



## Offenders under the age of 18 in the South West of England and Cornwall.

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### 1. Context

The overall aim of the National Offender Management Service Co-Financing Organisation (NOMS CFO) programme is to improve offender education, training & employment opportunities and increase access to existing resettlement provision. Rather than deliver education and training programmes directly, the NOMS CFO Programme is designed to motivate participants and remove barriers that prevent them from progressing into mainstream provision delivered by other agencies such as Jobcentre Plus employment services, Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) funded provision or further education/training. Not all these services are directed specifically at offenders and NOMS CFO links into services in prison/community for offenders and those available to everyone. Effective engagement with offenders in custody or in the community will also more adequately prepare them for employment, training, education and other mainstream activities. The provision of NOMS CFO enhances existing activity within prisons and the community by identifying the gaps in delivery for the harder to help groups, which includes prisoners serving short term sentences. NOMS CFO aims to complement existing CFO activity by bridging the service gaps experienced by offenders.

The Prime Provider for the South West and Cornwall CFO regions is Tribal. Tribal is using the current NOMS CFO 2011 – 2014 programme to run the 'new futures' project across the two regions. The new futures project encompasses a wide variety of organisations contracted to offer the necessary guidance and support to help offenders into education, training or employment (ETE). Participants on the new futures project are able to access suitable and appropriate support to address a range of barriers; whatever need they present with, Tribal will supply the necessary assistance so that they can progress smoothly. The overall aim of the project is to offer additional support where currently missing and increasing the number of opportunities for all types of offenders; including those that are deemed the hardest-to-help. The targeted hard-to-help sub-group cohort for the South West and Cornwall is offenders under the age of 18.

Tribal has sub-contracted provision for the offenders under 18 sub-project in order to cover all of the counties in the regions. In the locality of Dorset, the Dorset, Devon and Cornwall Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) is currently running the original pilot programme; this was the initial offered provision which was set up as a trial with the purpose of acquiring a greater knowledge of the barriers and needs of the sub-group. Tribal chose Dorset as a base for the under 18 provision due to the existing links the CRC had with the two Youth Offending Teams (YOT) in the area; Bournemouth and Poole YOT and Dorset YOT. On the pilot, there is a dedicated Case Manager who offers bespoke, tailored assistance to participants, working jointly with the YOT's to supplement work done in order to maximise resources available in that support network; for example, where the YOT's cannot go and



directly see someone, the Case Manager can. The Case Manager offers bespoke one-to-one support and guidance for participants and can meet them according to their requirements; the support is completely flexible to meet the needs of the participant.

To cover Avon and Somerset, Tribal has their own Case Manager who also has a role as a recruitment advisor. Similar to that of the pilot, the Case Manager offers dedicated, bespoke support to participants and again it is flexible, relaxed and reflective of the needs of the participant. Tribal have also sub-contracted 1625Independent People (IP), a charity organisation that supports vulnerable young people and runs emergency accommodation hostels. As part of CFO provision, 1625IP provides an ETE mentor for participants who are supervised by Bristol YOT or South Gloucestershire YOT; the mentor offers a positive influence, supporting participants that are in transition to adult services or those who are in need of additional help. Also in Gloucester, Tribal contracted with a Community Interest Company called REACH to offer vocational courses, such as mechanics, in community settings. An organisation called Superact, who offer employability development through arts-based activities, has been sub-contracted to cover the county of Devon. Tribal also have two sub-contracted Case Managers working in Wiltshire who offer the same one-to-one service but with the addition of feeding participants in to Probation-run courses for adults; which, although subject to strenuous risk management, has proven to be effective. Lastly, in Cornwall, an organisation called BF Adventure has been sub-contracted to offer adventurous, outdoors activities to build life skills which is then supplemented by employability work. In all, Tribal have strived to offer an innovative range of provision to motivate and engage participants, addressing any barriers they have but still retaining the core principle of improving employability.

The main findings of the report will focus on answering the following key research aims:

- i. To explore and outline the provision offered for this group by each region within the NOMS Co-Financing programme – to show good practice, areas of development and lessons learned.
- ii. To highlight the associated resettlement needs, how they have been addressed by the provider and what other additional help is offered to this group – looking at activities carried out and outcomes achieved.

