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Special Edition: Unlocked Graduates,
MSc Applied Custodial Leadership

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The Editorial Board wishes to make clear that the views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Prison Service.

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Editorial Comment

This special edition of the Prison Service Journal is dedicated to the research undertaken by participants on the Unlocked Graduates Leadership Development Programme as part of their Masters studies, and importantly focuses on the often-forgotten voice of the Prison Officer. These officers are not policy makers or academics, but they do have a unique perspective and insight from having lived and breathed the reality of prisons from the lens of a frontline member of staff.

Unlocked Graduates is an award-winning two-year Leadership Development Programme which recruits outstanding graduates and career changers to work as Prison Officers, whilst also undertaking a part-time Masters in Applied Custodial Leadership at Leeds Trinity University. Since the programme was founded in 2016 by CEO Natasha Porter OBE, over 600 recruits have spent at least two years as frontline Prison Officers in 38 prisons across England and Wales. It is these experiences that have formed the research papers that you are about to read.

The officers who authored these papers started on the landings in September 2020, as the world was still getting to grips with the COVID pandemic, whilst prisoners spent unprecedented time behind their cell door, and access to family visits, education, and other purposeful activity was either suspended or severely reduced. The role of the frontline Prison Officer had never been more important, when interactions with prison officers were often the only connection prisoners would have in a day. The authors all completed the programme in Summer 2022, and a significant proportion remain operational within HMPPS. Many have been promoted or taken on additional responsibilities, and some have moved into policy roles within the Ministry of Justice or gone to work for third sector organisations within the Criminal Justice sector.

Whilst these experiences have undoubtedly shaped their experiences on the frontline, you will see a variety of topics and areas covered. The first paper, written by Ayeisha Vaze, explores the impact architecture has on prisoner wellbeing. It offers insight from a prisoner perspective and presents several recommendations for the male prison estate. The second paper, written by Elizabeth Davison, is a literature review which offers some solutions for prison staff working with neurodiverse prisoners in the male estate, whilst Beth Sutherland undertakes a consultative review of the gaps in provision for female prisoners with learning disabilities and makes recommendations to improve the support provided for this vulnerable and marginalised group. We then move onto a paper written by Iona Warren, exploring the five principles of Trauma Informed Practice

in a women's prison, followed by a paper written by Scarlett Thomas, who created two Trauma-Informed spaces in her establishment. Moving onto thinking about leading change, Galina Ignatova and Amy Viner interviewed staff about their perceptions of the key worker scheme and its implementation, making recommendations for practice, whilst Beth Kendle looked more broadly at the barriers to effective communication in a custodial environment. Finally, Max Baker explored the link between use of force and rehabilitative culture, finding an inextricable link.

We believe these papers have the ability to make a deep and lasting impact. They ask vital and challenging questions, offering solutions, and providing suggestions for change. Reoffending continues to cost the UK £18.1 billion per year. Not only does this result in a huge waste of human talent, reoffending ex-prisoners also commit crime in our communities. This makes us all less safe, and we will continue to work tirelessly to reduce reoffending.

All these papers were co-edited by some of the Prisons and Custody team at Leeds Trinity University — Professor Danielle McDermott, Associate Professor Claire Vilarrubi and Dr Sarah Waite, as well as Gemma Buckland, Director of Do It Justice. Unlocked Graduates are grateful for the partnership with Leeds Trinity University, in particular the expertise of the team in operational prison roles which has ensured that research remains relevant and practical.

None of this work would have been possible without the constant support and partnership of Unlocked Graduates' colleagues within His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Ministry of Justice. We seek to bring prison officers into the system who will offer challenge and positive disruption, so our work depends on the support and engagement of those who work within the system already. Their ongoing support for our work — from the Secretary of State, Ministers and CEO, through to the myriad of frontline Governors and Prison Officers who support our work — has always been incredible and we could not exist without it. We are honoured that 100 per cent of governors recently surveyed would recommend a cohort of Unlocked Graduates to another prison. You have our deep gratitude and appreciation for all that you do.

Should you wish to read any of the full papers or learn more about the work of Unlocked Graduates and the bespoke Masters delivered by Leeds Trinity University, please do get in touch. Our final thanks, of course, go to all at the Prison Service Journal for collaborating on this special edition. We hope you find it stimulating, enjoyable, and most of all, inspiring.

Architectures of Harm or Architectures of Hope?

The effects of carceral space on the wellbeing of prisoners

Ayeisha Vaze is a Private Secretary at the Ministry of Justice and an ambassador of the Unlocked Graduates Programme.

