

# The Impact of a Progression Regime on Observed Behaviour Indicators

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**Progression Regimes (PRs) were initially developed in prisons in England and Wales for male indeterminate sentenced prisoners who were: (a) excluded from open conditions; (b) serving the recall period of their licence in custody; or (c) having difficulty progressing through their sentence via the usual routes. In April 2019, the Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners Progression Board extended the PRs admission criteria to include individuals who are yet to complete all recommended offending behaviour programmes and/or interventions, and those with some current behavioural issues. Upon further consultation, this was further expanded to include Life sentenced prisoners who were within four years of their tariff expiry, and Extended Determinate Sentence prisoners.**<sup>12</sup>

The regime at these specialist units comprises three stages of progression and incorporates the use of Enhanced Behaviour Monitoring (EBM). EBM processes are a mechanism for consistently monitoring risk-related behaviour demonstrated by individuals. They do not assess risk but provide a description of current risk behaviours, which helps inform other existing risk assessment systems. Prisoners may progress to the next stage of the regime upon the positive review of their EBM case management indicators. PRs aim to provide residents with opportunities that are meant to reflect life in the community in order to build evidence to inform the Parole Board process for recommendations. In addition, residents are allocated a Prison Offender Manager, Community Offender Manager, and Prison key worker on admission.

Post-tariff prisoners tend to be prioritised over those who are pre-tariff, at present. However, they are required to meet the suitability criteria as specified on the HMPPS Progression Regime Policy Framework.<sup>3</sup> Prisoners must show a willingness to engage in an approach which requires high levels of personal responsibility, and where they are expected to actively address their offending-related behaviour.

A set of success measures for PRs was published in January 2019. This was followed by an Equality Analysis. All PRs have been devised with inclusion in mind. They are environments which promote inclusion of prisoners who consider themselves to meet any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. The measures were further reviewed in September 2019 by the Indeterminate Sentence Operational Support (ISOS) in consultation with project staff and national HMPPS Psychology Services.

The present study aims to contribute to the internal HMPPS evaluation of PRs, as recommended by the ISOS group following the September review of success measures, by developing appropriate and valid measures of behaviour change.

## Literature Review

### Prison behaviour studies

Previous studies on prison behaviour have mainly focussed on a number of quantified variables such as aggression and violence, towards others and oneself,<sup>4,5</sup> and instances of drug-taking behaviour.<sup>6</sup> Slade's research on the prevalence of dual harm in

1. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). (2019). *Progression Regime Policy Framework*. Ministry of Justice.
2. HMPPS. (2020). *A review of success measures within Progression Regimes*. Indeterminate Sentence Operational Support (ISOS), Ministry of Justice.
3. HMPPS. (2019) *HMPPS Incentives Policy Framework*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incentives-policy-framework>
4. Trammell, R. (2012) *Enforcing the convict code: Violence and prison culture*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
5. Power, J., & Brown, S. (2010) *Self-injurious behaviour: A review of the literature and implications for corrections*. Correctional Service of Canada.
6. Connor, D., & Tewksbury, R. (2016) Inmates and prison involvement with drugs: Examining drug-related misconduct during incarceration. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 32(4), 426-445.

prisons, showed that up to 42 per cent of prisoners who assaulted others in prison, would also engage in self-harm behaviour, and vice versa.<sup>7</sup> A strong association has also been reported between substance use and non-suicidal self-injury amongst men in custody, especially amongst individuals with a history of intravenous drug abuse.<sup>8</sup> Carpentier et al., in their systematic review of 13 international studies, found that the prevalence of substance misuse and dependence amongst male prisoners to be between 10 per cent and 48 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Results from random Mandatory Drug Testing (rMDTs) in prisons in England and Wales in 2019/2020 showed that the percentage of positive results from rMDTs for drugs other than psychoactive substances (PS) remained at a similar level to the previous two years at 10.5 per cent. Only 4.3 per cent of rMDTs were positive for PS, down from 12.9 per cent in the year ending March 2018 and 9.0 per cent in the year ending March 2019.<sup>10</sup>

