

# Applying evidence-based practice in custody PIPEs and using early evidence to inform the development of Theory of Change

*Nicole Webster* is a HMPPS Evidence Specialist within the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway Data and Evaluation Team. *Lucinda Bolger* is a Clinical and Forensic Psychologist and the PIPEs National Clinical Lead for the OPD Pathway in HMPPS. *Dr Carine Lewis* is the Data and Research Lead for the OPD Pathway in HMPPS.

Established in 2011, Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs) form part of the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway. The OPD pathway is a jointly commissioned initiative, between His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the National Health Service (NHS) England, that aims to provide a network of psychologically informed services for a highly complex and challenging prisoner group who are likely to have a severe personality disorder and who pose a high risk of harm to others, or a high risk of reoffending in a harmful way. This cohort of prisoners present a particular challenge to the prison estate, likely contributing to the high level of assault rates and general prison disruption, and their complex mental health needs put them at an increased risk of maladaptive coping strategies, such as self-harm.<sup>1</sup> More broadly, self-harm incidents in custody settings have risen in recent years, particularly within the women's prison estate. Prison assaults have also been on the rise since 2012, and following a drop during the COVID-19 pandemic, are increasing again.<sup>2</sup> Combined with population capacity difficulties within HMPPS, and continued problems with

retaining the workforce, there is an increasing emphasis on system wide change to facilitate the necessary conditions to support behaviour change.<sup>3</sup> The focus on the lived environment is particularly important given the evidence that the prison environment may impact a prisoner's quality of life within custody and outcomes post release.<sup>4</sup>

The predecessor to the OPD Pathway — the Dangerous Severe Personality Disorder (DSPD) programme — identified that in the right environmental conditions, it was possible to provide treatment for 'personality disorder' in custodial settings.<sup>5</sup> The programme however, only provided treatment for a very small cohort of prisoners,<sup>6</sup> and the benefits of participation were hampered by problems with their transition back to the main prison estate.<sup>7</sup> Using the learnings from the DSPD programme, along with that of the literature from Therapeutic Communities,<sup>8</sup> and the findings of the Bradley Report,<sup>9</sup> the concept of a Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE) was developed.<sup>10</sup>

PIPEs are residential units, designed to address psychological, relational, and risk issues of those whose who are eligible for OPD pathway services.<sup>11</sup> A central

1. Fazel, S., Hayes, A. J., Bartellas, K., Clerici, M., & Trestman, R. (2016). Mental health of prisoners: prevalence, adverse outcomes, and interventions. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 3, 871-81; Favril, L., Yu, R., Hawton, K., & Fazel, S. (2020). Risk factors for self-harm in prison: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 7, 682-91.
2. Safety in Custody Statistics Bulletin, England and Wales, Deaths in prison custody to June 2023, Assaults and Self-Harm to March 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk).
3. Tew, J., Vince, R., & Luther, J. (2015). Prison culture and prison violence. *The Prison Service Journal*, 221, 15-19.
4. Auty, K. M., & Liebling, A. (2019). Exploring the Relationship between Prison Social Climate and Reoffending. *Justice Quarterly*, 37, 358-381.
5. Tyrer, P., Duggan, C., Cooper, S., Tyrer, H., Swinson, N., & Rutter, D. (2015). The lessons and legacy of the programme for dangerous and severe personality disorders. *Personality and Mental Health*, 9, 96-106.
6. Skett, S., & Lewis, C. (2019). Development of the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway: A summary of the underpinning evidence. *Probation Journal*, 66, 167-180.
7. Ramsay, M. (2011). *The early years of the DSPD (Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder) Programme: results of two process studies*. Ministry of Justice.
8. Haigh, R. (1999). The quintessence of a therapeutic environment. Five universal qualities. In P. Campling & R. Haigh (Eds.), *Therapeutic Communities: Past Present and Future*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
9. Department of Health (2009). *The Bradley Report: Lord Bradley's review of people with mental health problems or learning disabilities in the criminal justice system*. Department of Health.
10. Benefield, N., Turner, K., Bolger, L., & Bainbridge, C. (2018). Psychologically Informed Planned Environments: A new optimism for criminal justice provision. In G. Akerman, A. Needs & C. Bainbridge (Eds.), *Transforming Environments and Rehabilitation: A guide for practitioners in forensic settings and Criminal Justice*. Routledge.
11. NHS England & HMPPS (In Press). *The Offender Personality Disorder Pathway. A joint Strategy for 2023-2028*.