HMP Wandsworth's 2021 inspection report cited the physical environment as one of the prison's main concerns. Like many Victorian prisons, HMP Wandsworth was originally designed to showcase civic pride and retribution. There has since been a shift in His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS) stance; whilst prison is still a place of punishment, it is also a place of rehabilitation. This project aims to understand how prisoners experience the physical environment at HMP Wandsworth and how this impacts prisoner wellbeing. Finally, it seeks to understand how the physical environment could be adapted to better support wellbeing. This project recognises that the built environment can either create an environment which triggers and institutionalises prisoners, or one which inspires and provides hope. Research was carried out by conducting interviews and participant-led graphic elicitation with six prisoners at HMP Wandsworth. Findings demonstrated that whilst most prisoners perceived the physical environment as unfit for purpose and oppressive, others displayed an indifference towards design and appeared accustomed to poor physical conditions. The physical environment was said to provoke feelings of sadness and anxiety. When asked how prisoners would choose to adapt the prison environment if they were tasked with creating their 'ideal prison', there was an initial difficulty in visualising anything other than the status quo. When asked to demonstrate ideas visually,

prisoners' sketches demonstrated the importance of spaces of interaction, escapism, productivity, nature, but also design which encouraged mobility, dignity, and autonomy. Whilst trauma-informed environments are beginning to filter into the UK female estate, this research demonstrates that there is also a need for a wellbeing-informed environment in the male estate. Combined with an enabling culture, purposeful activity, positive prisoner-staff relations, and appropriate interventions, this has the potential to produce an environment conducive with growth and rehabilitation.

Literature Review

This review examines the recent shift towards rehabilitative and trauma-informed carceral design and the wider implications of this on prisoner wellbeing.¹

Wellbeing Promotion Through Design

Increasingly, research is promoting the benefits of creating humanistic and generative prison spaces.^{2,3} Research from environmental psychology demonstrates the positive rehabilitative and wellbeing outcomes which result from importing normality and autonomy into carceral design.⁴ Matter Architecture's model (Figure 6) exhibits the clear positive outcomes which derive from fostering an environment which supports prisoner health and wellbeing, resulting in improved individual potential, better engagement with support and training and reduced reoffending.⁵

1. Jewkes, Y. (2018). Just design: Healthy prisons and the architecture of hope. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 51(3), 319-338.
2. Moran, D., Jones, P. I., Jordaan, J. A., & Porter, A. E. (2020). Does nature contact in prison improve well-being? Mapping land cover to identify the effect of greenspace on self-harm and violence in prisons in England and Wales. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 111(6), 1779-1795.
3. Engstrom, K. V., & Van Ginneken, E. F. (2022). Ethical Prison Architecture: A Systematic Literature Review of Prison Design Features Related to Wellbeing. *Space and Culture*, 25(3), 479-503.
4. Karthaus, R., Bernheimer, L., O'Brien, R., & Barnes, R. (2017). *Wellbeing in prison design: A design guide*. <http://www.matterarchitecture.uk/research/>
5. Karthaus, R., Block, L., & Hu, A. (2019). Redesigning prison: The architecture and ethics of rehabilitation. *The Journal of Architecture*, 24(2), 193-222.

Figure 1: Matter Architecture Model



Recent research demonstrates the therapeutic benefits of nature contact in a carceral setting, finding that prisons with a higher vegetation cover have a lower rate of self-harm and violence.⁶ Prisoners also reported feeling calmer, more positive, more communicative, and less mentally fatigued when surrounded by nature.^{7,8}

International ‘Good Practice’

The ‘principle of normality’ has guided the design of prisons in several Scandinavian countries. This logic

purports that the loss of freedom is punishment enough, without further constraints from the built environment. This design provides prisoners with the conditions and resources to lead productive lives upon release.⁹ Norway’s Halden Prison, opened in 2010, incorporates natural forest, bar-less windows, sunlight, artwork and communal open-plan living into its design (Figure 2).¹⁰ Inspired by Halden, Schmidt Hammer Lassen architectural firm has designed Greenland’s first closed prison, Nuuk Correctional Institution (Figure 8), created with the aim of incorporating nature to reduce the psychological violence of the built environment.¹¹

Figures 2 and 3: Halden Prison, Norway



6. Moran, D., Jones, P. I., Jordaan, J. A., & Porter, A. E. (2022). Nature contact in the carceral workplace: greenspace and staff sickness absence in prisons in England and Wales. *Environment and Behavior*, 54(2), 276-299.
7. Moran, D., & Turner, J. (2019). Turning over a new leaf: The health-enabling capacities of nature contact in prison. *Social Science & Medicine*, 231, 62-69.
8. Nadkarni, N. M., Hasbach, P. H., Thys, T., Crockett, E. G., & Schnacker, L. (2017). Impacts of nature imagery on people in severely nature deprived environments. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 15(7), 395-403.
9. Høidal, A. (2018). Normality behind the walls: Examples from Halden Prison. *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, 31(1), 58-66.
10. Hancock, P., & Jewkes, Y. (2011). Architectures of incarceration: The spatial pains of imprisonment. *Punishment & Society*, 13(5), 611-629.
11. Jewkes, Y., & Moran, D. (2014). Should prison architecture be brutal, bland or beautiful? *Scottish Justice Matters*, 2(1), 8-11.