How these behaviours are explained in terms of the demographics of the population has captured the interest of researchers in the field. Over the last decade, several studies have been conducted on prison interpersonal violence and sex, self-inflicted violence and sex, prison violence and age, and prison violence and cultural background. For example, women have been found to display less violence than men in the prison environment.<sup>11</sup> Motivations for self-harm may also vary between sex; some research has suggested that while

this behaviour by men may be an expression of anger or means to obtain external rewards, the function of self-harming behaviours by women may relate more to relational motivations, such as breakdowns in relationships, lack of social support, and a sense of worthlessness.<sup>12</sup> Desistance and associated observed behaviours have been found to increase with age.<sup>13</sup> Further, prisoners in ethnic minority groups, and those from lower educational backgrounds, have been found more likely than other individuals to display rule-breaking behaviours.<sup>14</sup>

The physical condition of the prison environment and its management have also been the subject of extensive research. Studies have found that the perceived quality of prison climate affects the level at which these types of misconduct are present.<sup>15</sup> When considering such associated risk factors with the likelihood of desistance pre- and post-release, Ellis and Bowen found that desistance from negative prison behaviours occurs in more enabling environments.<sup>16</sup>

### Enabling environments

The conditions of confinement and its impact on the wellbeing and behaviour of prisoners has attracted the interest of the research community in recent times.<sup>17</sup> A positive prison environment has

shown to be related to positive outcomes in many aspects associated with prisoners' wellbeing, motivation to treatment, and sustainable change.<sup>18</sup>

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7. Slade, K. (2018) Dual harm: an exploration of the presence and characteristics for dual violence and self-harm behaviour in prison. *Journal of criminal psychology*, 8(2), 97-111.
8. Stewart, A., Cossar, R., Dietze, P., Armstrong, G., Curtis, M., Kinner, S., & Stoové, M. (2018) Lifetime prevalence and correlates of self-harm and suicide attempts among male prisoners with histories of injecting drug use. *Health & Justice*, 6(1), 1-9.
9. Carpentier, C., Royuela, L., Montanari, L., & Davis, P. (2018). The global epidemiology of drug use in prison. *Drug use in prisoners: Epidemiology, implications, and policy responses*, 17-41.
10. HM Prison and Probation Service. (2020). *HMPPS Annual Digest 2019/20*. Ministry of Justice.
11. Harer, M., & Langan, N. (2001) Gender differences in predictors of prison violence: Assessing the predictive validity of a risk classification system. *Crime & Delinquency*, 47(4), 513-536.
12. Smith, H., & Power, J. (2014) Themes underlying self-injurious behavior in prison: gender convergence and divergence. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 53(4), 273-299.
13. Martín, A., Padrón, F., & Redondo, S. (2019) Early narratives of desistance from crime in different prison regimes. *European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 11(2), 71-79.
14. Bonner, H., Rodríguez, F., & Sorensen, J. (2017) Race, ethnicity, and prison disciplinary misconduct. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 15(1), 36-51.
15. Kelly, C., & Welsh, W. (2016). Examining treatment climate across prison-based substance abuse treatment groups. *Substance use & misuse*, 51(7), 902-911.
16. Ellis, S., & Bowen, E. (2017). Factors associated with desistance from violence in prison: an exploratory study. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 23(6), 601-619.
17. Liebling, A., Laws, B., Lieber, E., Auty, K., Schmidt, B., Crewe, B., & Morey, M. (2019) Are hope and possibility achievable in prison? *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 58(1), 104-126.
18. van Ginneken, E., Palmen, H., Bosma, A., Nieuwbeerta, P., & Berghuis, M. (2018) The Life in Custody Study: The quality of prison life in Dutch prison regimes. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*, 4(4), 253-268. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCRPP-07-2018-0020>

