

An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Kainos Community ‘Challenge-to-Change’ programme in English prisons

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This paper outlines the key research findings on the effectiveness of the Kainos Community Challenge-to-Change programme (CtC). It is a hybrid programme using cognitive behavioural work in a therapeutic community setting within the prison. Our evaluation shows that CtC has been successful in improving both prison discipline prisons and significantly reducing 2-year post-release reconviction rates². We argue that it compares favourably with mainstream UK and international programmes, due to: CtC’s hybrid design; consistent input from dedicated staff; a relatively consistent selection process that targets medium to high risk offenders.

Key Findings

- From the start of CtC in 1997 through to 2003, CtC achieved a reconviction rate within two years of release of 36%. Though there is no predicted figure to compare this with for the whole period, it indicates that the programme is achieving a low and sustained level of reconvictions.***
- Our more detailed analysis, for the period 1999-2003, shows that CtC achieved a reconviction rate of 35%, significantly lower than a predicted rate of 50%: a reduction of 15.%***
- We also show that 74% of CtC participants were medium-to-high risk offenders and it is clear that the programme is most successful when targeted at this group of offenders, as CtC achieved significantly lower reconviction rates than predicted for these medium-to-high risk offenders***
- CtC return to prison rates within two years for 1997-2003 are 12.8%. The most comparable rate is the Home Office (2005) figure of 35% for all males released from prison in 2001 who were reconvicted to immediate custody within two years after release.***
- CtC participants achieved consistently lower prison discipline sanctions than non-participants in the same prisons.***

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² This analysis used the Offenders Index database, held by the Home Office until June 2007 and since then by the Ministry of Justice.

Key words: Reconviction rates; Cognitive behavioural programmes; therapeutic communities; hybrid interventions; offender behaviour

Background

The charity Kainos Community (Kainos) has been running the Challenge-to-Change (CtC) programme, in dedicated wings in English prisons, since 1997³. It is currently run in 3 prisons: The Verne, Swaleside and Stocken. The rolling, full time, 24 week, community-based programme targets offenders with medium to high criminogenic risks and needs. Participants can stay for a minimum of 6, and a (more typical) normal maximum of 18 months. CtC uses a hybrid model combining: the 4 main modules of multi-modal cognitive behavioural programmes common to accredited prison intervention programmes; and *in vivo* learning supported through the therapeutic community (TC) ‘milieu’, partly facilitated by other ex-CtC prisoners trained as mentors. Pro-social modelling, practice and feedback are undertaken within the TC living arrangements (see Ashcroft, 2007). Each participant must undergo a total of 64 2 hour intervention sessions. Table 1 below, outlines the overall programme structure of CtC.

Table 1: Kainos Challenge-to-Change Programme Structure

Weeks	Start/Finish	No. of Programme Component Sessions (2 hours each)				TOTAL
		Community Living	Focus	IPR	Citizenship	
1-4	Induction					
5-9		16				
10-13			16			
14-17				16		
18-21					16	
22-24	Evaluations					
Total Hours	16	32	32	32	32	148

³ See the Kainos web site <http://www.kainoscommunity.com/index.html>

Introducing Kainos to English prisons: addressing poor discipline

Kainos was introduced as a last resort in 1997 after an HMIC report identified extremely poor discipline in one wing of the Verne. The Kainos programme saved the wing from closure by improving behaviour and discipline, which in turn allowed a reduction in prison staff on the wing (Burnside et al, 2005). Since that time, in-prison behaviour is routinely monitored on the Kainos wing as a measure of effectiveness. Table 2 shows the figures for the most recent evaluation results. Each of the Kainos wings is compared to the overall discipline rates in their 3 respective prisons. Without exception, rates of adjudications, assaults, added days and the results of both voluntary and mandatory drug tests are better for those in the Kainos Wings than for those of the rest of the prison in which they are run.

Table 2: Kainos wings' internal prison discipline performance compared to overall respective prison rates: April 2007/January 2008

Type of disciplinary result		Verne		Stocken		Swaleside	
		Number	Per 100	Number	Per 100	Number	Per 100
Average Population	Prison	596		617		777	
	Kainos	72		66		42	
No of adjudications	Prison	275	46.1	949	153.8	475	61.1
	Kainos	14	19.4	36	54.5	3	7.1
No of assaults	Prison	2	0.3	71	11.5	30	3.9
	Kainos	1	1.3	2	3.0	0	0.0
No of added days	Prison	42		1699		135	
	Kainos	0		119		0	
Voluntary drug tests	Prison	4,722 (2+ve)	0.04	5,789 (178 +)	3.1	8,196 (821+)	10.0
	Kainos	1080 (0 + ve)	0.0	578 (16+ ve)	2.8	412 (1 +ve)	0.2
Mandatory Drug Tests	Prison	332 (2 + ve)	0.0	343 (9 +ve)	2.6	800 (133 +ve)	16.6
	Kainos	27 (0 +ve)	0.0	28 (0 + ve)	0.0	19 (0 +ve)	0.0
Meaningful activity hrs	Kainos	12,886		44,185		35,430	