The relationship between design and rehabilitative outcomes is clear. Research has found that Norway, which has adopted this principle, boasts recidivism rates of 20 per cent, far below the UK and US's recidivism rates of 46 per cent and 52 per cent respectively.¹² Whilst it may appear that this model offers a silver bullet design, Grant and Jewkes warn against transposing one country's design philosophy to another without adapting it to the new penal and socio-cultural context.¹³

UK-Based 'Good Practice'

Since 2017, 'trauma-informed' training and design have been rolled out across the UK female estate.¹⁴ Trauma-sensitive design minimises environmental triggers, such as excessive security equipment, long corridors, hard surfaces, and bars on windows, replacing them with an environment which provides psychological safety. The Murray House facility, in

HMP/YOI Hydebank Wood Women's Unit was designed to be domestic and private, with a living room, soft furnishings and surrounded by nature, to reduce the feeling of being incarcerated. If properly implemented, such environments can not only avoid re-traumatising prisoners,¹⁵ but can also encourage healing from past trauma.

Some of these lessons are beginning to filter into the male estate. Design at HMP Low Moss uses bold colour and creatively aims to maximise natural daylight, minimising the institutional feel of the environment (Figure 3). HMP Berwyn adorns its walls with landscape artwork, enabling prisoners to 'escape' the sterile environment (Figure 4). Equally, new build 'smart' prison HMP Five Wells boasts bar-less windows and a design centred around promoting decency, autonomy and normality. Such design initiatives are contentious — they go against the cultural and political imagination of what 'prison' is.

Figures 3 and 4: HMP Low Moss (left) and HMP Berwyn (right)



12. Deady, C. W. (2014). Incarceration and recidivism: Lessons from abroad. Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy. https://salve.edu/sites/default/files/filesfield/documents/Incarceration_and_Recidivism.pdf
13. Grant, E., & Jewkes, Y. (2015). Finally Fit for Purpose: The Evolution of Australian Prison Architecture. *The Prison Journal*, 95(2), 223–243.
14. Jewkes, Y., Jordan, M., Wright, S., & Bendelow, G. (2019). Designing 'Healthy' Prisons for Women: Incorporating Trauma-Informed Care and Practice (TICP) into Prison Planning and Design. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(20), 3818.
15. Miller, N. A., & Najavits, L. M. (2012). Creating trauma-informed correctional care: A balance of goals and environment. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 3(1), 17246.

Despite some examples of more progressive prison design, 25 per cent of the current custodial population reside in Victorian prison,¹⁶ built for the purpose of punishment and retribution. Accompanying this are rising rates of self-harm and suicide within the prison population.¹⁷ The Prison Safety and Reform White Paper acknowledged this, stating that the prison estate requires urgent investment and modernisation if it is to foster a positive culture and improved prisoner wellbeing.

Research Aims

This study explores the relationship between prison design and prisoner wellbeing and investigates how prison design can be adapted to better support wellbeing.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of carceral space at HMP Wandsworth?
2. What effect does carceral space have on the wellbeing of prisoners at HMP Wandsworth?
3. How might carceral space better support the wellbeing of prisoners at HMP Wandsworth?

Methods

Research Design and Methodological Approach

Whilst a large part of prison 'knowledge' is constructed by those in positions of power, here, prisoner voice is placed at the forefront of knowledge production. This research is grounded in a constructivist ontology and interpretive epistemology, viewing the world as having multiple socially constructed realities which require interpretation.¹⁸

The Prison Safety and Reform White Paper acknowledged this, stating that the prison estate requires urgent investment and modernisation if it is to foster a positive culture and improved prisoner wellbeing.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Six prisoners at HMP Wandsworth were selected via convenience sampling and participated in semi-structured interviews. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and took place in the private space of the chapel. An interview schedule had been pre-prepared, involving questions about how participants experience carceral space, how it affects their wellbeing and their ideas for adapting prison space. Despite questions being pre-written, interviewees were encouraged to voice their thoughts and experiences openly. With prior permission, interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim, in order to capture the true words of the participant, rather than my interpretation.¹⁹

Participant-Generated Graphic Elicitation

After each interview, participants took part in a graphic elicitation exercise, producing a sketch of what their 'ideal' prison would look like, where wellbeing promotion is the main priority. This method acknowledged the value of the visual as a medium through which to express ideas and feelings, which cannot easily be articulated verbally.^{20 21} I considered that this would produce richer, more nuanced data and would provide a more

inclusive medium, circumventing barriers posed by language and literacy.

Data Analysis

After interviews had been transcribed verbatim, thematic analysis was conducted to make sense of the data. The interview transcripts were analysed, and latent and semantic codes were created. These codes

16. Moran, D., Houlbrook, M., & Jewkes, Y. (2022). The Persistence of the Victorian Prison: Alteration, Inhabitation, Obsolescence, and Affirmative Design. *Space and Culture*, 25(3), 364-378.