tenet of the PIPE approach is the lived environment. The core components of the model are designed to enhance the overall experience of PIPE as a 'lived' environment, for both participants and staff. The development of the original PIPE model was influenced by psychosocial and psychoanalytic principles,<sup>12</sup> and adopted the Enabling Environments framework (Royal College of Psychiatrists).<sup>13</sup>

Initially, there were seven pilot sites, five in prisons and two within Probation Service Approved Premises (APs).<sup>14</sup> These original prison sites were Progression PIPEs, designed to help men and women put into practice the skills they had learned on their treatment programmes, which were usually a high intensity treatment, while the AP sites were designed to support effective community re-integration with an emphasis on pro-social relating. The prison application was expanded with the development of Preparation PIPEs and Provision PIPEs.<sup>15</sup> The core components of the model remain the same, but the content of these has required modification driven by the needs of the differing populations. To date, there are now 18 PIPEs within custody settings and 13 PIPEs in APs in England. There are currently no OPD Pathway PIPEs within Wales.

As with all OPD services, PIPEs aim to contribute to the four high level outcomes of the OPD pathway, which are:

- ❑ For men, a reduction in repeat serious sexual and/or violent offending; for women, a reduction in repeat offending of relevant offences.
- ❑ Improved psychological health, wellbeing, pro-social behaviour, and relational outcomes.
- ❑ Improved competence, confidence, and attitudes of staff working with a complex

group of people in the criminal justice system who are likely to have personality disorder.

- ❑ Increased efficiency, cost effectiveness, and quality of OPD Pathway services.

Additionally, PIPEs have their own intended outcomes focussed on psychological development and maturity, particularly in relation to the management of risk. The core components of the PIPE model include socially creative sessions, structured sessions, and key working, which all aim to provide opportunity and support for the person to better understand their behaviour and to practice prosocial interactions.

Attention to the needs and development of the staff who work in PIPEs is also addressed. Additional to the standard training and support offering to prison staff, all PIPE staff attend regular training and supervision to help them with their work; group supervision is provided on a weekly basis and individual 'clinical' supervision usually on a monthly basis. The training offer includes national courses such as Knowledge and Understanding Framework (KUF)<sup>16</sup> and Enabling Environments training, PIPE group process training, and local bespoke training according to the needs of the unit. Every PIPE has a clinical lead (a qualified and registered clinician) and an operational lead (a prison Custodial Manager, or Senior Probation Officer within APs) in place to oversee these core

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components.

The PIPE model draws on relevant literature, with concepts such as attachment theory and the idea of facilitating a 'good enough' social environment for people to thrive.<sup>17</sup> It is acknowledged however, that the bringing together of these theories and concepts and 'applying' them to high risk, complex individuals within the criminal justice system requires attention to both intended and unintended outcomes.<sup>18</sup>

12. Turner, K., & Bolger, L. (2015). The provision of PIPEs — Psychologically Informed Planned Environments. *Prison Service Journal*, 218, 41-46.

13. Paget, S., & Woodward, R. (2018). The Enabling Environments Award as a Transformative Process. In G. Akerman, A. Needs & C. Bainbridge (Eds.), *Transforming Environments and Rehabilitation: A guide for practitioners in forensic settings and Criminal Justice*. Routledge.

14. Approved Premises are residential settings operated throughout England and Wales to provide intensive supervision for people on probation on licence upon release from custody, who present a high or very high risk of serious harm.

15. Preparation PIPEs offer 'pre-treatment' for people in prison who have failed to progress in their sentence and require psychological and relational support to prepare them for the next step of their pathway. Provision PIPEs accept people in prison who are attending a treatment programme and require additional support within a PIPE to help them maintain engagement and integrate their learning.

16. KUF is a learning programme for professionals working across health, social care, criminal justice, and voluntary sectors to support people with complex emotional needs, often associated with a diagnosis of 'personality disorder'.

17. Winnicott, D. (1960). The theory of the parent-child relationship. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 41, 585-595.

18. See Footnote 12: Turner, K., & Bolger, L. (2015).

The role of evidence informed practice is a key principle for the OPD Pathway. The foundations of the PIPE model are no exception and were built using an evidence-based approach. Evaluation of OPD Pathway services is strongly encouraged, not just to evidence if it is working but to play a key role in continuing to inform the service. The actualisation of these concepts therefore means attention is also needed towards practice-based evidence, wherein the practical application of what the evidence tells us is applied, shared, and informs further evaluation.