## 2. Approach

The methodology of this report is designed to provide a balanced commentary on the overall implementation, delivery and sustainability of the project; analysing how impactful and effective the support offered is, what is working well and where are the areas for development, and finally what are the long term prospects of the project. The evaluation consists of a series of qualitative interviews with selected people involved in the design and delivery of the project supported by qualitative analysis of the sub group participant cohort taken from the Case Assessment and Tracking System (CATS).

### Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected in the form of several face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with parties relevant to the design, implementation and delivery of the sub-project. In total, 5



interviews were conducted with 5 people. Two of the interviews were with people linked to the Prime Provider; the Partnership Manager gave an outline of the development of the entire sub-project whereas the Case Manager described working with the sub-group cohort, the support offered and the challenges faced by participants. Three other interviews were conducted with representatives of a select few of Tribal's sub-contracted organisations. The ETE and Accommodation Manager from, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall CRC explained the implementation and delivery of the pilot project in the area; discussing how it has developed with time and how the lessons that were learnt shaped subsequent provision. An interview was also conducted with the mentor from 1625IP who offered a perspective on her alternative role of being a positive influence and greater insight on the chaotic nature of the sub-group. Lastly, the Programme Manager from BF Adventure reported how they became involved in the sub-project and the purpose of the U-Turn project that is running in Cornwall as part of CFO provision. Brief communication was also made with a small number of participants of the project in order to gauge their opinion and experience.

### Quantitative Data

The quantitative data used in the report was sourced from the CATS application. It enabled an analysis of the demographics, needs and outcomes of that of the target sub-group cohort to a comparative offender cohort from the South West and Cornwall. Using the CATS data, two comparisons were made between two male-only cohorts. Those participants from the sub-group cohort aged over 18, 4 participants who started in custody and 1 female participant were excluded from the data to enable a simple comparison to be performed. The data for the current report looks at 74 offenders under 18 who started on the new futures project. One comparison was made with a control group of offenders over 18 who also started on the new futures project. A second comparison was made to 16 and 17 year olds on CFO programmes in other regions. Further analysis was conducted to determine whether there was any statistical significance of the highlighted needs of the target sub-group and if they differed to that of each comparison cohort. These significance tests were carried out using Pearson's Chi-Squared test with Yate's Correction for Continuity.

### 3. Results

This report serves as an effective feedback mechanism to the providers, NOMS and ESF that explores the delivery of the provision and the impact on participants. The central issue of this report is to determine whether the projects are contributing to the change that they were designed to make, and to examine those aspects of the project that are contributing to or hampering its success; do these lie in the design or the implementation process.

This section provides the results of the evaluation to date by answering the following two research aims:-

- To explore and outline the provision offered for this group by each region within the NOMS Co-Financing programme – to show good practice, areas of development and lessons learned.
- To highlight the associated resettlement needs, how they have been addressed by the providers and what other additional help is offered to this group – looking at activities carried out and outcomes achieved.



The themes that are discussed firstly are in relation to answering set research aim one: To explore the implementation and delivery of the sub project within the NOMS Co-Financing programme – to show good practice, areas of development and lessons learned.

### **‘A chaotic nature’ and ‘being a consistent presence’**

One theme that was consistent through all interviews conducted was the sheer chaotic and unstable nature of sub-group participants. It was detailed in every interview how working with this group is extremely difficult due to their unpredictable nature. The ETE mentor from 1625IP described how volatile a participant’s circumstances are and how chaotic their lives can be; giving examples such as how their housing situation can change in a day, the temptation and influence from peers to reoffend, poor familial relationships, instances of mental health problems or addictions to alcohol or drugs and behavioural issues including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Asperger’s Syndrome. With such a complex array of barriers and the potential for a participant’s situation to change within an instant makes arranging meetings and opportunities very challenging. As the mentor explained, using the example of housing, if a participant were to lose their accommodation then everything else becomes irrelevant until the issue is resolved; meaning that offering any ETE support becomes unnecessary because they focus too much on other issues. It was discussed that any delivery staff must recognise and be sympathetic of the fact that there are many other issues that the participant faces and that in those instances, until the participant regains some stability, they should provide a supportive presence in the participant’s life; aiding with whatever need where and when possible.