Several regime domains have been identified through the existing literature to impact on the development and promotion of positive prison behaviour, such as autonomy, safety and order, relationships, a sense of purpose, and access to services. Van der Kaap-Deeder et al. in their study of prison life found that prisoners afforded a greater degree of autonomy and decision-making presented as more satisfied and rated their perceived quality of the prison regime more positively.<sup>19</sup> Safety, order, and an environment free from the threat of violence and victimisation have been found to increase the quality of prison life and, in turn, to improve custodial behaviour.<sup>20</sup> Staff-prisoner relationships have also been considered a key determinant of the quality of prison life; these relationships have been found to impact on prisoners' experiences and prison behaviour.<sup>21</sup>

Further, research has found that affording prisoners a sense of purpose by facilitating their engagement in meaningful activities, during which they can learn or practice skills useful for release, is associated with improved behaviour and increased perceptions of quality of life while in custody.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the ability of prisoners to access internal and external services has been associated with the development of positive prison climates.<sup>23</sup> The accumulated evidence on 'what works' when addressing prison behaviour has led to the differentiation in regimes for special groups of convicted prisoners in English and Welsh prisons or those whose needs were no longer met by mainstream regimes.

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**Success measures**

Measuring prison performance and prison behaviour are difficult tasks.<sup>24</sup> HMPPS publishes Performance Ratings based on Service Delivery Requirements annually.<sup>25</sup> These indicators include variables such as reduction of prison violence, the prevention of incidents of self-harm, and the delivery of offending behaviour programmes, a reduction in drug use within prisons, uptake of services, and the provision of purposeful activities for prisoners, amongst others.

Traditionally, the assessment of prison life and climate and evaluation of what works on addressing prison behaviour indicators have been based on qualitative research.<sup>26</sup> However, their methodology has generated contradictory results. On reviewing the use of structured questionnaires for assessing prison climate, Tonkin found growing evidence that some questionnaire-based measures can provide a reliable and valid assessment of the social climate in secure settings.<sup>27</sup> However, Steiner and Wooldredge also found evidence to suggest that prisoners' self-report is not always consistent with that of official accounts.<sup>28</sup> To better understand the influence that prison regimes may have on prison behaviour, researchers have argued that more emphasis needs to be placed on conducting evaluations that link forensic practice to general theories of crime and desistance.<sup>29</sup>

19. van der Kaap-Deeder, J., Audenaert, E., Vandevelde, S., Soenens, B., Van Mastrigt, S., Mabbe, E., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2017) Choosing when choices are limited: The role of perceived afforded choice and autonomy in prisoners' well-being. *Law and Human Behavior, 41*(6), 567.
20. Crewe, B., Warr, J., Bennett, P., & Smith, A. (2014). The emotional geography of prison life. *Theoretical Criminology, 18*(1), 56-74.
21. Crewe, B., Liebling, A., & Hulley, S. (2015) Staff prisoner relationships, staff professionalism, and the use of authority in public and private sector prisons. *Law & Social Inquiry, 40*(2), 309-344.
22. Stevens, A. (2012) 'I am the person now I was always meant to be': Identity reconstruction and narrative reframing in therapeutic community prisons. *Criminology & Criminal Justice, 12*(5), 527-547.
23. Harding, R. (2014) Rehabilitation and prison social climate: Do 'What Works' rehabilitation programs work better in prisons that have a positive social climate? *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 47*(2), 163-175.
24. Stern, V., & Francis, V. (2002) *Measuring the Impact of Imprisonment: Papers from a Roundtable Held in London on 9 November 2001*. International Centre for Prison Studies.
25. HMPPS. (2021). *Prison and Probation Performance Statistics*. Ministry of Justice. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prison-and-probation-trusts-performance-statistics>
26. Jewkes, Y. (2014) An introduction to "doing prison research differently". *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*(4), 387-391.
27. Tonkin, M. (2016) A review of questionnaire measures for assessing the social climate in prisons and forensic psychiatric hospitals. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology, 60*(12), 1376-1405.
28. Steiner, B., & Wooldredge, J. (2014) Comparing self-report to official measures of inmate misconduct. *Justice Quarterly, 31*(6), 1074-1101.
29. Steiner, B., Butler, H., & Ellison, J. (2014) Causes and correlates of prison inmate misconduct: A systematic review of the evidence. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 42*(6), 462-470.