A number of evaluations have been carried out since the inception of PIPEs, the majority of which have been carried out in Prison PIPEs by the PIPE services themselves so as to inform their thinking and practice around the model. Many of these evaluations, however, have not reached academic publication and have not been reviewed collectively to determine broader learning around PIPEs practice. This article therefore aims to summarise the PIPEs literature to date, including identified unpublished literature. The evidence base has been used to inform PIPEs practice, and the custody PIPEs Theory of Change, presented in this article, which itself will be used to inform future evaluations.

### Identifying PIPEs Literature

Published literature was identified via a previous scoping review literature search looking for all published evidence across the OPD Pathway. The electronic databases Scopus (which included full coverage of MEDLINE, EMBASE and Compendex) and EBSCO were searched for the period 01.01.2012 (national introduction of OPD) to 19.10.2022. Two separate searches were run to capture staff and prisoners or people on probation.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to this literature search, stakeholders in the OPD Pathway (i.e., the central team and service leads) were contacted for published literature that may not have been identified, as well as for any unpublished literature. The HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC) also produced a set of approved publications and research summaries that involved PIPEs.

In order to be eligible for inclusion, studies needed to take place within a prison OPD PIPE service. Opinion pieces, process and impact evaluations were all

included, as well as research with both staff and service participants.

For the purpose of this article, studies only focusing on AP PIPEs, or papers that explored elements that did not feature the PIPE itself (e.g., 'how to guides'), studies exploring applicability of psychometrics, or practices for encouraging meaningful engagement of service user involvement were excluded. Eight of the identified studies were consequently deemed out of the scope.

A total of 15 published papers were identified for inclusion, of which four published studies were identified outside of the literature search. Seven unpublished studies were additionally identified, and of these six had been written up as either an unpublished report or a research summary (N=1). Findings or write ups for five studies that were registered with the NRC could not be located.

PIPE sites for men (N=13) and women (N=4) were examined.<sup>20</sup> Five papers were concept papers and not related to any one service. One study related to the general prison environment but included specific reference to a PIPE environment.

A narrative synthesis was applied. All included studies were formally analysed using principles of thematic analysis by the primary author to identify key themes within the collective PIPEs

custody literature. Data saturation was considered achieved when all relevant papers were themed, and no new themes were emerging.

### Enabling Features of PIPE

Research within custody PIPEs to date has been orientated within the theoretical underpinnings of the model and has sought to investigate its efficacy in practice. The evidence base highlights the features of the PIPE model of practice that appear particularly enabling for both participants and staff working in the PIPE. Outlined here is a synthesis of the research on PIPE enabling factors.

#### *Relationships*

One of the primary enabling factors identified is the role of relationships and the importance of fostering healthy, supportive, and collaborative relationships.

Many of these evaluations, however, have not reached academic publication and have not been reviewed collectively to determine broader learning around PIPEs practice.

19. Full list of search terms is included in the Scoping Review and available upon request (journal publication anticipated).

20. Some studies included more than one PIPE site. It is possible that there were multiple studies on the same PIPE site(s).

According to the literature, relationships are the cornerstone of the PIPE model and central in working towards the achievement of identified outcomes.

The evidence suggests PIPE participants are more likely to spend time socially with their peers, offer support to new members and lodgers (people residing within the PIPE but not referred for or accessing PIPE services), and demonstrate lower rates of bullying than may typically be seen in custody. Prison PIPEs may be less hierarchical, calmer, and allow for greater group cohesiveness.<sup>21</sup> The additional support received within PIPE from staff, peers, and community agencies,<sup>22</sup> and the quality of the relationships reported may support a safer environment,<sup>23</sup> and improved psychological well-being and pro-social behaviour,<sup>24</sup> in comparison to general prison environments.

The key elements of relationships identified as supportive to these possible changes and differences include open, approachable, and friendly staff,<sup>25</sup> authenticity, mutual respect, trust, honesty, care, fostering a sense of belonging, fostering a supportive and relaxed community, and supporting choice.<sup>26</sup> PIPE participants further reflected on the importance of staff recognising early warning signs of distress and offering support, spending time together pro-socially with peers, learning to stick with relationships, and to understand themselves and others better. This is likely experienced as unique in comparison to the general prison environment, and may be important in facilitating a turning point for behaviour change and a new way of dealing with distress.<sup>27</sup>

## Relationships with prisoners are experienced as more positive and respectful on the PIPE than in the general prison environment.