When faced with such unpredictability with participants, Case Managers and other delivery staff described how it is best to be a consistent, supportive presence in their lives during the good points and bad points. It was noted that many authorities and professionals can be involved in their lives for a length of time and then disappear; so it is understandable that they are mistrusting of offers of new support, expecting them to be the same. Therefore, delivery staff make the effort to show that they can be a continuous source of support for participants. Tribal’s Case Manager discussed how he emphasizes to participants that he is always available to contact for whatever they may need. When their lives are that unstable and chaotic, having that single source of consistent support can prove a lifeline for some participants; a way to make sense of the chaos as the ETE mentor described. The support offered was praised by delivery staff for being always available, meaning that if participants disengaged for a time, they were not turned away if they came back. For participants, just knowing that there is that consistent source of support that is available at any time, in any capacity, offers comfort when their situation is deteriorating.

### **‘Communication’ and ‘building a trusting relationship’**

One lesson that has been learnt over the course of the sub-group project has been the difficulty with maintaining contact with participants. It was discussed in all interviews how participants have the tendency to change their mobile phone making their numbers untraceable. Also, attempts to send letters to where the participant lives may also be unsuccessful because their housing situation is very precarious and can change quickly. Sustaining communication with offenders under 18 appears to be intrinsically difficult; again making arranging provision and opportunities problematic. The Partnership Manager for



Tribal admitted surprise at how much of a challenge it has been to monitor and track participants; stating that unless they report to a YOT then they are ultimately untraceable and it is a matter of waiting for them to return. It was explained that there was no specific provision that can be offered to increase engagement; more that it is a case of being involved with the participant and supporting them enough for them to accept the help and recognise that they need it. By building a trusting relationship with the participant and demonstrating that the support is genuine as well as constant, then they will feel the need to keep seeking it; it was stated that this approach was key to facilitating sustained engagement.

All interviewees discussed how support worked especially well when Case Managers and other delivery staff had the time and capacity to develop a trusting relationship with participants. It was explained that the majority of participants do not have anyone who is a positive influence. Also, as already noted, there are many professionals who enter their lives, have some influence for a short period of time and then exit; as a consequence, participants tend to be very sceptical of new offers of support. As the Tribal Case Manager describes, by building that relationship and earning their trust, the participant learns to open up more and engage more; in turn that trust also means that participants feel confident enough to ask for help. Though Tribal's Partnership Manager stressed that trust does not come easily, it is earned over a period of time, over months if need be. However, the ETE and Accommodation Manager stated that once that relationship has been established, motivation increased significantly and participants were enthusiastic about the support and opportunities provided. This approach was common throughout all of new futures' provision for offenders under 18. It was key to sustaining engagement in a cohort that is very difficult to keep focused. The dedicated and resilient nature of new futures staff was key to helping participants, demonstrating to participants that they have a genuine interest in their future and that they can effectively assist with any barrier.

### **'A lack of self-worth' and 'celebrating small achievements'**

Another aspect that makes working with this sub-group cohort difficult is that they appear to have an inherent lack of self-worth and self-belief; further impacting on motivation to find employment or start further education. It was discussed that, in the majority of cases, participants have never had any aspiration or belief instilled in them by anybody. Especially if there has been a series of generations that have worked in the same trade or if there is a specific business running in the family, they are then expected to follow the same path; in that respect, the young person has never had any choice over what they want to do. The Programme Manager from BF Adventure stated that, if they have been unsuccessful in education as well, it amounts to a great deal of negative self-perception. 1625IP's mentor discussed how hard it is to address this, saying that often participants think that they have no social skills, they are never going to work and that they have no chance at being successful. In order to try to improve a participant's feelings of self-worth, delivery staff took the approach to set small, manageable steps that can be celebrated upon completion, which in turn promotes a sense of achievement that the participant can then build on.

What has worked well, with respect to improving a participant's feelings of worth, was setting small goals and celebrating every achievement, no matter how little or seemingly insignificant; even if something went wrong, showing the participant what positives can be taken from the experience. Tribal's Case Manager gave the example of writing a C.V. with a



participant, stating that it is an excellent confidence building task, as it enables them to think about themselves in a different light; when the C.V. is completed at the end, the participant shows pride in what they have created. Even when the participant had a bad experience, delivery staff tried to show them the positives in order to maintain levels of self-worth. The mentor discussed how in a lot of cases, participants can take three steps forward and two back and so part of the role is mitigating any damage to self-worth through positive reinforcement. It was also conveyed that even from the very beginning of support, when a participant will barely talk or will not look someone in the eye, just to get them to speak freely and express themselves is a huge step for them and should be celebrated as such. By demonstrating the ability that participants' have, new futures ensures that their well-being and general welfare is taken into account and can be monitored; if levels of self-worth were to diminish, then action can be taken to address the situation.