17. Ministry of Justice. (2023). Safety in custody statistics. Quarterly update to December 2022. England and Wales.

18. Beyens, K., Kennes, P., Snacken, S., & Tournel, H. (2015). The craft of doing qualitative research in prisons. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 4(1), 66-78.

19. Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.

20. Bagnoli, A. (2009). Beyond the standard interview: The use of graphic elicitation and arts-based methods. *Qualitative Research*, 9(5), 547-570.

21. Vince, R., & Warren, S. (2012). Participatory visual methods. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (eds.), *The practice of qualitative organizational research: Core methods and current challenges* (pp. 1-21). Sage.

were further refined into research themes. Unlike interview transcripts, the analysis of images was more challenging, due to visual data being subjective and difficult to categorise. The knowledge produced through graphic elicitation arose out of the interaction between the researcher and the participant, rendering it necessary to conduct analysis within each specific interview context.

Findings and Discussion

Lived Experiences of Carceral Space

Research Question 1, 'what are the lived experiences of carceral space at HMP Wandsworth?', aimed to elicit how prison space is perceived by someone inhabiting it. There were three main themes discussed: unfit for purpose, prison as oppressive, and the expected norm.

During interviews, participants frequently spoke about the old Victorian design of the prison no longer being fit for purpose. One participant described the prison as: 'very archaic, pretty run down, pretty dusty' and 'falling to bits'. Another participant described the building as needing a 'whole new refurb'. Not only was the wing itself considered outdated by participants, so too were the wing's facilities, in particular the showers. Participants also commented on the presence of vermin inside the establishment, including rats, mice and pigeons.

Another core theme was feeling 'oppressed' by the prison environment. Participant 4 referred to the 'narrowness of the walkways' as something that particularly contributed to this feeling. Additionally, the '1s' landing was referred to as a 'dungeon' by participant 3 due to the 'solid ceiling' and presence of vermin. However, Participant 4 expressed an appreciation for the wing's large windows and plentiful natural light, without which the design would be even more oppressive.

Despite acknowledging that the wing is an unpleasant environment, participants appeared to

accept this. Participant 3 stated that it is 'what I would expect because it's just what I'm used to'. Participant 4 discussed becoming 'acclimatised' to the environment because it becomes the new 'normal', no matter how poor the conditions. There also appeared to be a shared opinion amongst participants that prisoners are undeserving of the same standard of living that might be expected outside of prison. Participants 1 and 3 talked about having to 'pay the consequences' of past mistakes, including through design. It was observed that this same justification of 'it's jail' was utilised by several participants as an excuse for the poor prison facilities and environment.

Prison design being oppressive and unfit for purpose was an anticipated finding and is supported by both literature and policy.²² HMP Wandsworth's 2021 inspection report reiterated this, referring to Wandsworth as a 'crumbling, overcrowded, vermin-infested prison'. Prisons were historically designed with the purpose of showcasing retribution, civic pride and the invincibility of the state and therefore look oppressive in design.²³ Since the purpose of prisons is no longer purely to punish, there is now a widespread understanding that this type of prison design is no longer appropriate.²⁴ This argument has also endured in political debate for almost a century.²⁵ Despite repeated promises to shut or reform such

Prisons were historically designed with the purpose of showcasing retribution, civic pride and the invincibility of the state and therefore look oppressive in design.

prisons, Victorian prisons constitute too pivotal a segment of the prison estate to abolish, housing over 25 per cent of the incarcerated population. Not only do the findings demonstrate that carceral space is experienced poorly by prisoners, but that this has become the *status quo*. Participants appeared unsurprised that prison design was outdated and oppressive, nor did they appear to expect better. This finding was unexpected but can be theorised by the principle of less eligibility. This principle states that conditions should not be superior to the conditions of the lowest social class of 'free society' and thus hardship and suffering should be demonstrated by the prison's design. It appears that this mentality of being deserving of less than the average person has been

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22. Karthaus, R., Block, L., & Hu, A. (2019). Redesigning prison: The architecture and ethics of rehabilitation. *The Journal of Architecture*, 24(2), 193–222.
 23. Hancock, P., & Jewkes, Y. (2011). Architectures of incarceration: The spatial pains of imprisonment. *Punishment & Society*, 13(5), 611–629.
 24. Jewkes, Y. (2017). Prison design and the need for reform. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1(12), 846–848.
 25. Moran, D., Houlbrook, M., & Jewkes, Y. (2022). The Persistence of the Victorian Prison: Alteration, Inhabitation, Obsolescence, and Affirmative Design. *Space and Culture*, 120633122110570.

internalised by prisoners, shaping their low expectations of prison design. Previous research supports this finding, arguing that prison design portrays a powerful 'othering' influence towards prisoners, preventing them from perceiving that they are deserving of more. Not only is punishment enacted by taking away one's liberty, but it is then reinforced through the built environment. At a first glance, it appears that HMP Wandsworth's 'oppressive' and 'unfit for purpose' environment is stifling, rather than supporting, HMPPS's aims of providing a prison environment which promotes wellbeing, decency, and rehabilitation.