Relationships with prisoners are experienced as more positive and respectful on the PIPE than in the general prison environment.<sup>28</sup> Key work sessions in particular appear to be important for developing healthy relationships.<sup>29</sup> Transparent and consistently applied boundaries, and a key worker who is present when needed, and who takes time to learn and understand the person are seen as necessary conditions to enable feelings of safety within the PIPE.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, key workers offer feedback and advice to best support change. It was acknowledged, however, that the responsibility for PIPE participants should not lie solely with the key worker and that difficulty maintaining regular contact due to cross-deployment of staff to work on another prison wing presented a challenge at times.<sup>31</sup> A governor who supports and protects the boundaries of the PIPE within the prison is needed to ensure that cross-deployment of staff does not adversely impact the quality of relationships within the PIPE,<sup>32</sup> and in turn, support the potential beneficial outcomes of PIPE.

Further, careful management of endings and transitions out of PIPE may be integral to sustaining any observed changes for prisoners leaving. Many participants reported that through the relationships and support experienced in the PIPE, they developed autonomy, felt better able to make their own decisions, to manage their emotions post-PIPE, and to remain successfully in the community on release.<sup>33</sup> Conversely, some individuals identified a sense of not belonging after losing relationships fostered in PIPEs as a primary reason

21. Turley, C., Payne, C., & Webster, S. (2013). *Enabling features of Psychologically Informed Planned Environments*. Ministry of Justice.
22. Healey, R. (unpublished). Offender reflections on the transition from a Psychologically Informed Planned Environment to a community setting.
23. Payne, A. (unpublished). How prison officers and residents within a Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE) experience the key work relationship; Stein, R. (unpublished) Exploring the experiences of prisoner officers working on a Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE) in a young offender's prison; Bainbridge, C. (2017). Restoring ordinariness for women offenders: why every wing matters. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 28, 172-187.
24. Davis, I. (unpublished). Balancing the bubble; Fitzalan Howard, F., & Pope, L. (2019). *Learning to cope: an exploratory qualitative study of the experience of men who have desisted from self-harm in prison*. Ministry of Justice; Kuester, L., Freestone, M., Seewald, K., Rathbone, R., & Bhui, K. (2022). *Evaluation of Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs): Assessing the first five years*. Ministry of Justice.
25. See Footnote 22: Healey, R. (unpublished).
26. See Footnote 24: Davis, I. (unpublished).
27. See Footnote 24: Fitzalan Howard, F., and Pope, L. (2019).
28. See Footnotes 23 & 24: Payne, A. (unpublished); Stein, R. (unpublished); Kuester, L. et al., (2022).
29. Each person in PIPE is assigned a named member of staff as a Key Worker. The Key Worker has regular one to one sessions with the person to coordinate, reflect upon and process the person's involvement on the PIPE, and their plans for the future.
30. See Footnotes 21 & 23: Turley, C., et al. (2013); Payne, A. (unpublished); Stein, R. (unpublished).
31. See Footnote 23: Payne, A. (unpublished).
32. Liebling, A., Auty, K., Gardom, J., & Lieber, E. (2021). *An Evaluation of the Experience and Meaning of Shared Reading in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments in Prisons*. Ministry of Justice.
33. See Footnote 24: Kuester, L., et al (2022); Tock, G. (unpublished). An exploration of prisoners' experiences of transition from a high security Progression PIPE to the mainstream wings of a high security prison.

for disengagement, while for others, the lack of support and feelings of stress and responsibility were cited as reasons for recall and reoffence. Transition from PIPE back to a general prison environment, or release into the community (which is unlikely to have the same ethos and level of support available), may undermine behaviour change and development of healthy relationships if not managed appropriately and according to the needs of the individual.<sup>34</sup>

In summary, the evidence to date suggests that healthy relationships within PIPEs offer a range of potential benefits to participants and staff. High quality key work and supportive senior leadership may foster a sense of safety and support within the PIPE environment, in comparison to the general prison environment. As a result, participants may be more likely to have improved psychological well-being and pro-social behaviour, and may be better able, with the right support, to manage transition back to a general prison environment or into the community successfully.