### **'A relaxed, flexible and bespoke approach'**

Another aspect that worked really well was the overall general nature of the provision. The relaxed, flexible and individual approach used for the provision suited participants well as it considered their needs and barriers without being demanding of them. Provision was continually praised by those involved in delivery for being extremely reflective of the cohort. By having the capacity and time to work closely with each participant, being able to build that trusting relationship that is vital to sustaining engagement and offering a wide variety of services, new futures has supplied provision that can adapt to the volatile nature of the sub-group; yet still offer the necessary support to meet their needs. Tribal's Case Manager also stated that the support must be governed completely by the participant at their own pace. Participants cannot be made to feel that they are being pushed or coerced in any way otherwise it risks them shutting down and disengaging with provision. The nature and intensity of support must be solely directed by the participant themselves and the delivery staff facilitate what they need. By using this approach to working with the sub-group, the new futures project ensures that the participant is treated as an individual as well as demonstrating that there is genuine consideration of what the participant wants and values.

### **'Eligibility'**

One aspect that the sub-project struggled with was surrounding eligibility and the subsequent impact on the pool of potential participants that could be worked with; this was very pertinent to Cornwall. The Programme Manager running the U-Turn project stated that, in a recent monitoring report identifying the number of potential participants for the area, in the entirety of Cornwall there were only a possible 17 targets; the eligibility criteria being that they were 16 or 17 years of age and had a minimum transgression of being cautioned by the Police. The Programme Manager carried on to say that Police are averse to giving young people cautions which, although a positive thing in a general context, means that it limits the number of potential participants that can be worked with. Even on Probation-monitored caseloads in Dorset, it was discussed that there were rarely any project-eligible 16 or 17 year olds. As a consequence, sourcing eligible participants has been considerably difficult for the new futures project. The main referral route has been the Youth Offending Services, meaning that new futures is heavily reliant on the YOT's in the regions. Tribal's Partnership Manager expressed frustration at the overall lack of participants over the course of the sub-project however conceded that it is simply because there are barely any eligible participants in either



region. In all interviews, a desire to widen the age eligibility criteria for the sub-project was conveyed. A suggestion was made to possibly include young adults up to the age of 24 with the reasoning that the severity and type of need does not suddenly change after turning 18. By changing the eligibility criteria in this way, it would increase the pool of potential participants and allow the sub-project to be made available to more young people who need that support.

### 'Relationship with YOT's'

It was discussed in interviews that the relationships with the various YOT's in the regions has been somewhat mixed; in general, it has been positive and YOT's have been supportive of the new futures sub-project but there were instances of discord. As YOT's are a major referral route, good relationships with YOT's facilitates access to potential participants; e.g. new futures can be introduced to participants when they meet with their YOT workers. 1625IP's mentor discussed working with the YOT, stating that the provision worked especially well when the mentor could work with the YOT to provide a comprehensive service to participants. The ETE and Accommodation Manager at Dorset, Devon and Cornwall CRC described how their communication with YOT's was excellent; their Case Manager was invited to YOT meetings, telephone calls were made daily to enquire about referrals and the YOT's were always very supportive. Though Tribal's Partnership Manager commented that, a period of time was needed to demonstrate the worth of the project and how it could supplement YOT provision; though once accepted, new futures and YOT's worked very efficiently together. The Partnership Manager discussed how, if the project could be taken back to the start, the Youth Offending Services would have been more heavily involved in the development than they were for the current project. If involved from the outset, YOT's would have more understanding of what the project offers and how it can complement YOT work. Also, there would be more focus on maintaining positive relationships with YOT's and building on those connections to offer a more holistic service for participants.

The next set of themes are pertinent to answering set research aim two: To explore differences in resettlement needs and how they have been addressed – looking at activities carried out and outcomes achieved.

The below table shows the identified resettlement needs specific to the offenders under 18 sub-group cohort compared to males over 18 in the main cohort on the South West and Cornwall programme. The below statistics and all following statistics are accurate as of August 2014. As of August 2014, there have been a total of 74 offenders under 18. This data has been limited to males started in the community in the South West and Cornwall aged between 16 and 17 on starting.