## Research Questions

A number of studies have found that prison climate and enabling environments have a significant effect on observed prison behaviour.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, previous research has found that demographic and individual characteristics, such as age, can influence observed behaviour.<sup>31</sup> Under these assumptions, the present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

Hypothesis 1: the type and prevalence of observed behaviour indicators vary after individuals are transferred from ordinary location onto the PR.

Hypothesis 2: this variation in observed behaviour indicators cannot be explained by other independent variables such as age or type of sentence served.

The methodology used for the study was based on a quantitative design which included the use of secondary data only, as already accessible and freely available on the National Offender Management Information System (NOMIS). The HMPPS NOMIS database contains personal details such as prisoners' age group, offence, sentence, and case note information. These case notes contain observations of prison behaviour, such as breaches of discipline. Prison staff in PRs are trained in the recording of such

information and adhere to strict security-specific guidelines under a forensic risk factor-focused approach.<sup>32</sup>

## Method

### Participants

The initial sample of participants comprised 96 prisoners, between the ages of 27 and 63, all past or current residents within one PR that operate around the country. These PR residents were either serving a Life sentence, an Indeterminate for Public Protection sentence (IPP) or an Extended Determinate sentence (EDS), and at some point during their sentences would have experienced trouble progressing towards release. Individuals were excluded if they had resided in the PRs for less than six months, or when their residence coincided with the national Covid-19 pandemic lockdown (announced on 23rd March 2020).

The final sample consisted of 59 male prisoners. 30.5 per cent of the sample was under 35 years old, 45.8 per cent aged 35 to 50, and 23.7 per cent over 50. 35.6 per cent of prisoners were serving a Life sentence, 55.9 per cent an IPP sentence, and the remaining 8.5 per cent an EDS (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Frequencies and percentages for participant demographic variables**

	Sample (N = 59)	Percent ( per cent)
Age		
Under 35	18	30.5 per cent
35 to 50	27	45.8 per cent
Over 50	14	23.7 per cent
Sentence		
Life	21	35.6 per cent
Imprisonment for Public Protection	33	55.9 per cent
Extended Determinate Sentence	5	8.5 per cent

### Ethical Approval

Permission to conduct this research was obtained from the PR Prison Manager on 10th August 2020, with the final ethical approval for the research granted by HMPPS National Research Committee on 25th September 2020. The following ethical guidelines were followed: The Prison Service Instruction on Research Applications; the Health and Care Professional Council Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, and the

British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct.

### Materials and Procedures

#### Measures

Five measures, or observed behaviour indicators, and the demographic characteristics of age and type of sentence were used in light of the existing evidence,

30. Kordowicz, M. (2018) *The Perceived Impact of the Enabling Environments Programme within HMPPS Settings: A Qualitative Evaluation*. Royal College of Psychiatrists.

31. Whiteside, E., & Bond, C. (2017) Understanding disruptive behaviour in the juvenile prison estate. *Journal of forensic practice*, 19(2), 162-170.

32. Ministry of Justice. (2016). Prison National Offender Management Information System (p-NOMIS) and Inmate Information System (IIS). Unpublished.

which supports their reliability and validity in the assessments of prison life and association with desistance pre- and post-release.

Officially recorded secondary data was used, gathered electronically, for reasons of economy and speed. This data included the periods of six months pre- and six months post-arrival onto the PR. The datasets did not allow discrimination between some behaviours, such as incidents of substance misuse, as these are normally recorded under a range of different indicators such as adjudications or negative behaviour entries.

### Dependent variables (DVs).

**Adjudications.** Adjudications are part of the prison disciplinary system. They are regulated by Rule 51 of the Prison Rules 1999. Incidents of violence and instances of drug misuse, for example, are covered by the rules.

**Negative and positive behaviours.** As recorded on NOMIS case notes by HMPPS staff or those undertaking work on their behalf in compliance with HMPPS Incentives Policy Framework 2019.