### **Social Climate**

A second enabling factor of PIPE apparent in the literature is a safe, supportive, social climate in which to reflect on past experiences and behaviour.<sup>35</sup> It is thought that a positive social climate provides a supportive space to overcome challenges within a group context, as well as develop interpersonal skills, and foster a supportive culture.<sup>36</sup> Features of a positive social climate identified include appropriate boundaries, involvement, and supportive, healthy relationships in providing a psychologically safe

environment in which to pursue change.<sup>37</sup> Environments that experience high levels of verbal aggression are likely linked to staff absence and higher rates of self-harm among prisoners.<sup>38</sup>

Assessments using the Essen Climate Evaluation Scale (EssenCES)<sup>39</sup> indicate that staff and participants may experience better staff-prisoner relationships, support among prisoners, increased sense of safety, improvements in satisfaction, and better overall experiences over time compared to those on non-PIPE wings.<sup>40</sup> However, evidence to date demonstrates mixed findings, with some sites showing differences, and others showing no or little difference on PIPE in comparison to main prison location, particularly in relation to cohesion within the prisoner cohort.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, there is some evidence to indicate that staff and participants may perceive the environmental circumstances differently, with staff more likely to rate the extent to which the unit is perceived as supportive of prisoners' therapeutic needs higher, and PIPE participants more likely to rate 'experienced safety' higher, particularly in the aftermath of incidents of physical aggressions.<sup>42</sup> This has implications when considering the potential for power imbalances in the staff/ prisoner relationships and the group processes that may pose

challenges within PIPE and impact outcomes.

In summary, the evidence indicates that social climate may be a key enabling factor in the development of healthy relationships and interpersonal skills, as well as facilitating a safe physical and

High quality key work and supportive senior leadership may foster a sense of safety and support within the PIPE environment, in comparison to the general prison environment.

34. See Footnotes 22 & 33: Healey, R. (unpublished); Tock, G. (unpublished).

35. See Footnote 26: Davis, I. (unpublished); Brown, M. (2014). Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE): A group analytic perspective. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 28, 345–354; Greenacre, K., & Palmer, E. (2018). *Exploring Forensic Environments. How do Environmental Factors Influence Individual Outcomes for Residents and Staff? A Systematic Review*. University of Leicester; Preston, N. (2014). Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs): Empowering the institutionalised prisoner. *British Psychological Society (Forensic Update, Annual Compendium)*, 171-178.

36. See Footnote 35: Brown, M. (2014).

37. See Footnote 35: Preston, N. (2014).

38. Kavanagh, J. (unpublished). Social Climate, Institutional Aggression and Self-Harm within a Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE).

39. Schalast, N., Redies, M., Collins, M., Stacey, J., & Howells, K. (2008). EssenCES, a short questionnaire for assessing the social climate of forensic psychiatric wards. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 18, 49-58.

40. See Footnote 24: Kuester, L. et al. (2022); Reading, L., & Ross, G. (2020). Comparing social climate across therapeutically distinct prison wings. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 22, 185-197.

41. See Footnote 24: Kuester, L. et al. (2022); Bradbury, J. (unpublished). Social climate on PIPE. Do positive staff offender interactions contribute to higher levels of satisfaction in service users?

42. See Footnotes 38 & 40; Kavanagh, J. (unpublished); Reading, L., & Ross, G. (2020); Camp, J., & Rowland, C. (unpublished). EssenCES: Evaluating the social climate of a prison Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE) from the perceptions of residents and prison officers.

psychological space in which change can occur. However, further exploration and research of this area is warranted to provide clarity due to the somewhat mixed findings to date. It is also likely that variations between sites are present and that the process of developing a social climate is neither linear nor consistently sustained.

### **Staff Experience, Training and Support**

A further enabling factor of PIPE is a well-trained psychologically-minded staff team, which supports both healthy relationships and the social climate. However, the experience of staff adapting to working within a PIPE environment has outlined the often challenging and transformative process necessary to work in the more relational realm of PIPE and has highlighted the importance of attention to group processes. The process of moving from a traditional prison officer role to one of being more psychologically minded, has been described as difficult for some.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, challenges arise in maintaining boundaries of support, while still needing to maintain sight of risk issues and maintain the role of disciplinarian. Working in this way involves significant change, both professionally and personally.<sup>44</sup> Challenges to maintaining role identity as staff become more psychologically minded were identified, and conflicts between the PIPE and the wider prison system have been reported. This needs to be recognised and effectively managed so as to maintain consistent approaches and commitment to the PIPE by staff, and prevent the quality of the support offered and interactions with participants from being undermined.<sup>45</sup>