It is important to comparisons within each prison, rather than across the 3 prisons, because, although Kainos participants are typical of their prisons, the prisons themselves are different. The Verne is a Category C Training prison; Swaleside is a Category B Training prison; and Stocken a Category C closed Training prison.

Return to prison rates

Kainos' management information system routinely matches its records of all CtC graduates with HM Prison Service's records of those returning to prison. While this does not allow for all reconvictions, it is a relative simple and effective proxy measure for 'serious re-offending', as Rose (2002) has already showed. The most recent results for Kainos graduates who return to prison are given in Table 3:

Table 3: Return to prison rates within 2 years of prison release: Kainos graduates 1997 to 2003

	HM The Verne	HM Swaleside	Total
Total graduates	262	50	312
Graduates returning to prison	38	2	40
Percentage reconvicted to prison	14.5%	4%	12.8%

Source: Kainos management information system.

There is no exact comparator group for such figures. However, the Kainos return to prison figures compare well with the published return to prison rate of 35% for all males released from prison in 2001 and reconvicted to immediate custody within 2 years after release (Home Office, 2005).

Reconviction rates for Kainos participants

Logically, total reconviction rates will be much higher than return to prison rates. They are also the key performance indicator on which the Ministry of Justice (and previously the Home Office) judges the effectiveness of prison programmes. Kainos is committed to demonstrating its effectiveness in this way, and has, therefore, previously commissioned an evaluation to provide a reconvictions measure of CtC's impact.

The first reconviction rate study on Kainos interventions

Rose (2002), and later, Burnside, Adler, Loucks and Rose (2005), reported the results of an analysis of 84 Kainos graduates who left the Verne, Highpoint North and Highpoint South prisons between 1997 and (autumn) 1999 and who could be matched against the Offender Index (OI) records. In the 2 reports, Kainos graduates achieved a 2-year reconviction rate of 36.9% compared to around 43% for an OI-generated comparison sample of 13,832 offenders, with broadly similar characteristics to the released Kainos participants, and who were released in 1996 and 1997. Despite a difference of around 6%, the Kainos graduate numbers were too small to show that CtC had achieved a significant reduction in reconvictions. As a result, the Kainos board agreed to conduct a further reconviction study once the numbers of graduates had reached a sufficient size. The analysis below shows our conclusions based on carrying out this later, larger study.

The second Kainos reconvictions analysis

Since the first evaluation, the Home Office has published guidelines on the scientific rigour with which reconviction studies should be conducted (Harper & Chitty, 2005), see Figure 1 (adapted) below. Although there has been some criticism of these guidelines (see Hollin, 2008; Raynor, 2008), they have been maintained by the new Ministry of Justice and we have therefore used them as our guide here.

Figure 1: Levels of rigour for possible Kainos reconviction rate studies

Level 1	Simply calculate reconviction rates for Kainos graduates only
Level 2	Calculate predicted Kainos graduate reconviction rates to compare against actual rates
Level 3	Calculate reconviction rates for a Kainos group and those for a comparison group
Level 4	Calculate reconviction rates for a Kainos group and those for a fully matched group
Level 5	Conduct a Randomised Control Trial (RCT): allocate prisoners to Kainos programmes or not at random and evaluate the difference in reconviction rates

We were always clear that RCT was not legally, ethically or practically possible. Instead, we originally intended to produce a level 3 or level 4 analysis, where we would use predicted and actual scores for both the Kainos graduates and for a comparison or fully matched group, following the example of Falshaw, Friendship, Travers and Nugent (2003). However, this proved to be too difficult from outside the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate (National Offender Management Service) at a time when it was being divided up between the Home Office and the new Ministry of Justice. In the end, we had to settle for a level 2 approach, which is essentially that used by Rose (2002). Despite this, we were able to ensure that we exploited the new, more refined OGRS3⁴ reconviction prediction scores. In addition, we were able to analyse a larger number of Kainos graduates so that we can be much more certain about CtC's impact.