**Self-harm.** The National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health's broad definition of self-harm has been used to define this prison behaviour indicator. Self-harm is defined as 'self-poisoning or self-injury, irrespective of the apparent purpose of the act.' It includes both

suicide attempt and non-suicidal self-injury, and self-harm by substance abuse.<sup>33</sup>

**Violence.** Incidents of violence include actual and direct violence perpetrated against both, staff, and fellow prisoners. It does not count for the use of threats of violence, attempted violence, violence against oneself, or self-harm.

### Independent variables (IVs).

**Demographic factors.** As discussed in the literature review, some demographic factors have been found to be significantly associated with observed custodial behaviour indicators, reoffending rates, and treatment effectiveness.<sup>34</sup> In the present study, the individual characteristics of age and type of sentence were selected as factors that may affect prison behaviour. For the analysis, the variable of age was categorised as 'under 35', '35-50', and 'over 50'. Sentence type was categorised into 'Life', 'IPP', and 'EDS'.

### Analysis

The analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 24. Table 2 shows the sample's means scores and standard deviations of the scale variables.

**Table 2: Sample means scores and standard deviations of the scaled variables**

	Mean	SD
Six months before the progressive move onto the PR		
Adjudication	1.20	1.96
Negative behaviour	3.31	4.79
Positive behaviour	2.46	2.87
Self-harm	0.20	0.61
Violence	0.65	0.50
Six months after the progressive move onto the PR		
Adjudication	0.56	1.02
Negative behaviour	1.36	1.94
Positive behaviour	7.69	6.01
Self-harm	0.15	0.55
Violence	0.10	0.36

Checks were carried out for homogeneity of variance, skewness and kurtosis, and outliers. As the data did not meet parametric assumptions for normal distribution, non-parametric analyses were conducted.

The data met the assumptions of randomness and independence required for non-parametric tests.

Sign tests were used to compare the PR residents' median scores of each one of the scales on the six-

33. National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (UK). (2004) Self-harm: the short-term physical and psychological management and secondary prevention of self-harm in primary and secondary care. British Psychological Society. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21834185/>

34. Mooney, J., & Daffern, M. (2015) The relationship between aggressive behaviour in prison and violent offending following release. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 21(4), 314-329.

month periods before and after their progressive move to the PR; Kruskal-Willis tests were used to compare the prisoners' mean rank scores of each of the scales in relation to their individual characteristics, six months into their progressive move onto the PR; Spearman's rank-order correlations were performed to examine the degree of association between the criterion and predictor variables.

## Results

### Variation in type and prevalence of observed behaviour pre-post PR

Overall, there was a decrease in the number of adjudications, negative behaviour, self-harm, and

incidents of violence in the six months following the prisoners' progressive move to the PR. The number of positive behaviour indicators observed increased during that same period. However, not all differences were statically significant. Paired-sample sign tests found that the median significantly decreased in the number of adjudications accrued by residents at the PR six months after their progression move,  $p = .022$ . A statistically significant median decrease was also found for the number of negative behaviours,  $p = .003$ ; and a statistically significant median increase in the number of positive behaviours,  $p < .001$ , both after the six months period of admission into the PR.

Tables 3 and 4 below show the frequencies and the sample's median scores of the scaled variables, respectively.

**Table 3: Paired-sample sign test frequencies**

Scaled variables		N
Adjudications after-adjudications before	Negative differences	23
	Positive differences	9
	Ties	27
	Total	59
Neg. behaviour after-neg. behaviour before	Negative differences	31
	Positive differences	11
	Ties	17
	Total	59
Pos. behaviour after-pos. behaviour before	Negative differences	11
	Positive differences	42
	Ties	6
	Total	59
Self-harm after-self-harm before	Negative differences	7
	Positive differences	4
	Ties	48
	Total	59
Violence after-violence before	Negative differences	6
	Positive differences	3
	Ties	50
	Total	59

**Table 4: Scaled variable median scores**

	Percentiles								
	Before			After			Difference		
	25th	50th (M)	75th	25th	50th (M)	75th	25th	50th (M)	75th
Adjudications	.00	.00	2.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	1.00*
Neg. behaviour	.00	2.00	4.00	.00	.00	2.00	.00	2.00**	2.00
Pos. behaviour	1.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	8.00	12.00	1.00	6.00***	8.00
Self-harm	.00.	.00.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Violence	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

A positive effect on prison behaviour can be observed in that the incidence and prevalence of adjudications and negative behaviours significantly decreased six months after the residents' admission

onto the PR, and with the incidence and prevalence of positive behaviours significantly increasing during that same period.