Carceral Space and its Effect on Prisoner Wellbeing

The second research question sought to understand 'what effect does carceral space have on the wellbeing of prisoners at HMP Wandsworth?'. Participants' responses generally fit within three main themes: anxiety inducing design, depressing design and indifference towards design.

Participants articulated feeling 'trapped', stating that the repetitiveness of the environment resulted in 'anxiety, stress' and 'uncomfortableness'. Anxiety derived particularly from 'blind spots' in design, areas away from staff or cameras, such as the showers. Participant 3 discussed that some prisoners felt so anxious that they completely avoided these areas. Other participants described the wing as feeling 'claustrophobic', 'suffocating' and mentally 'very testing'.

Generally, participants agreed that the environment was 'dingy', 'doom and gloom' and 'depressing' in design and that this had the effect of 'bringing the morale of everyone else down' (participant 5). One participant noted that it was the repetitiveness of design which he found particularly mentally challenging 'the kiosk, the netting, the railings, it's all the same. It is a bit depressing'. However, Participant 6 stated that it was the colour scheme of the wing which particularly affected his mood. He discussed that 'the more colours you can bring into the environment the better it makes your mood', due to this reducing the feeling of being incarcerated.

Although most participants agreed that prison design impacted their mental wellbeing, one participant purported that this was no longer the case 'Maybe if you haven't been to prison before it might have an effect on you...I've been to prison before, so I know what jail is like'. He explained that prison design used to affect his mental wellbeing, but now he has come to terms with the fact that 'jail is jail'. He stated that now, 'if the regime is really really good' he 'wouldn't really care what the wing looks like'.

The results suggest that the carceral environment triggers feelings of sadness and anxiety. These findings are heavily supported by the literature, which purports the idea that the physical environment can have a psychologically harmful effect on prisoners. Alongside

this, architectural features such as metal gates, cameras and vandal resistant furnishing contribute to a sense of 'othering' and of being constantly watched. This induces a form of self-governance onto prisoners and heightens prisoners' anxiety and self-consciousness.²⁶ The physical environment not only contributes to poor wellbeing through the affective experience it produces, but also by interfering with many of the Maslow's basic needs, such as sleep, ventilation and privacy.²⁷

What was most surprising was one individual's apparent indifference towards design. Whilst it is possible that this finding indicates that the physical environment is not important to all prisoners, this response was anomalous. Participant 1 was open about spending many years in prison, therefore it is also possible that this response demonstrates a learned indifference towards the carceral environment, which has developed as a result of many years of incarceration. Previous research has offered a possible explanation behind prisoner apathy towards prison design, as it is argued that prison interiors have become increasingly sanitised and mundane 'non-places', provoking feelings of indifference in the eye of the spectator.²⁸ It is possible that the mundanity of HMP Wandsworth's prison wing also elicits this same reaction in prisoners.

So far, the research findings have shown that HMP Wandsworth's prison design does not support prisoner wellbeing, but rather provides an affective environment where wellbeing is tested. Prison is already an anxiety-

HMPPS's aims of providing a prison environment which promotes wellbeing, decency, and rehabilitation.

26. Tartaro, C. (2006). Watered Down: Partial Implementation of the New Generation Jail Philosophy. *The Prison Journal*, 86(3), 284–300.

27. Davies, B. (2019). Rehabilitative culture in a High Security Prison. *Prison Service Journal*, 224, 26-29.

28. Jewkes, Y., Slee, E., & Moran, D. (2017). The visual retreat of the prison: Non-places for non-people. In M. Brown & E. Carrabine (eds.), *Routledge international handbook of visual criminology* (pp. 293–304). Routledge.

inducing environment, irrespective of prisoners, many of whom carry with them significant amounts of imported vulnerability.²⁹ When this is exacerbated by a prison environment, which causes prisoners to feel sad and anxious, there are wider implications of intensifying existing poor mental health and wellbeing. This works against MoJ's wider objectives of ensuring a 'decent, safe and productive environment', where prisoners are 'supported to turn away from crime'.

Adapting Carceral Space to Better Support Wellbeing

The final research question aimed to elicit how participants felt the built environment could be adapted to better support wellbeing. This was encapsulated verbally through interviews and visually through participant sketches. Five themes emerged, including: impossibility for change, spaces of interaction, escapism and productivity, access to nature, and accessibility, ergonomics and dignified design.

When asked how they would adapt carceral space, participants initially struggled to conceptualise what an alternative model of prison could look like. Two participants reiterated their difficulty in visualising change: *'I can't think of any alternatives... I don't know what other design would come to mind'* and *'I should just draw the wing that we are on because it's jail, what do people expect?'*. Most participants' sketches of the wing appeared very similar to the current model, a radial design with cells lining the wing.