Resettlement Need	Offenders under 18 (n = 74)			Main Cohort Participants (n = 3728)		
	Has Need	No Need	Percentage with Need	Has Need	No Need	Percentage with Need
Alcohol	12	62	16%	1503	2225	40%
Attitude & Life Skills	72	2	97%	2588	1140	69%
Drugs	24	50	32%	1584	2144	43%
Education	73	1	99%	3397	331	91%
Employment & Training	74	0	100%	3728	0	100%
Financial Status	30	44	41%	1787	1941	48%
Health	12	62	16%	1256	2472	34%
Housing	11	63	15%	1166	2562	31%
Relationships	9	65	12%	759	2969	20%

As the table shows, the offenders under 18 sub-group cohort have a relatively specific set of needs; the most frequent of which were attitude and life skills, employment and education. However, the statistics also demonstrates instances of other needs which justifies the use of an individual, bespoke approach to support as it means that if any subsequent barriers were to develop, then they can be addressed appropriately and swiftly. Using Pearson's Chi-Square significance test with Yate's Correction for Continuity it was found that there was no significant difference in the majority of resettlement needs of offenders under 18 compared to that of the over 18 main cohort. There were significant findings for the alcohol, health and housing resettlement pathways; offenders under 18 were significantly less likely to experience these resettlement barriers. However, when comparing young people to adults, attention should be paid to the fact that their circumstances and experience can be vastly different; an example of such thing would be the differences in the statutory provision that both groups receive.

### 'Differences for a youth cohort'

It was noted in the interviews conducted that support had to be mindful of working with a cohort of young people as opposed to adults. The 1625IP's mentor gave the example of, when working with adults, the focus may be on getting them back in to employment or training, whereas when working with young people, the focus of support is likely helping someone who has no experience of working. As such, they may have little comprehension of what is required of them or even what they want to do for an occupation. The intense, individual nature of this sub-project means that participants have someone to work closely with, to help them decide what they wish to aim for and then identify the necessary steps needed to achieve those set aims. Support should also be, where possible, supplied by organisations with experience of or who are solely dedicated to working with this offender group; on the current project, all sub-contractors have experience of working with young offenders. Tribal's Partnership Manager stressed the importance of being wary when designing provision for young people; stating that there is a tendency to have an "adult idea



of what young people want”. Tribal arranged various elements of provision that were considered to be appealing to young people. However it was in Wiltshire, where there was no funding to do anything specific, that provision worked especially well. Participants were given the option to attend Job Club and offered Construction Skills Certificate Scheme card courses; in these environments they were mixing with older offenders, though carefully risk managed. It was suggested that, the opportunity of support which was perceived as useful, combined with the association with people in similar situations to them worked well for young people.

As the experiences of young offenders and adult offenders can be very diverse, a second comparison was conducted with a cohort that has similar circumstances to that of the sub-group. The below table shows the resettlement needs of offenders under 18 sub-group cohort in the South West and Cornwall compared to offenders under 18 on CFO programmes in other regions; of which there are 550. Again the data has been restricted to males only.

Resettlement Need	Offenders under 18 in South West and Cornwall (n = 74)			Offenders under 18 in other CFO regions (n = 550)		
	Has Need	No Need	Percentage with Need	Has Need	No Need	Percentage with Need
Alcohol	12	62	16%	45	505	8%
Attitude & Life Skills	72	2	97%	472	78	86%
Drugs	24	50	32%	72	478	13%
Education	73	1	99%	480	70	87%
Employment & Training	74	0	100%	550	0	100%
Financial Status	30	44	41%	84	466	15%
Health	12	62	16%	66	484	12%
Housing	11	63	15%	52	498	10%
Relationships	9	65	12%	47	503	9%

Compared to offenders under 18 across the other CFO regions, in general, those in the South West and Cornwall have a greater need of all the resettlement pathways. As the table shows, there are also instances where participants in the current sub-group project demonstrated a much greater need of a select few of the pathways. There were significant differences found for the alcohol, drugs and financial status resettlement pathways; offenders under 18 in the South West and Cornwall were significantly more likely to have these resettlement needs. The following results discusses the support that the new futures sub-project is providing to address the barriers that participants exhibit.



