



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

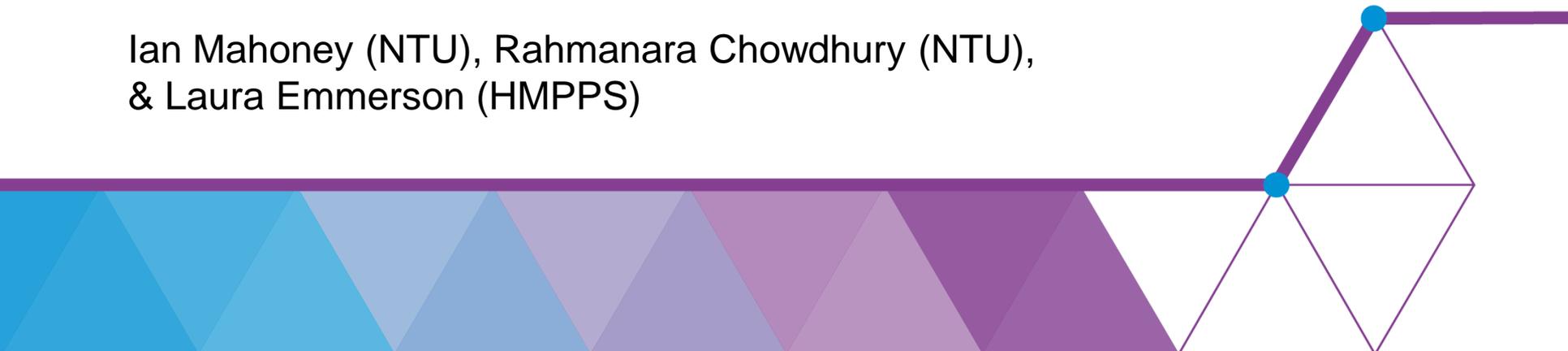


Nottingham Trent  
University

# Criminal Justice Inequality: Reducing disproportionality in reoffending

Reducing Reoffending, Partnerships & Accommodation Directorate

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# Project summary

- Developing Academic and Policy Engagement (DAPE) initiative with Nottingham Trent University\*
- Exploring issues surrounding disproportionality in reoffending rates
- Key themes:

Addressing systemic bias and discrimination

The appropriateness of interventions and barriers to engagement

The role of family in providing support

The need for community engagement

The need to embed holistic support

\*For the full report see Mahoney and Chowdhury (2021)

## The problem

**27% of prisoners identify as Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic (Yasin and Sturge 2020) vs 13% of the general population (ONS 2012)**