One consistent theme across the data was that participants spoke about the positive wellbeing benefits that would result from adding more spaces which encourage socialisation and interaction. Most participants associated such spaces with reduced stress and positive mental health *'If you've got these larger areas where a few people can congregate it's stress free...It's good for your psyche to communicate with people'*. In practice, participants explained that these social spaces could be in the form of a pool table, table tennis, a chess room or simply an area to have a cup of tea. The positive benefits of existing similar spaces were noted *'That table that they've put for the chess, it's been a brilliant thing because it's brought community to it'*. One participant placed several community-promoting design features as central features in his sketch, including a pool table, a kitchen, table tennis

and a games room. These features were common design elements in several interviewees' sketches.

Another common theme which emerged was the desire for design features which enable productivity, or which replicate an escape from the feeling of incarceration. One participant talks about how the current wing design provides little space to decompress *'if you want to... de-stress a little bit, you can't do that in prison because there's no facilities for it and there's no space for it'*. Many design elements in participants' sketches fell under the category of escapism and productivity, including a vision room, which helps prisoners to visually map out their lives, a research room, a chess room, a meditation yard, a relaxation room and a fitness pod. Participants 1 and 6 stated that they wanted design elements which *'take you away from being in prison'*,

arguing that this contributes to a positive mental health. Alongside these additional spaces on the wing, one participant spoke about the importance of the colour scheme of the wing, arguing that bright colours can also contribute to escapism and the feeling that you're not 'stuck in prison'.

Another theme which emerged was the positive wellbeing effects of incorporating more open spaces, nature and light into prison design. Participant 2 argues that greenery would make prisoners

feel more optimistic about the future and be *'more prone to connecting with other people.'* Participant 4 also agreed that there would be positive wellbeing effects of a view of nature or a garden, giving prisoners the opportunity to go outside more and access the fresh air. Greenery, fresh air, and light were common design features in participants' drawings. Participant 2 drew trees positioned on the wing itself, whilst Participant 5 incorporated *'lots of natural light'*, a *'view of nature'* and a garden into his design.

The need for more accessible and ergonomical prison design was recognised by participants. One participant raised the challenges for prisoners who struggle with mobility: *'someone who is older might want to go to the 4s but because of the stairs, they might say you know I'm not gonna do that'*. Participant 3 discussed how Wandsworth's design is also inaccessible to vulnerable prisoners. He suggested re-designing the showers on the wing so they are more accessible for staff to be aware of incidents, thereby

MoJ's wider objectives of ensuring a 'decent, safe and productive environment', where prisoners are 'supported to turn away from crime'.

29 Liebling, A., & Maruna, S. (2013). *The Effects of Imprisonment*. Routledge.

making more vulnerable prisoners feel safer. Participant 2 also spoke about design needing to be more anthropometrically generous, with more ventilation, wider doors, and more space on the wing to pass one another. Participants revealed a desire for more spaces which enable autonomy and dignified living. This was suggested through the addition of a cafe or kitchenette area, giving prisoners trust and responsibility, the addition of tables on the landings, allowing prisoners to eat collectively outside of their cells and a clock, allowing prisoners to maintain their own time keeping. Participant 6 stated that these changes would allow him to feel 'more at home'. Several participants articulated a desire to contribute to their built environment. Participant 2 commented that in Norway and Sweden prisoners are able to '*creatively re-design their space*'. Participant 5 discussed wanting to help maintain the environment more by trusting prisoners with painting and re-decorating the built environment. He argued that this 'gets people more motivated' and '*brings up self-achievement*', which have a positive effect on wellbeing. Participant 1 seconded this, suggesting that the walls could be adorned with art created by prisoners. Participant 4 discussed the advantages of a prisoner-led wing design which promotes autonomy and dignity, arguing that this would help prisoners take responsibility for their own future, contributing to positive wellbeing and reduced stress.

Question 3 sought to understand how carceral space could be adapted to better support prisoner wellbeing. Whilst initially many participants found it challenging to visualise a prison environment different from the *status quo*, this struggle lessened when participants were asked to display their ideas visually. What links the above themes is that they import elements of normality into prison design. As already discussed, the 'principle of normality' is a key guiding principle behind much of the design in the Norwegian correctional system.³⁰ The importance of a key component of normality — interaction, was expressed by participants and is supported by the literature which found that implementing certain design approaches, such as enhancing external and communal areas in prisons, encourages communication, mobility and

interaction and promotes the re-socialisation of prisoners.³¹ Previous research demonstrates that encouraging positive social interaction and group ties boosts prisoner wellbeing, by fostering autonomy and reducing social isolation.³² Participants expressed a desire for more nature to be incorporated into prison design, stating that nature contributes to a calming influence, whilst also enabling cohesion and cooperation. This finding is supported by a burgeoning new body of literature which advocates the positive wellbeing potential of nature contact.^{33 34}