⁴ The most recent version of the predictor first used by Copas and Marshall for the Probation Service, see Copas and Marshall, (1998)

Our reconvictions analysis is limited to the Verne and Swaleside, since the Stocken programme has not yet been running for a long enough period for reconviction data to be available. We identified 196 Kainos graduates who were released from prison in the latter part of 1999 to 2003⁵. RDS (NOMS) matched 151 of these against their Offenders Index database and eventually provided their predicted and actual reconviction rates. These Kainos programme graduates included those of all ranges of risk, but around three-quarters of the sample had an OGRS3 score of over 30%, ie, were those of medium to high risk, which shows a good level of intended target selection.

Our key finding is that while the OGRS3 predicted a 2-year mean rate of reconviction of 50%, the actual rate for our Kainos graduates was only 35%. In short, there is a significant 15% lower reconviction rate than predicted, which shows that Kainos compares extremely favourably to other prison-based programmes targeted at the same level of risk.

Characteristics of those in the sample

The 151 graduates we used in the analysis were released from prison over a long period. Table 4 shows the years in which they were released and indicates that there is only a small overlap (10%) with the period covered by Rose (2002).

Table 4 Age of release of those Kainos graduates in the 2008 sample sample

Year of release	Mean OGRS3 score	No. not reconvicted	No. reconvicted	Total	% of Total	% reconvicted	Difference Actual vs Predicted
1998	49%	2	0	2	(1%)	0	-49%
1999	73%	7	6	13	(9%)	46%	-27%
2000	49%	30	11	41	(27%)	27%	-22%
2001	45%	15	12	27	(18%)	44%	- 1%
2002	55%	22	12	34	(23%)	35%	-20%
2003	40%	22	12	34	(23%)	35%	- 5%
Total	50%	98	53	151		35%	-15%

⁵ During the checking of the release dates, it was apparent that 2 prisoners had actually been released in 1998, but we have included them in this analysis. For reasons of brevity, we use the period 1999-2003 throughout the rest of this report.

The bulk of the offenders were released between 2000 and 2003. In these years, there was a sufficient volume of Kainos graduates to show that there a good level of consistency within predicted risk levels (from 49-55%) of Kainos graduates over the years; and actual reconviction rates (from 27-44%). The difference between the predicted score and the actual reconviction rates is more volatile.

One of the key criticisms that can be levelled at any selective programme is that it may be selecting only ‘easy’ prisoners that would be less likely to reconvict in any case. Table 5 shows that Kainos would be able to rebut this criticism in the main, with 74% of its participants from mid-to-high risk levels.

Table 5: Comparison of predicted risk score ranges with actual reconvictions for Kainos graduates 1999-2003

Range: predicted OGRS3 risk of reconviction scores	Number not reconvicted	Number reconvicted	Total	% of Total	Actual reconviction rate
LOW (0-30%)	34	5	39	(26%)	13%
MEDIUM (30.01 – 60%)	37	13	50	(33%)	26%
HIGH (60.01-100%)	27	35	62	(41%)	56%
Total	98	53	151		35%

It is important to look at the 39 who are in the low risk group in more detail, but since this is partly related to the variation between the 2 prisons, we first need to look at this.

Variation between prisons

Our reconvictions analysis is limited to data available for Kainos graduates from the Verne and Swaleside prisons over the 1999-2003 period. Of these 151 graduates, the majority (112) were from the Verne, and 39 were from Swaleside. Results from the two prisons separately are shown in Table 6. Graduates from both prisons showed a drop in reconviction rates when compared to predicted rates. The predicted rates for Swaleside are quite low but the small numbers mean that it is not possible to demonstrate significant falls in reconviction rates from that prison alone. Future studies will hopefully provide sufficient evidence on this, once the throughput of prisoners has increased.

Table 6: Reconviction rates within 2 years of prison release: Kainos graduates from The Verne and Swaleside, 1999 to 2003

	Verne	Swaleside	Total
Graduates matched	112	32	151
Predicted reconviction rate	55%	35%	50%
Graduates reconvicted within 2 years	42	11	53
Actual reconviction rate	37%	28%	35%
Statistically significant lower rate?	√	X	√

Due to the different nature of the 2 prisons, it is not surprising to find very different patterns of OGRS3 in the Verne and Swaleside (see Table 7). Around a half of those at Swaleside had OGRS scores of under 30 (ie, low risk offenders), compared with only 18% at the Verne. This prompted us to contrast the reconviction rates for the low risk offenders against the mid-to-high range reconvictions.