**Those identifying as Black in prison is 13% vs 3% of the general population (MoJ 2020)**

**51% of children in youth custody identify as Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic (MoJ 2020)**

**Black men spend more of their original sentence in prison than men from other ethnic groups (MoJ 2020)**

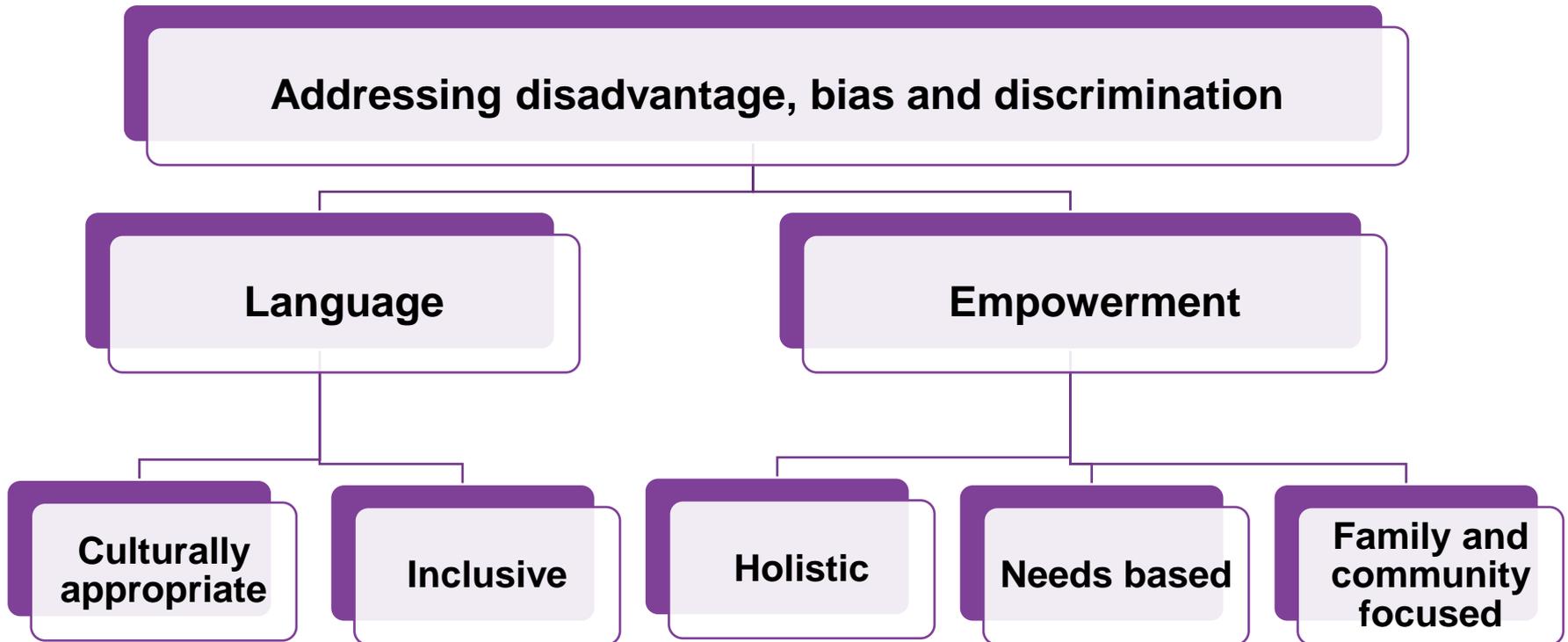