Conclusion

These findings build on the literature and practices around trauma-informed design and psychological safety. Many features have already been incorporated successfully into healthcare settings and women's establishments. However, the findings indicate that there is an additional urgent need for them in male establishments. Incarcerated men also struggle with their wellbeing and mental health, in particular in local prisons where the population is often more turbulent and emotionally vulnerable. The findings suggest that in general, HMP Wandsworth's prisoners perceive their current carceral environment as failing to provide them a suitable environment to nurture positive wellbeing and rehabilitation, thus actively working against some of the core aims of the criminal justice system. Some of this has been internalised, resulting in prisoners feeling that they are not deserving of better. When asked what their 'ideal' prison wing would look like, whilst some suggestions related to basic decency and humanity, others were aligned with the 'principle of normality'. Rehabilitative design alone is unlikely to result in positive prisoner wellbeing, however those in custody require certain levels of environmental decency and normality before they can make sustainable change. Combining a more generative prison design with positive prisoner-staff relationships, purposeful activity, and a culture of hope, this is one step towards achieving a prison estate where prisoners are equipped with the skills, support, and environment to lead productive lives on release.

30. Hyatt, J. M., Andersen, S. N., & Chanenson, S. L. (2020). Prison cells as a grounded embodiment of penal ideologies: A Norwegian-American comparison. In J. Turner & V. Knight (eds.), *The prison cell* (pp. 45–70). Palgrave Macmillan.

31. Fikfak, A., Kosanovic, S., Crnic, M., & Perovic, V. (2015). The contemporary model of prison architecture: Spatial response to the re-socialization programme. *Spatium*, 34, 27–34.

32. Kyprianides, A., & Easterbrook, M. J. (2020). Social Factors Boost Well Being Behind Bars: The Importance of Individual and Group Ties for Prisoner Well Being. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 12(1), 7–29.

33. Moran, D., Jewkes, Y., & Lorne, C. (2019). Designing for imprisonment: Architectural ethics and prison design. *Architecture Philosophy*, 4(1), 67–81.

34. Moran, D., & Turner, J. (2019). Turning over a new leaf: The health-enabling capacities of nature contact in prison. *Social Science & Medicine*, 231, 62–69.

'Before My Brother Came... I Lived Off Sandwiches'

Adapting the Prison Service to ensure equality for neurodiverse prisoners

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The researcher was a Prison Officer at a Category B remand prison in central London. This is a challenging environment, with a diverse prisoner population which is often changing. Staff have little time or training to accommodate the needs of neurodiverse prisoners, yet often make their best efforts to do so. Officers have been seen writing application forms, giving tours of the wing, ensuring that prisoners too afraid to shower in general association get showers outside of this. Countless lunch times have been given up printing outlines of animals for prisoners to colour in, or pictures of motorbikes to decorate cells with and emailing in-reach with a long list of welfare concerns. Equally, there have been instances of misunderstandings which have escalated into use of force. A prisoner being given an instruction they might not fully understand, disobeying it and being put behind their door (again). Officers learn in training that your duty as a prison officer is to, 'prevent victims by changing lives' and to 'reduce reoffending by rehabilitating the people in our care through education and employment'. Yet the literature discussed in this report reveals that there are many areas in which the Prison Service is failing to give adequate adjustments and support to neurodivergent prisoners. There needs to be systematic changes across the entire prison-estate to ensure equality of experience for the neurodiverse prison population. In local remand prisons, issues of gang violence often take the centre-stage and there is not the same funding and opportunities to look for solutions for problems faced by neurodiverse prisoners. Yet, the remand prison is perhaps one of the most important areas to get this right. It is the first place that neurodiversity

could be identified and support can be put in place. The remand prison is also an emotionally taxing part of the prison experience, where prisoners: negotiate prison life, face court and sentencing, learning the norm of emotional restraint which acts as a 'collective coping function'.¹ This research looks at some of the key areas of prison life which are directly affected by neurodiversity and in the second part looks at some potential solutions and recommendations.

Introduction

There is no universally accepted definition for neurodiversity and as such the range of conditions that fall under this bracket is diverse and there is a variation in the impact any one of these conditions has on daily life. It is not a perfect term and scholars have, more recently, recognised that the 'neurodivergent' identity can be problematic if it assumes a common experience of neurodiversity. Although the term is broad, it is the preferred one for this study as it rejects the medical model of disability, engaging instead with the social model, where neurodivergent people are considered part of a normal variation. The term rejects the use of stigmatized terms such as 'deficit' and 'disorder'.²

The literature presents that there is a disproportionate representation of neurodiversity in the prison population. It is difficult to estimate the exact figures because there has been no consistent data gathering at local or national level. Again, the broad term 'neurodiversity' presents some problems in capturing data as different neurodivergent conditions are measured using different criteria. The 2021 Review of Evidence commissioned by the then Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland, used the 'working conservative assumption' that around 50 per cent of the adult prison

1. Crewe, B., Warr, J., Bennett, P., & Smith, A. (2014). The emotional geography of prison life. *Theoretical criminology*, 18(1), 56-74.