Table 7: Reconviction rates within two years of released from the Verne or Swaleside 1999 to 2004 by Low, Medium and High risk

Low risk offenders OGRS3 0-30			
	Verne	Swaleside	Total
Graduates matched	20	19	39
Graduates reconvicted within 2 years	2	3	5
Predicted reconviction rate	10.25%	11.2%	10.7%
Actual reconviction rate	10.00%	15.8%	12.8%
Actual vs Predicted reconvictions	+0.25%	+4.6%	+2.1%
Medium to high risk OGRS3 30+			
	Verne	Swaleside	Total
Graduates matched	92	20	112
Graduates reconvicted within 2 years	40	8	48
Predicted reconviction rate	64.1%	58.6%	63.1%
Actual reconviction rate	43.5%	40.0%	42.8%
Actual vs Predicted reconvictions	-20.6%	-18.6%	-20.3%

The results in Table 7 need to be interpreted carefully, especially since the Swaleside numbers are very small indeed. However, it is clear that the reduction in overall reconviction rates for all Kainos graduates is entirely due to the success of the Kainos programme with medium to high risk offenders: ie those with OGRS3 scores of over 30. Looking at this medium to high risk group as a whole, the predicted rates were 63.1% but the actual reconviction rates were 42.8%, over 20 percentage points lower, and a highly significant difference. However, there was no success at all for low risk offenders. Not only are their predicted rates already very low, there is also the notion from ‘what works’ literature that this may be too high a level of intervention or ‘dosage’ for their risk scores . This finding needs to be thought

through by Kainos and, if necessary, acted upon to reduce the numbers of low risk offenders taken onto the programme to a minimum and concentrate, as entirely as is practicable, on those of medium to high risk, whose OGRS scores will be over 30. In practice, in a prison setting, this would have to be balanced against the impact of turning people away and further research to collect the views of Kainos practitioners would be invaluable here.

Overall total reconviction rates

Although this study used slightly different and updated forms of analysis to Rose (2002), the basic reconviction data, from the Offenders Index was calculated on the same basis, and the same period of reconviction, two years after release, was used. Thus some of the summary data from the two studies can be put into Table 8 below for comparison. This gives an overall set of basic reconviction rates for Kainos CtC graduates who were released from prison between 1997 and 2004 and shows a consistency in the reconviction rates in the two years after release. The ‘predicted’ reconviction rates are higher in the more recent study, which could reflect the differences in the way the predicted values were calculated or could reflect a more rigorous enforcement of the selection criteria so that Kainos is better targeted at the medium to high risk offenders for which it was designed.

Table 8: Total two-year reconviction rates of Kainos graduates who left prison between 1997 and 2004

	Numbers matched in Studies	Actual reconviction rates	‘Predicted’ reconviction rates
Rose(2002)	84	36.9%	42.4%
Ellis & Shalev (2008)	151	35.1%	50.1%
Total	235	35.7%	

Discussion

Using the best sources of reconviction data available and matching against calculated OGRS3 scores, we have shown that Kainos graduates who complete the programme achieve significantly lower reconviction rates than would be expected, especially if they are in the medium-to-high risk group. This has happened over the 10 years that CtC has been running, and contrasts with results from an increasing number of international evaluations of cognitive behavioural programmes, which to date, remain the bedrock of accredited interventions in E&W prisons. For instance, Bonta (2002) in Canada has shown that there is enormous variation in reducing reconviction rates overall through cognitive behavioural programmes, while Svensson (2007) found they made very little impact on reconvictions for those on Swedish probation. In the USA, Lambert, Hogan, Barton and Stevenson (2007) showed that a cognitive programme in US prisons was not successful in reducing prison behavioural problems, while Wilson (2007) evaluated the US ‘Greenlight program’ and no effect, either on the interim outcomes that it was designed to address—including housing, employment, and parole—or on re-arrest and reconviction after one year.

In England & Wales, Falshaw et al, 2003 show disappointing reconviction rates for HM Prison Service programmes Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R & R) and Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) and quote several potential reasons for this other than the variability in rates, eg: falling off in staff and offender motivation; over-rapid expansion of provision, without enough dedicated resources to deliver them; and, crucially, less focus on the suitability/level of risk of those selected.

In contrast, the Kainos CtC programme has only been delivered in a few prisons at the same time. This has meant that trained staff and resource availability have remained at high levels. Our

analysis above also shows that, as far as possible, participants are selected at the appropriate level of medium-to-high risk.

However, another important reason for the Kainos programme's success may lie in the fact that it is not simply a cognitive behavioural programme. As noted, CtC is a hybrid model, and is part of a growing body of programmes with an 'essential dynamic' of mutual self-help where *'the day to day activities are conducted by the residents themselves. In their jobs, meetings, recreation, personal and social time, it is the residents who continually transmit to each other the main messages and expectations of the community'* De Leon (2000). In CtC, offenders are able to practise the skills learned in the cognitive behavioural programme within a TC setting. Research supporting the effectiveness of such TC-based programmes in reducing rates of offending has been around for some time (see Martin and Player, 2000; Campling & Haigh, 1999; Marshall (1998).