**Black men and youths remain the most likely to re-offend (Uhrig 2016, MoJ 2020)**

**White adults and youths are more likely to have a higher volume of reoffences (MoJ 2020)**

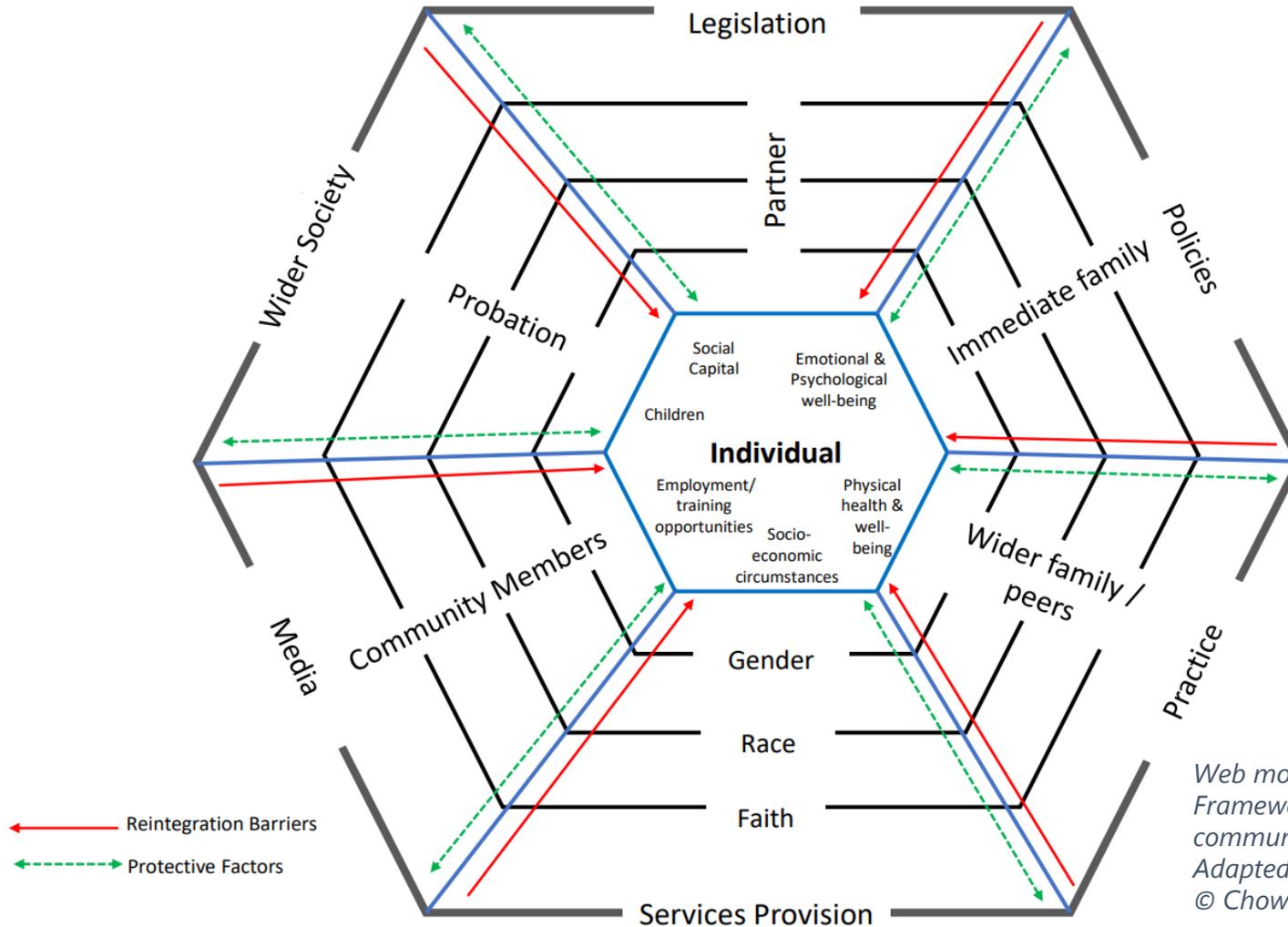
**Asian and 'Other ethnicities' have consistently lower rates of reoffending (Uhrig 2016, MoJ 2020)**