PIPE staff have consistently described a sense of purpose and mattering in their roles, provided by having the opportunity to form meaningful relationships with the people in their care. The emotional impact of PIPE work is a risk, likely mitigated

by the availability of group and individual supervision sessions, and staff training to support safe and effective working relationships with each other and service participants<sup>46</sup>

### **Socially Creative Sessions**

The evidence suggests that a programme of socially creative sessions and enrichment activities support the development of a positive social climate and healthy, supportive relationships. According to the literature, socially creative sessions and enrichment activities may offer an accessible therapeutic activity which is preferable for some than formal therapeutic groups,<sup>47</sup> foster a sense of belonging, connectedness and community support, humanise prisoners and develop healthy relationships, improve emotional regulation and mental health, and enable people to develop prosocial identities and make changes to their behaviour.<sup>48</sup>

Two studies (one a national, independent study) have been published evaluating the impact of specific enrichment and socially creative sessions — shared reading, drumming, singing, and ceremony sessions. Although limited to reading and music creative sessions, the research is positive in terms of the potential impact of these activities. Findings suggest that participation may create a positive community and social climate which allows people to overcome physical and emotional disconnections that have been caused by trauma, while increasing a sense of emotional connection to others.<sup>49</sup> Regular participation in a creative session group may support increased meaning and feelings of security, 'ordinariness', wellbeing, hope, agency and self-efficacy, and interpersonal trust, which in turn have a positive impact on relationships, the environment, and the experience of participants. Furthermore, PIPE participants that took part in shared reading showed additional benefits when compared to those who did

A further enabling factor of PIPE is a well-trained psychologically-minded staff team, which supports both healthy relationships and the social climate.

43. Bond, N., & Gemmell, L. (2016). Experiences of prison officers on a lifer psychologically informed planned environment. *Therapeutic Communities: The International Journal of Therapeutic Communities*, 35, 84-94.

44. See Footnotes 23, 35 & 43: Stein, R. (unpublished); Brown, M. (2014); Bond, N., & Gemmell, L. (2016).

45. See Footnotes 21 & 35: Turley, C., et al (2013); Brown, M. (2014)

46. See Footnotes 21, 23, 24, 35 & 43: Turley, C., et al (2013); Stein, R. (unpublished); Kuester, L., et al. (2022); Brown, M. (2014); Bond, N., & Gemmell, L. (2016).

47. Ryan, S., Benefield, N., & Baker, V. (2018). Socially creative activities in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments: engaging and relating in the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 20, 202-210.

48. See Footnotes 33 & 47: Leibling, A., et al. (2021); Ryan, S., et al., (2018); Craddock, L., Kells, M., Morgan, L., & Shah-Beckley, I. (2021). Drumming, singing and ceremony within a psychologically informed planned environment for women on the offender personality disorder pathway. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 24, 123-137.

49. See Footnote 48: Craddock, L., et al., (2021).

not take part, and the more sessions they took part in, the greater the benefit.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Expectations, Experiences, and Impact of PIPE***

Research relating to the expectations and experiences of PIPE participants indicates that prisoners may be motivated to enter a Progression PIPE in the hope that it will prepare them for, and support them in, generalisation of skills learned in previously completed prison treatment programmes, develop confidence and self-understanding, and that their progress would be recognised by staff and reflected in future risk reports, de-created risk, and progression. Participants reported that their expectations were met through being part of a community which prioritised self-development, interacting with others, and belonging.<sup>51</sup>

To date there is little longitudinal research relating to the medium-long term outcomes of PIPE. However, PIPE participants use skills learned in prison-based treatment programmes previously completed,<sup>52</sup> and report more change in social and relational skills than prisoners on non-PIPE wings, with statistically significantly lower levels of problematic social problem solving and relating styles observed post-PIPE compared to both pre-PIPE and comparator wings.<sup>53</sup> It is likely that developing a sense of trust in others and their community is a key mechanism of change in this process.<sup>54</sup>

### **The role of Evidence-Informed Practice in everyday PIPEs Practice**

The summary above brings together all the formal evaluations conducted on custody PIPE units to date and shows that the development of healthy relationships is likely a key mechanism of change. Central to this, and achieving PIPE outcomes, is the development of a positive social climate and activities, such as key work, to facilitate this attachment-building.

