodation placements on beneficiaries' re-offending rates is unclear. However, there are early signs that offending rates of some of the beneficiaries may be '*slowing down*' (Roberts 2007) and this was further evidenced through the case study element of the evaluation. It should also be borne in mind that recidivism is notoriously difficult and sometimes misleading to measure (see for example Le Vay's briefing paper 1/04), particularly over such a limited time span. Also, as highlighted in Section 2.1, there is a strong argument to suggest that:

*'...prolific offender projects are complex in terms of their multi-agency nature and the needs of their clientele. Their value should be judged beyond crime rates and cost-effectiveness, though these are of course important. Other criteria which should be taken into account include, on the one hand, health, educational and social benefits for participants and, on the other hand, improved multi-agency working and information exchange between project partners and improved intelligence on prolific offenders. Projects working intensively with prolific offenders might be best regarded as being of a maintenance nature – of buttressing primary desistance – rather than a short sharp intervention that acts as a cure-all...'* (Farrall, Mawby and Worrall 2007: 358-359).

Looking at the criteria highlighted by Farrall et al (2007) PORCH has clearly achieved a number of softer impacts. The evaluation has shown how staff work holistically with beneficiaries to address a range of resettlement issues, alongside accommodation and re-offending. The case studies demonstrate the wide-ranging emotional and practical support that has been provided to individuals with some highly positive outcomes including in some instances, a desire from the beneficiary to move forward with other aspects of their lives such as training and employment.

Progress has also been made in co-operative working between the relevant criminal justice agencies through the Project. PORCH is run by a number of highly committed individuals who have worked hard to develop co-operative relationships with other agencies, particularly the PPOU with whom they have developed appropriate processes and procedures for the assessment and referral of beneficiaries. These co-operative relationships are of particular importance to the successful running of the Project and enable staff to maintain an offender-focused approach to their service, and they also appear to be impacting positively on other agencies involved. One stakeholder in particular expressed the view that PORCH is now vital to the success of other agencies. The role that PORCH staff perform in stabilising their beneficiaries through accommodation and other support was perceived as enabling those individuals to more effectively engage with the other agencies with whom they need to work.

Looking to the future, long-term sustainability remains an issue for PORCH. However, the Project has been proactive in this area and continuation funding has been secured until September 2008. Staff are actively pursuing different options at present and are optimistic that the Project's merger with CARD may better position them for future funding opportunities.

### **6.3 Areas for Future Consideration**

At a strategic level, the longer-term sustainability of the Project needs to be considered, although as highlighted above it is anticipated that the CARD-PORCH merger may better position the Project for future funding opportunities. Whilst this may be a positive development, careful consideration will need to be given to the operationalisation of the new structures and daily working practices to ensure that the integrity of the Project is maintained.

On a related note it is also suggested that careful consideration be given to the monitoring protocols for the merged Project. Issues around consistent record keeping and the effective monitoring of PORCH activities were highlighted at interim stage of the evaluation. Staff have subsequently worked hard to remedy this and, although not all of the evaluation team's recommendations have been taken on board, significant improvements have been made in this area. It will be important to ensure the consistency and accuracy of future record keeping across the merged Project to establish the evidence base for future evaluation. This includes the systematic collation and review of the recidivism data which should enable a more definitive assessment of impact over time.

Operationally, a key area for future consideration appears to be the very intensive level of support that is often required in order for the PORCH staff to achieve the results that have been demonstrated through the case studies. Although the case study element of the research has also shown that the intensity of support in some cases diminishes over time, as the beneficiary gains greater stability, the resource implications of this level of activity should nevertheless be recognised in terms of the Project's forward planning.

Also of note are the calls for a common client support plan to further join-up provision between the different agencies involved in resettlement. Although barriers to this have been identified, they do not appear to be insurmountable and it is suggested that this would be a positive development for the future.

A final and associated point for PORCH's consideration relates to the cessation of staff support when an individual is removed from the PPO list. Staff are understandably reluctant to withdraw support entirely in these circumstances until they are confident that full resettlement has been achieved. This necessarily impacts on workload demands and it is suggested that protocols would be useful for managing any resulting tensions.

By way of some concluding comments, the evaluation team also wishes to highlight the calls for greater clarity in terms of how the patchwork of offender accommodation fits together. Whilst this may be beyond PORCH's remit to resolve, it would appear to be relevant for the wider criminal justice community.

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