### Variation in observed behaviour by independent variables

Kruskal-Wallis tests examined the differences in the prisoners' mean rank scores on the scale variables of adjudications, negative behaviour, and positive behaviour, in relation to their individual characteristics of age and sentence, six months into their progressive

move onto the PR. Table 5 shows the sample's mean rank scores by age and sentence. A statistically significant relationship was observed for negative behaviour and age ( $H(2) = 8.35, p < .05$ ). Post hoc comparisons (Dunn-Bonferroni) revealed statistically similar scores for the under 35 (M rank 33.44) and 35-50 (M rank 33.24) groups, but a significantly lower score for the over 50 group (M rank 19.32,  $p = .02$ ).

**Table 5: Mean rank scores for adjudications, negative, and positive behaviour by age and sentence.**

IVs	DVs	N	M rank
Age			
Adjudications	Under 35	18	31.36
	35-50	27	30.31
	Over 50	14	27.64
	Total	59	
Neg. Behaviour	Under 35	18	33.44
	35-50	27	33.24
	Over 50	14	19.32*
	Total	59	
Pos. Behaviour	Under 35	18	30.72
	35-50	27	29.87
	Over 50	14	29.32
	Total	59	
Sentence			
Adjudications	Life	21	28.69
	Imprisonment for public protection	33	31.45
	Extended determinate sentence	5	25.90
	Total	59	
Neg. Behaviour	Life	21	26.50
	Imprisonment for public protection	33	32.35
	Extended determinate sentence	5	29.20
	Total	59	
Pos. Behaviour	Life	21	31.57
	Imprisonment for public protection	33	30.92
	Extended determinate sentence	5	17.30
	Total	59	

\* $p < .05$

No statistically significant differences in values were found in relation to sentence type for adjudications ( $p = .614$ ), negative behaviour ( $p = .414$ ), or positive behaviour ( $p = .220$ ).

The Spearman's rank-order correlation revealed a significant negative correlation between negative behaviour and age ( $r_s(59) = -.30, p = .019$ ). This would suggest that older residents are less likely to display negative behaviours. A coefficient of .30 signals a moderate correlation, which means that 9 per cent of the variance ( $.03 \times .03$ ) in age explains variation in negative behaviour.

### Discussion

The findings from the present study suggest that the type and prevalence of some observed behaviours vary after individuals are transferred from ordinary prison location to a PR. However, the age of the individual partly explains some of this difference.

Two major findings emerged from the study. Firstly, significant differences were found for observed behaviour indicators of adjudications, and negative and positive behaviour. The results suggest that the PR had a positive effect on observed behaviour indicators in

that the incidence and prevalence of adjudications and negative behaviours significantly decreased six months after the residents' admission onto the PR, with the incidence and prevalence of positive behaviours significantly increasing during that same period. This seems to be congruent with previous studies which found that enabling environments promote the development of positive prison behaviour.<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, a statistically significant difference was found between the demographic variable of age and the incidence and prevalence of observed negative behaviour indicators. The results indicate that the older residents are, the less likely they are to display negative behaviours. Further analysis showed that, although weak, a significant negative correlation exists between observed negative behaviour and age. These findings appear to be consistent with previous research on the age-crime curve of violence and other negative or antisocial behaviours.<sup>36</sup> However, although its effects are considered universal, the shape of the curve can vary amongst different populations,<sup>37</sup> and its effects cannot only be attributed to the ageing process alone, but to other variables that emerge from the situational context individuals find themselves in.<sup>38</sup> Type of sentence was found not to have a statistically significant influence on the results of the present study; however, recent studies show that sentence can explain variation in observed prison behaviour in recent studies through the resident's accumulated experience of the custodial environment.<sup>39</sup>

### Implications for Policy

The key findings of the research provide some insight into the effectiveness of PRs as measured by the

incidence and prevalence of observed behaviour indicators six months after the individuals' progressive move into this specialist environment. It provides a baseline for the forthcoming HMPPS review of success measures within PRs at a national level. It also draws attention to the need for developing a standardised process of recording observed behaviour indicators on NOMIS. It could be that the environment that the PR offers is not solely responsible for a change in observed behaviour, per se, but that it may be attributed to the way its staff responds to and record observed prison behaviour on NOMIS, or to variables not accounted for in this study.