Additional to these formal evaluations, other feedback and learning (including from HMIP inspections, MQPL reports, PIPE visits, expert opinions from staff and PIPE participants) are obtained, and the findings are used to constantly inform the PIPE model, ensuring that evidence-informed practice is embedded, and learning feeds into practice in a timely manner. Observed themes around significant issues of concern

and examples of excellent practice are brought to national forums for wider sharing, and it is this feedback loop that continually informs PIPE delivery and practice. Whilst the core components have remained the same, how they are applied and understood has evolved.

### **Developing a Theory of Change**

The PIPEs literature supports the model and suggests evidence of early outcomes. The key PIPE activities coming through in the evidence base include key work sessions to foster trust and supportive working relationships, building a culture of emotional safety and support (via an Enabling Environment), supporting transitions, staff training and supervision, and the role of enrichment activities. Short-term outcomes highlighted within the evidence base include improved trust and relationships, skills development, improved communication and problem-solving skills, and more prosocial identities. The evidence also suggests reduced problematic behaviour, although more research is needed to formally conclude this.

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a way (often visual) of presenting a programme theory to show the causal sequence that an intervention aims to achieve. It articulates the how and why an intervention should be effective, as well as in what way and when. This is particularly important for complex programmes in policy settings as it describes what is realistic to achieve and sets out what we expect to see if a programme is working as intended. Further a ToC is critical within evidence-based practice as it allows us to test theory, monitor whether things are happening as intended, and inform the direction of future research.

The OPD Pathway has recently developed an overarching ToC to bring together the overall aims and outcomes of the pathway.<sup>55</sup> However, PIPEs have their own model and aim to contribute towards the overarching outcomes. The PIPEs ToC (Figure 1) has therefore been developed as its own 'nest', bringing together the evidence that was used for the OPD Pathway and PIPEs model, and incorporating the evidence in this summary. It provides the key activities and outcomes that we would expect to see over time, and a framework in which to guide future monitoring and evaluation activity.

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50. See Footnote 33: Leibling, A., et al. (2021).

51. Bennett, A. (2014). Service users' initial hopes, expectations and experiences of a high Security psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE). *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 16, 216-227.

52. See Footnotes 21 & 35: Turley, C., et al. (2013); Preston, N. (2014).

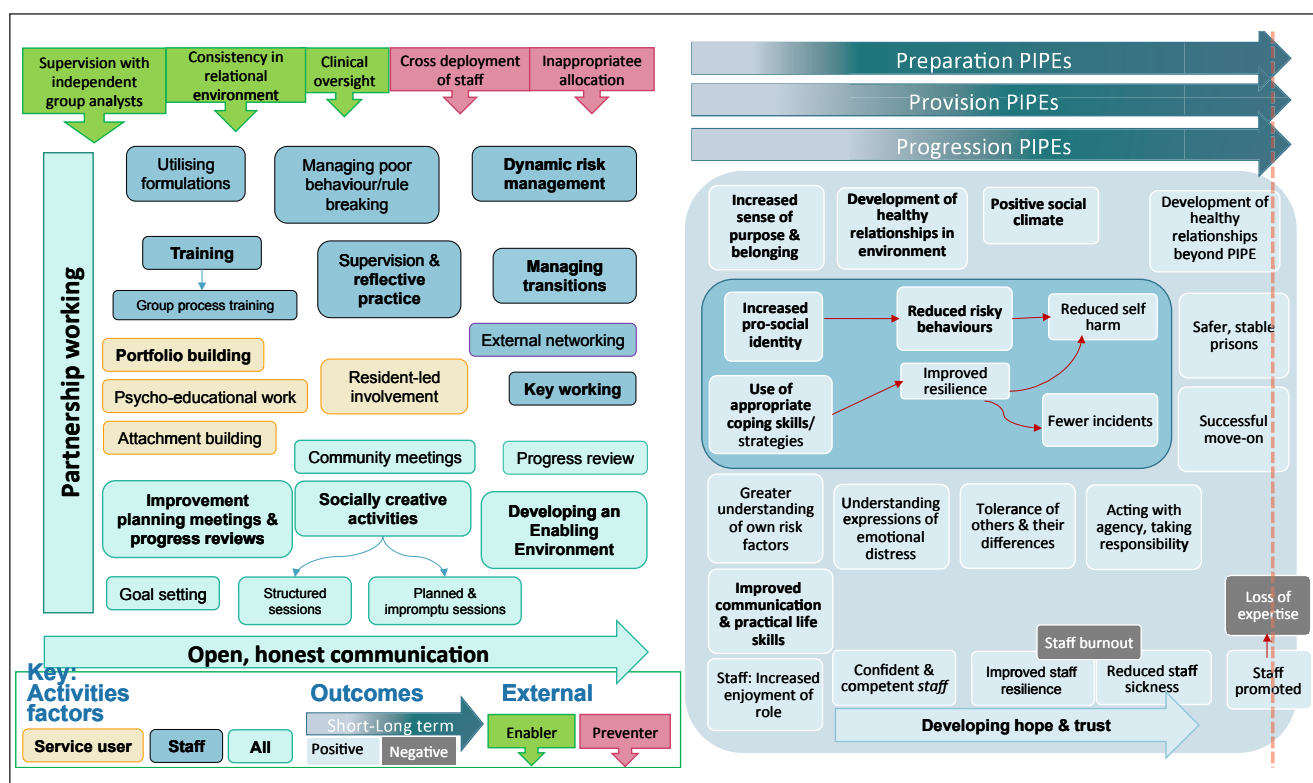
53. See Footnote 24: Fitzalan Howard, F., & Pope, I. (2019).