**Existing studies do not provide satisfactory explanations for this variation (Shingler and Pope 2018)**

# Overarching concerns

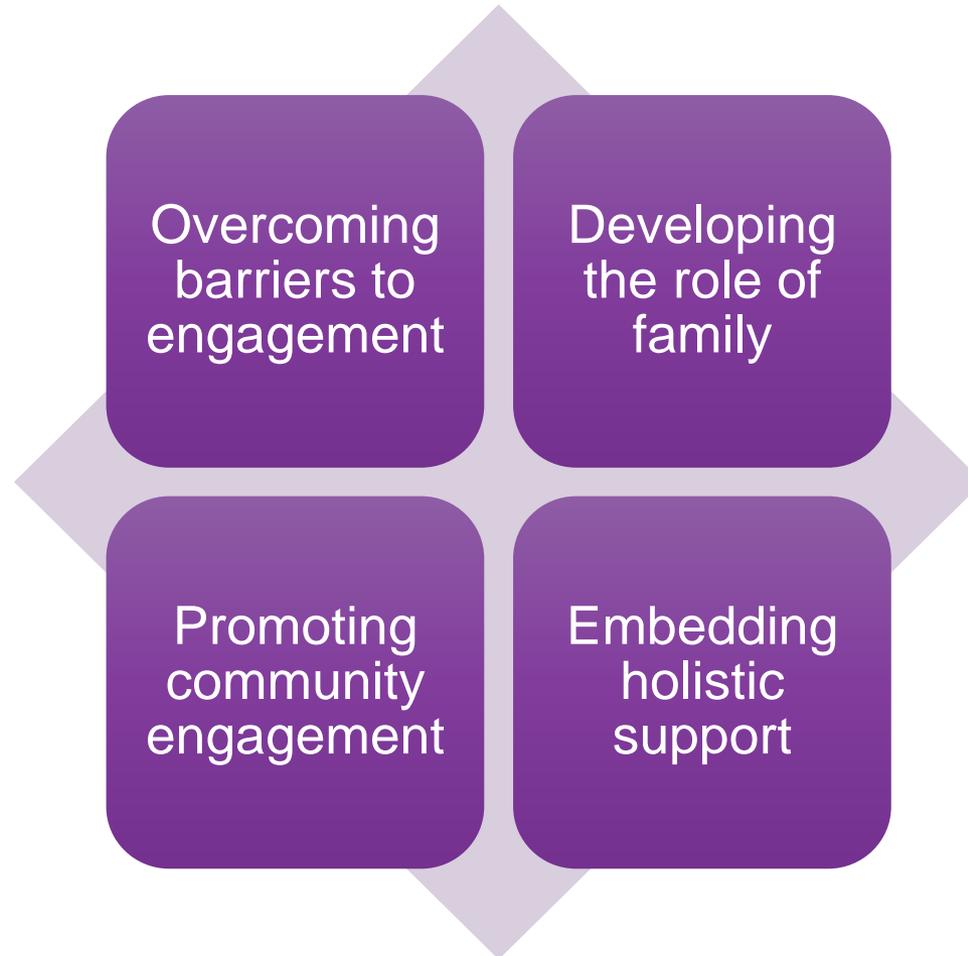


# Visualising holistic support



Web model of Reintegration Framework for minority communities (Chowdhury 2021). Adapted from Web Model of DVA, © Chowdhury, 2021

# Key themes



# Overcoming barriers to engagement

- Minority populations are underrepresented throughout treatment programmes and interventions
- Barriers to engagement:
  - Fear of judgement and alienation (Hunter et al. 2019)
  - A sense of being misunderstood (Brookes et al. 2012)
  - Concerns over racism and/or discrimination (Mason et al. 2009)
  - Cultural relevance (Brookes et al. 2012)
  - Therapy as a 'White' concept (Shingler and Pope 2018)

## Appropriate programme design:

Address training needs: programmes should be culturally aware and delivered by culturally sensitive staff;

Some service users may benefit from working with staff from similar ethnic backgrounds;

Provide a sense of choice and control over the speed of delivery and the nature of the content being covered;

Avoid overly complex, diagnostic, or treatment-focused terminology.

# The role of family

- Family play an important role in reducing reoffending and supporting reintegration (Chapski 2019)
- Visits from family and significant others are key to reintegration (Farmer 2017, 2019)
- Family contact is important throughout the experience of incarceration and beyond for:
  - Financial support and employment opportunities (Strickland 2016, Cherney and Fitzgerald 2016)
  - (Re)developing informal networks and social capital (Palmer and Christian 2019)

# Important family focused considerations

- The stigma of conviction affects the family as well as the perpetrator (SCCJR 2015)
- It is important to continue supporting families – they should not be left to shoulder the responsibilities of the state (Hall et al. 2018)

# Family Support Recommendations

Engage family to support people in prison

Address family needs

Address the stigma of conviction upon families

Assist families in supporting prison leavers

# The need to engage communities

- Prison leavers return to the community after they have served the custodial element of their sentence
- Minority communities are most likely to experience greater levels of deprivation and disadvantage (Williams and Durrance 2018)
- People from impoverished communities often lack the capital and resources to break out of the poverty cycle
- These challenges are compounded for those with a criminal record

# The importance of communities

- The community is where interactions with others are shaped
- Stigma affects the prison leaver **and** their family (SCCJR 2015)
- Communities are vital to the (re)development of social capital
- The community is the site of desistance
- Culturally aware organisations are embedded in local communities

# Community Engagement Recommendations

Invest in minority and other disadvantaged communities

Support and engage culturally aware organisations already embedded in the local community

Address the community stigmatisation of prison leavers and their families

Support communities and families to develop social capital

Use culturally relevant social prescribing to help reintegrate people back into communities

# The need to embed holistic support

- More culturally sensitive resources and interventions will benefit all, regardless of ethnicity or minority status
- Holistic support offers space for personalisation of responses
- Core elements include:
  - Developing positive, pro-social narratives
  - Focusing upon the individual's strengths, abilities, and attributes
  - Promoting desistance
  - Prioritising an individual's needs rather than the risks that they pose
  - (see Terrill and Chowdhury 2020, Hall et al. 2018)

