

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Co-Financing Organisation:

Analytical Study into the Impact of offender provision on Social Inclusion and Employment

Eleanor Grey, LLB Law with Criminology



Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Co-Financing organisation is a programme funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) to help get offenders back into the labour market. The project is currently on its third wave of funding. The

offenders that take part in this programme are categorised as 'hard to reach offenders', these are individuals who require support for a number of issues, from addiction to problems with housing. The programme aims to cater to the individual needs of each offender, by helping them complete different soft outcomes.

Objectives

The aim of this project was to assess the effectiveness of the CFO programme. This project was split into two pieces of research. The first assessed whether offender needs had been addressed and how this then affects the likelihood of employment. The aim was to show which outcomes provided by the CFO project worked best for which offenders.

The second piece of research looked more closely at the relationship between the offenders needs and the outcome they received and compared this to the likelihood of them getting employment.



Method

The data used in both pieces of research was collected during the second wave of the CFO programme. The data had already been cleaned and recoded.

Report 1

In order to assess which provisions worked best for different offenders, three steps were taken. The first step was to cluster the offenders based on certain

characteristics such as education completed or issues with drug use. The second step was to run the K Modes algorithm to cluster the offenders based on the outcomes they completed. The K modes algorithm was run using R. The third step was to include data about whether or not each offender got into employment or not. When data from the two sets of clusters was compared, conclusions could be drawn about which provision worked best for which offenders.

Report 2

The first step was to pair outcomes with needs. For example offenders were asked if they knew how to disclose their offence, this is the assessment question; therefore the outcome would be giving disclosure advice. Once the assessment questions had been paired to outcomes contingency tables were run to see the frequency of individuals who did or didn't have a need and whether they did or didn't achieve that outcome. A chi squared test was run to see if the values were statistically significant. The likelihood of an offender getting employment was calculated in relation to receiving an outcome or not and also needing the outcome or not. These odds were then turned into graphs. This was done using R and Excel software.

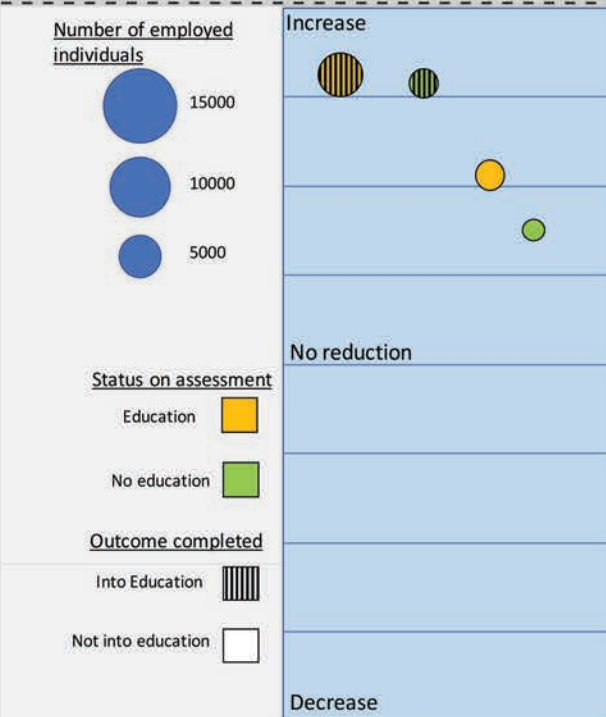


Figure 1: Graph showing the impact of getting into education on employment in relation to having had previous qualifications or not (Report 2)



Results and Conclusions

Report 1

One pattern which was consistent regardless of which cluster an individual was in, was the more soft outcomes an individual completed the more likely they were to gain employment. Analysis for all 14 clusters wasn't included in the report. An interesting cluster was a cluster containing individuals who were more likely to be single mothers, unemployed, have domestic issues and they were also more likely to want advice. The individuals in this cluster were more likely to be employed when they received advice outcomes, such as childcare advice, rather than any other outcome. This shows that the providers successfully identified the needs of the individuals and provided the appropriate provisions. As a result they were more likely to get into employment. This success was also shown in other clusters. This shows that when specific needs are targeted employment rates do increase.

Report 2

Figure 1. shows the general pattern that was found in the majority of the needs and outcomes pairings analysis. As it shows those who have had previous education and receive further education are most likely to be employed. However, those who didn't have education and received education are far more likely to be employed than those who didn't receive education through the programme but previously had education. This was done for more than 40 outcome and assessment pairings. They each show that chances of employment are increased by receiving help through the CFO programme.

One issue with this research is that it only assessed one pairing, no other factors are taken into account. In order to get more accurate information about which outcomes work best, other factors and outcomes would have to be assessed as a whole.

Both reports give an overview of the effectiveness of the CFO programme.