### **‘Motivation’**

As already discussed, one of the major challenges of working with this cohort is that levels of motivation can rise and fall dramatically. The CATS data showed that, on starting the project, 60% of participants had red levels of motivation; meaning that, although they may desire to enter employment or education, they were not optimistic about their prospects or they did not feel they would be able to achieve anything. Their chaotic lives also detract from the situation because, with all that is happening around them, it makes it hard to focus on specific things. The approach used in the current sub-project is central to facilitating an improvement in motivation and then sustaining it. The intensive nature of provision, coupled with that trusting relationship, means that the participant has someone to celebrate achievements with but also has someone to support them if they have a bad experience or if their circumstances were to descend in to chaos. The assistance and guidance given by delivery staff is directed by the participant so that they are always in control and they are empowered that they can choose every aspect of support. Tribal’s Case Manager described how the most important feature is to go at the participant’s pace, setting small goals to boost motivation and then steadily push them to a greater objective; such as employment or education. By using this approach to support, the general welfare and well-being of participants can be monitored and measures can be taken to address any problems that arise or if their situation deteriorates; the participant has someone that they can trust, someone they can talk to in confidence and someone who they know is there to support them no matter how dire the situation.

### **‘Education and training’**

There were a notable number of hard outcomes for participants either returning to education or beginning a form of training. 23% of participants received a hard outcome for Education/Training (Release/Community). Considering the chaotic nature of the sub-group and that many participants may have not completed formal education for whatever reason, to bring those participants to a point where they feel confident enough and stable enough to either return to education or begin a training course, is indicative of the quality of support that they have received from new futures. A participant that was spoken to expressed a desire to go to college and was confident that, based on the support already received from new futures, this would certainly be achievable. 1625IP’s mentor discussed how that, so long as the participant is willing, a focus should be placed on education because it will improve their employment prospects in the long term. However, for those that do not feel comfortable enough committing to that level of support, new futures also offers participants the opportunity to do very short, taster training sessions in vocational courses. 23% of participants received a soft outcome for Short Vocational Skills Training. These sessions are very short, usually lasting a day or two, where participants can engage in training for occupations such as mechanics. As they are only taster sessions, it does not pressure participants in to committing to something they are not ready for but gives them the opportunity to explore something that they may be interested in and can benefit from.

### **‘Employability’**

New futures offers a range of support for participants with regards to improving employability. Certain employability tasks that are considered to be pertinent are conducted frequently with new participants; these include disclosure advice, C.V. production, and interview techniques.



43% of participants received a soft outcome for disclosure advice. Disclosure is an extremely important part of applying for a job and in many cases, participants have no experience of this process, so consequently they do not know how to appropriately disclose their offence. Delivery staff will aid with this by explaining what is involved in disclosing effectively as well as also helping in the creation of the disclosure letter. 35% of participants had a soft outcome claimed for C.V. production. As already noted, this can also be an effective confidence booster as it allows participants to focus on their skills and abilities, promoting what they have achieved and producing a resource that participants can then use to proactively apply for jobs of their own accord. 34% of participants had an outcome claimed for Interview Skills. Tribal's Case Manager will conduct mock interviews to encourage participants to give more consideration to how they would respond in that situation. Following on from this, 26% of participants have had an outcome claimed for a Job Interview. Despite these seemingly small steps, for a participant to achieve an interview is a massive accomplishment for them. It was discussed how withdrawn participants can be on first starting the sub-project; not talking, keeping their head down and not making eye contact. To bring a participant from that starting point to a state where they can confidently deliver in an interview situation is a significant improvement and should be recognised as such.

### **'Accommodation'**

One issue that was raised in all interviews was how unstable this cohort's housing situation can be. Although not apparent from the statistics in the current report, it was continually stressed that this is a major problem for offenders under 18. Tribal's Partnership Manager expressed surprise at the sheer scale of the problem and the subsequent impact it has on the participant's wider circumstances. The unpredictable housing situation has a detrimental effect on arranging support as well as monitoring and contacting participants. 1625IP run high support hostels for young people and their mentor knows only too well how quickly a young person's housing situation can decline; it is not uncommon for them to become homeless. With regards to support with accommodation, 23% of participants on the sub-group project have received a soft outcome for Tenancy Advice. As a participant's poor housing situation can potentially be very disruptive to support, should this need arise, then it is best to try and resolve the problem swiftly. Accommodation support in that case should be a key aspect of any support for offenders under 18. New futures ensures that specialists are available to participants experiencing accommodation issues for immediate housing advice and support. Participants are then offered intensive help with every step that is required to get them back in to stable accommodation.