## Embedding holistic support

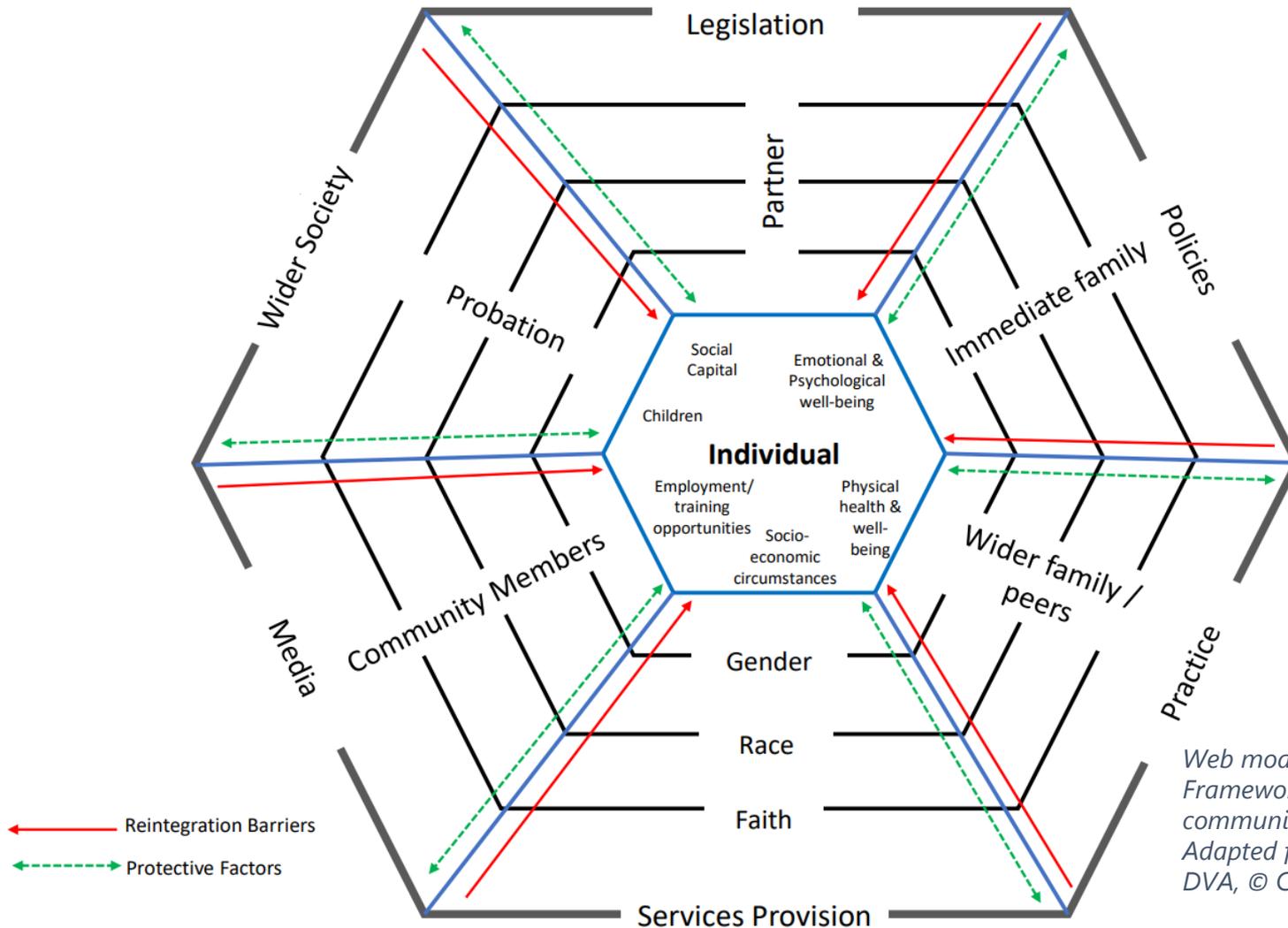
Place the prison leaver at the heart of any programme

Focus on the strengths and positive aspects of the prison leaver's skills and identity

Collaborate with the prison leaver, families, community organisations, and practitioners

Promote long-term wellbeing and development of skills, relationships, and capacity to promote desistance and reintegration