Burnside et al. (2005), in addition to their reconvictions analysis, carried out interviews with stakeholders involved with the Kainos programme. Lomas and Rogers (2008) have since updated this work and carried out a similar but more extensive series of interviews with all stakeholders, as part of an information gathering exercise for the 2008-2010 Kainos Business Plan. They have interviewed or collected completed questionnaires from over 150 individuals, including all 10 Kainos practitioner staff; 10 Kainos Trustees; 27 prison staff of all grades; 46 volunteers from all three prisons; 33 prisoners on current programmes; 9 ex-offenders/Kainos graduates; 8 prison service, NOMS and other senior officials; 6 funders; and 6 charity officials involved in work with prisoners. This has acted both as a process review and as a collection of ideas on strengths and weaknesses of the current system and possible improvements for the future. (Lomas & Rogers, 2008).

The qualitative/process research highlights the major differences between standard cognitive behavioural programmes. The success of Kainos CtC rests with the constant re-enforcement of

skills learnt in the modules that are then practised within the community. Participants are provided with positive role models from peers, staff and volunteers, to enable them to experience how a community interacts, the consequences of behaviours and to look positively at how to re-integrate within society. The Kainos TC culture is determined by staff and participants and is re-enforced consistently within the full time programme, informally on a one to one basis, within daily group discussions and weekly community meetings, as well as within the intervention modules themselves.

Unlike a standardised programme based on programme manuals where delivery styles are prescribed, an advantage of the hybrid model is that the manner of learning, rehearsal and reflection can be tailored more precisely to each individual learning style, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Advantages of a hybrid model such as Challenge-to-Change

A programme like Challenge to Change uses the combination of learning, rehearsal and reflection to enable those who need to:

- *Think and watch*, they are more likely to respond to the teaching style within the more didactic elements of the modules.**
- *Think and do*, they are likely to benefit from reflective exercises within the modules and discussion groups, and practicing skills within the community.**
- *Feel and do*, the affective components within the community meetings and group discussions are likely to be of benefit.**
- *Feel and watch*, they are more likely to acquire skills through observation of others within the community combined with reflection within discussion groups.**

Source: adapted from Ashcroft, 2007

Lessons for future development of Kainos Challenge to Change

The continuing success of Kainos in reducing both prison behavioural problems and 2-year reconviction rates needs to be considered in the light of the research showing a falling off of success of general cognitive behavioural programmes. Programmes that are successful, such as CtC need to maintain the elements likely to be the main reason for their continuing success. In the case of Kainos these are:

- **The hybrid nature of the programme**
- **The small number of prisons in which Kainos programmes are delivered, enabling sufficient resources to be made available, including dedicated staff and volunteers**
- **Ensuring the programme continues to be offered to medium to high risk offenders.**

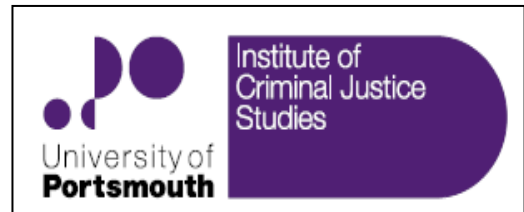
This will be particularly true if Kainos wishes to expand its activity to other prisons. Such an expansion would need to be a gradual one, to ensure that these elements are maintained, especially the high dedication of staff and volunteers.

Moreover, Kainos will need to continue to develop the rigour of its programme evaluations, and to develop its management information systems so that they are fully integrated with this approach, to ensure there is no falling off in their output and success. Specifically, Kainos will need to continue to collect the psychometric data of those selected, process the behavioural/prison discipline information, the return to prison data, and, from time to time, to repeat the qualitative surveys of the views of staff, prison staff, graduates and volunteers. Externally, further research should also be commissioned on: whether the programme is being run as designed; how reconviction rates for Kainos graduates compare with what would have been expected as we have done here; what differences are there among those who do and those who do not

finish the programme; and, on which additions to social capital can be attributed to the CtC Kainos programme.

In the immediate future, we would recommend that Kainos, ourselves, and the RDS NOMS (Minsitry of Justice) Offender Index team meet to discuss producing matched comparison or control groups' scores, so that, using essentially the same data, we can raise the our analysis from a Level 2 to a Level 3 or 4 evaluation. This will give Kainos a stronger case for any application for accreditation elsewhere within NOMS, and will also provide the Ministry of Justice and the NOMs with greater certainty that they have identified an intervention with medium-to-high risk prisoners, that works!

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