### **'Addressing additional needs'**

Tribal have strived to offer a combined service to participants that works in conjunction with YOT in order to address any need. The statistics only demonstrate a snapshot of one point in a participant's journey; during the course of their time on the sub-project, their situation could change dramatically and rapidly. Tribal's Case Manager discussed how participants can present with a myriad of issues including housing, family or social work. By having a full, wrap-around service with specialists in a number of areas that participants can be signposted to for immediate advice or emergency support, means that they are safeguarded against any barrier; no matter whether it is minor or major. The Programme Manager for BF Adventure outlined a case study of a U-Turn participant; discussing the numerous barriers that



participant had including family, housing, financial, drugs and alcohol issues. That particular participant was helped with applying for income support, referred to a specialist young person's substance addiction service and offered a peer mentoring opportunity in a role that was linked to their career aspirations. Examples of outcomes claimed for additional needs include; 30% for Financial/Benefits/Debt Advice, 34% for Advice on Completing Forms and 32% for Mentoring. By offering a service that supplements YOT provision, new futures ensures that there is always a medium between the participant and YOT as well as with wider support organisations so that if a participant's circumstances were to suddenly deteriorate, then they can be immediately assisted with the situation.

#### 4. Conclusion

The approach that new futures has used in the current sub-group project to aid offenders under 18 has been very effective in helping what is an extremely unpredictable cohort. The intense and bespoke nature of provision means that participants can access help with any issue or problem they have regardless of scale. By allowing participants to set the pace of provision and setting small steps towards a larger goal, then participants feel more comfortable and learn to gradually open up and trust delivery staff more. As participants can potentially have very chaotic lives with a number of problems, having a constant source of support that can be accessed at any time gives them comfort as they know that there is always someone available to help with the situation. Despite issues with numbers and initial difficulties with YOT's, the sub-project has managed to adapt and new futures has been able to work effectively alongside the YOT's to provide a service that, not only can address any barrier that the participant has, but also takes account of their general welfare and well-being; which is important in a group that can be rife with feelings of worthlessness and a lack of self-belief. It was commented however, that if taken back to the beginning, the YOT's would have much greater involvement in developing the provision in order to offer that intense, collective service from the start. There should also be an awareness of a potentially intrinsic issue with accommodation especially. All interviewees expressed the severity of the problem and the consequences that it can have on participant engagement and motivation. Despite the volatile nature of the cohort, new futures has managed to deliver a service that acknowledges the wider circumstances of the participants, that provides the necessary support in a relaxed and flexible manner and which can offer participants the chance of a stable life.

#### 5. Recommendations

Offenders under 18 are an extremely challenging sub-group cohort for a variety of reasons. They require support which is very intensive, patient and understanding of their circumstances; taking account of their chaotic and volatile lives, an intrinsic lack of self-worth and the resulting low levels of motivation. If a project of this nature was to be conducted again, the following recommendations are made:

- Time should be allowed for delivery staff to develop a trusting relationship with participants. By building that relationship with a participant, it facilitates an improvement in their motivation and engagement and the participant will gradually learn to open up and access more support. With many professionals entering and



exiting a participant's life, they can be mistrusting of new help. By being a constant source of support, the participant learns that help is available for any situation.

- Participants should be allowed to direct their own support and provision should be offered in small, manageable goals. Participants should govern what support they want and when to access it rather than being forced in to something they are not ready for and risk them disengaging. More recognition should be given to seemingly small achievements as they can indicate a much wider improvement in the participant's welfare and confidence.
- Provision should acknowledge and be sympathetic of a participant's wider circumstances and should be aware that their situation could change drastically very quickly. In that regard, support should be flexible and be able to adapt to the participant's dynamic state of affairs.
- Particular attention should be paid to accommodation needs. It was reported that participants' housing situation can be very unstable and they can quite quickly find themselves homeless. Accommodation support may be an aspect that is required when developing provision for this cohort.
- Provision should aim to work in conjunction with YOT's in order to provide an intense and collective support service for participants. Provision should supplement the work done with YOT's in order to maximise what is available to participants. It was recommended in the current sub-project that YOT's are incorporated, from the beginning, in the development of provision to ensure this aim is met.
- The current sub-project struggled with issues surrounding eligibility which limited the pool of potential participants that could be worked with. It was discussed how widening the age eligibility criteria would mean a greater pool to engage with; this would mean that young adults with a similar need requirement to that of the sub-group cohort could also gain access to the necessary intensive support.