# Visualising holistic support

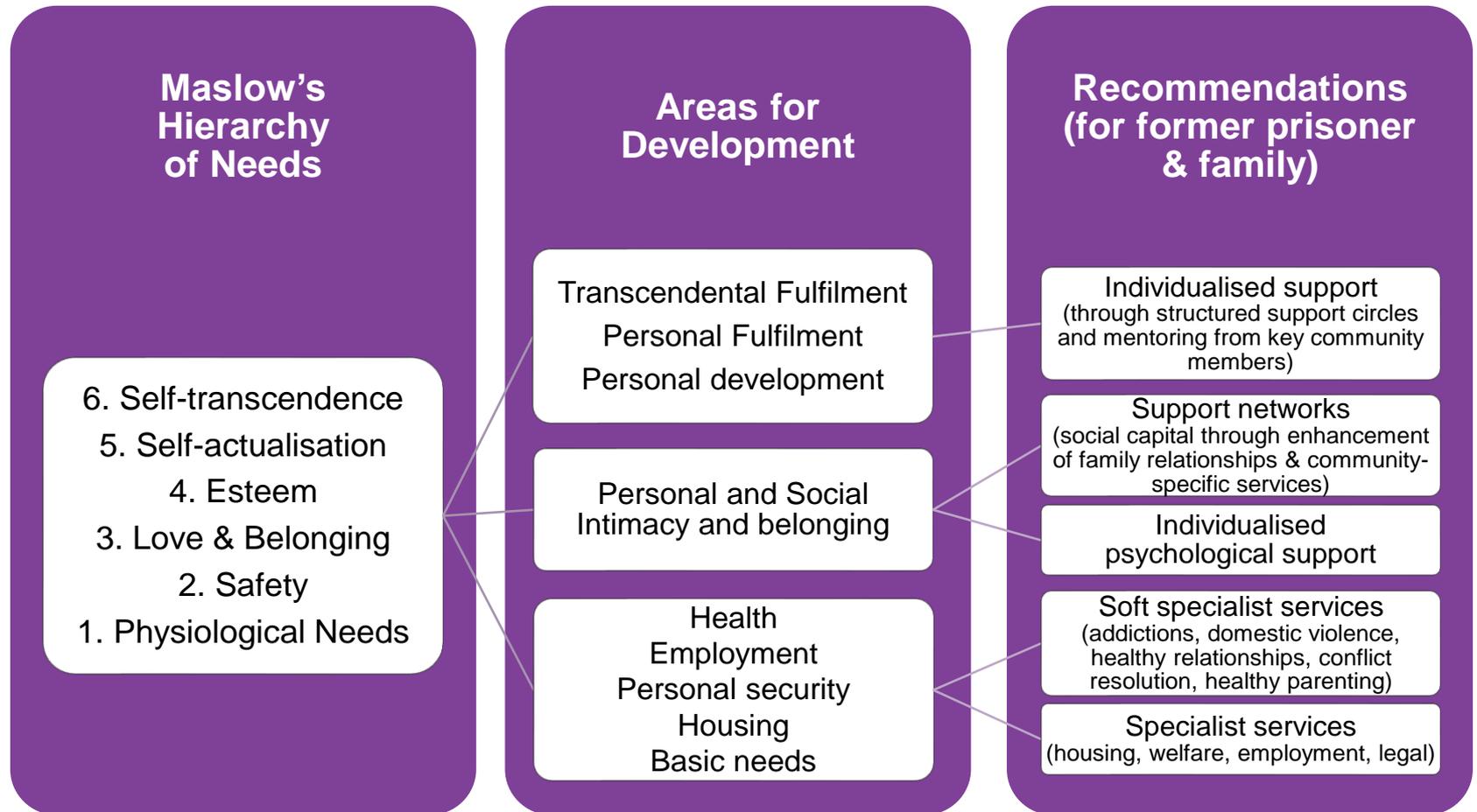


*Web model of Reintegration Framework for minority communities (Chowdhury 2021). Adapted from Web Model of DVA, © Chowdhury 2021*

# Kirkham Family Connectors Model

- Focus upon identifying and developing strengths of person in prison:
  - Building positive relationships
  - Developing resettlement capital
  - Promoting familial cohesion
  - Hope for the future
- Positive feedback from all stakeholders
- See Hall et al. (2018)

# Needs-based model of holistic support



Adapted from Terrill and Chowdhury (2020)

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