54. See Footnote 28: Kuester, L., et al. (2022).

55. See Footnote 11: NHS England & HMPPS (In Press).

**Figure 1. Custody PIPEs Theory of Change model.**

(Bold activities and outcomes indicate support from the underpinning evidence base)



### Limitations and Application of Findings

Although formal quality appraisal was not applied to the studies included in this review, there are observations identified that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The majority of evidence was qualitative in nature — while this was the appropriate methodology for the research questions identified, it is limiting in evidencing the impact of PIPEs. Aside from three papers, all evaluations were carried out in single sites, by staff within the service. This presents a couple of notes of caution. It significantly increases the potential of bias to occur, and also questions the generalisability of some of these findings. The latter however is less of a concern, given the consistent themes that emerged when summarising the evidence in this article. Some of these articles may not be of the highest quality (including articles that have not gone through a peer reviewed process), but the repetitive themes emerging suggests the included literature provides a valuable contribution to the PIPEs evidence base.

The majority of the evidence identified focused on Progression PIPEs only. While the model for Preparation and Provision PIPEs is the same, caution should be applied when applying these findings to these,

particularly in the case of evidence on early impact. In addition, while the enabling factors outlined above are seen as having equal importance within AP PIPE settings, we cannot assume that all research findings relating to PIPE in custody are generalisable between settings due to the differences in the community model. Conducting a robust evaluation of the AP PIPE is a key priority for the OPD pathway over the course of the next strategy.<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

The evidence to date highlights healthy, supportive, relationships as the main enabling factor perceived to be necessary for achieving the aims and outcomes of PIPE. The research highlights a difference in experiences between PIPE and the general prison environment, for both staff and prisoners, when the environment is enabling, and the social climate is conducive to fostering the required relationships. Although we know that the journey towards an enabling environment may not be linear, with changes in staff teams, PIPE participants, and wider organisational pressures likely to impact on the relational environment at different times, the literature suggests that when a PIPE demonstrates good fidelity with the model of practice, a positive and

56. See Footnote 11: NHS England & HMPPS (In Press).



impactful social climate may be achieved and lend its support to achieving the desired outcomes, and ultimately support identity and behaviour change, and over time, desistance from crime. The potential for sometimes stark differences between a PIPE in custody and the main prison location indicates the need for adequate planning and preparation for return to these environments as a key activity within PIPEs. The experiences shared by staff highlight the importance of high-quality supervision and training as another key activity, and one that is necessary to support both the staff as individuals and the social climate of the PIPE overall. Finally, enrichment activities and socially creative sessions within PIPE are indicated as contributors to positive outcomes for PIPE participants, that have the potential to support psychological and emotional growth, behaviour, and identity change over time.

This evidence has been used to inform PIPE practice and is considered within the PIPEs model and ToC. The key activities offered within the PIPE way of working and outcomes that PIPE aim to achieve for both staff and PIPE participants, are routed in what the research tells us to date and evolve as the evidence base grows. However, it is important to acknowledge that there remains much to do in terms of investigating PIPE processes and the potential impact within custody settings. Firstly, it is necessary to look at the quality of the PIPE model being delivered, to examine variance in delivery (and the causes and consequences of this), as well as to conduct large-scale evaluations of impact. Further evaluation should also be considered for AP PIPEs, where implementation of the PIPE model within community settings may be particularly challenging.<sup>57</sup>

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57. See Footnote 28: Kuester, L., *et al.* (2022)