The results indicate that the older residents are, the less likely they are to display negative behaviours. Further analysis showed that, although weak, a significant negative correlation exists between observed negative behaviour and age.

### Limitations of the Study

The small sample and single site of study means the findings may not be generalisable to other PRs. The findings should be considered preliminary at this stage. The use of secondary research data did not allow for some important behaviours to be studied (such as substance misuse), or for additional variables that may impact on custodial behaviour to be included in the analysis (such as the length of time spent in custody prior to PR admission). Whilst it will not be possible to account for all variables that may count for observed behavioural change, these could have potentially had an impact on the study's results. Research suggests that the longer individuals are

kept in custody, and their sense of hopelessness increases, the prevalence of observed behaviour indicators such as self-harm, substance misuse, and aggression, also increases, particularly within that group of men serving IPP sentences.<sup>40</sup> Data from the Prison Reform Trust and HM Inspectorate of Prisons had previously shown that the impact of serving an IPP

35. Liebling, A. (2012) *What makes prisons survivable. Towards a theory of human flourishing in prison*. SCCJR 7th Annual Lecture, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh.

36. Kolivoski, K., & Shook, J. (2016) Incarcerating juveniles in adult prisons: Examining the relationship between age and prison behavior in transferred juveniles. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 43(9), 1242-1259.

37. Loeber, R. (2012) Does the study of the age-crime curve have a future? *The future of criminology*, 11-19.

38. Sweeten, G., Piquero, A., & Steinberg, L. (2013). Age and the explanation of crime, revisited. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 42(6), 921-938.

39. Harris, M., Edgar, K., & Webster, R. (2020) 'I'm always walking on eggshells, and there's no chance of me ever being free': The mental health implications of Imprisonment for Public Protection in the community and post-recall. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 30(6), 331-340.

40. Harris, M., Edgar, K., & Webster, R. (2020) I'm always walking on eggshells, and there's no chance of me ever being free: The mental health implications of Imprisonment for Public Protection in the community and post recall. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*.

sentence on prisoners' wellbeing increased the prevalence of such indicators.<sup>41</sup> Notwithstanding this, the need for further research to empirically validate such findings and other factors that influence custodial conduct not accounted for in this study remain outstanding.

Finally, the quantitative nature of the study does not enable insight into why or how significant differences in some of the observed behaviours were found.

### Conclusions and Future Study

The results of the present study indicate a positive change in observed prisoner behaviour to be associated with being located in PRs. There was a decrease in the number of negative behaviour indicators observed in the six months following the prisoners' progressive move to the PR. The number of positive behaviour indicators observed increased during that same period. This is consistent with contemporary research on the effects on enabling environments on prison behaviour.<sup>42</sup> Further analysis revealed that the variation previously

observed on behaviour indicators may partially be explained by the individuals' demographic characteristic of age. Although a weak association was found, this is consistent with previous literature on the effects of the age-crime curve on violence and other forms of antisocial behaviour.

Whilst these results cannot be attributed for certain, to the influence that the PR has had on its residents, the limitations of the study can partly be overcome by conducting further research. Future research may include the use of qualitative or mixed methods research designs to further explore what aspects of the PRs particularly work for their residents, and what other factors may count towards behaviour change. When considering the complex relationship between desistance pre-and post-release, longitudinal studies could help examine the attribution of actual behavioural change.<sup>43</sup> Are PR staff recording behaviours differently from their counterparts in non-specialist units; how is the regime of those feeding prisons into PRs? Have PR residents learned to mask risky behaviours during their journey through the criminal justice system?

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