2. Shah, P. J., Boilson, M., Rutherford, M., Prior, S., Johnston, L., Maciver, D., & Forsyth, K. (2022). Neurodevelopmental disorders and neurodiversity: definition of terms from Scotland's National Autism Implementation Team. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 221(3), 577-579.

population experiences 'some sort of neurodivergence challenge.' This data presents overwhelming evidence that a large proportion of the prison population has some sort of neurodivergence which will directly impact their experience of the prison system. Yet, there is a dearth in literature which highlights neurodiverse prisoners' experiences, with little progression towards improving these experiences. Whilst there is some evidence of good practice, this tends to be singular to individual establishments, with very little cohesive improvement across the prison estate. It is imperative that there is improved research, from which we can advise the prison service and its staff what reasonable adjustments could be made to ensure equality for all prisoners. This first part of this review will look at four key areas which act as 'barriers' for neurodiverse prisoners in having an equal experience of the prison system.

Barriers for Equity

There is consensus amongst scholars that there is a lack of sufficient screening for neurodivergence, which leaves many unidentified.³ This is problematic as, theoretically, once neurodivergence is recognised, future interactions can be adapted to the specific needs of the individuals and further investigations can be made. One study showed that fewer than 50 per cent of prisoners in the target group had undertaken screening or assessment to determine the presence of learning difficulties and disabilities⁴ and another found that they could identify several prisoners with neurodevelopmental disorders and difficulties (NDD) who had previously gone unrecognised due to a lack of capacity and ability to assess NDD.⁵ Previous governmental research has reflected this evidence and recommended that 'urgent consideration should be given to the inclusion of identifying learning disabilities into the prison health screen'.⁶ Over a decade later, the Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate recommended that 'common screening

tool should be introduced, supported by an information sharing protocol.' The gap between these recommendations highlights that the screening process in prisons has had no significant improvement in the last decade.

When talking about access, it is important to address how the prison perceives responsibility. It is argued that prisoners are 'taught' to engage with institutional goals and take personal responsibility for their actions through a combination of threat and opportunity. An example of this is the Incentive Earned Privileges (IEP). Launched in 1995, IEP's give prisoners the opportunity to benefit from 'good' behaviour and therefore responsibility for their own sentence progression and rewards. However, there is a disconnect between these normative expectations of self-governance and the prison system's ability to respond to the challenges and barriers for neurodiverse prisoners.⁷ Therefore, neurodiverse prisoners are at a structural disadvantage.

Sentencing and sentence plans is one area which could reveal serious consequences of not having equal access to information. The literature indicates that there are some neurodiverse prisoners who receive complex sentences, the terms of which, they are unable to understand. Without guidance on the requirements, they need to meet in order to be released, the lack of reasonable adjustments in this area, can literally translate into longer sentences for neurodiverse prisoners. In a seminal study, prisoners were asked if they 'knew when they could go home'. One in ten said they didn't, a number that doubled for those with a possible or borderline learning disability.⁸ Decisions around prison progression and release is complicated for a large part of the population, their 'mechanics bewildering... an opaque form of fortune telling' leaving prisoners feeling powerless and dehumanised.⁹ Sentencing is an area which has the potential to instil a sense of powerlessness amongst prisoners. If the

If the sentence or sentence-plan is not presented to prisoners in a way that they can understand, a sense of 'powerlessness' translates into direct discrimination.

3. McCarthy, J., Chaplin, E., Underwood, L., Forrester, A., Hayward, H., Sabet, J., ... & Murphy, D. (2015). Screening and diagnostic assessment of neurodevelopmental disorders in a male prison. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities and Offending Behaviour*, 6(2), 102-111.
4. albot, J. (2008). *Prisoners Voices*. Prison Reform Trust, London.
5. See footnote 3
6. Bradley, K (2009). *The Bradley Report: Lord Bradley's Review of People with Mental Health Problems or Learning Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System*.
7. Gormley, C. (2022). The hidden harms of prison life for people with learning disabilities. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 62(2), 261-278.
8. See footnote 4.
9. Crewe, B. (2015). Inside the belly of the penal beast: Understanding the experience of imprisonment. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 4(1), 50-65.

sentence or sentence-plan is not presented to prisoners in a way that they can understand, a sense of 'powerlessness' translates into direct discrimination.

A recurrent theme throughout the literature is the inaccessibility of prisons 'paper-based regimes' which relies on written applications to make food choices, arrange visits, lodge complaints, purchase from the prison canteen.¹⁰ Further, when an individual with possible learning difficulties was interviewed, he stated: 'Before my brother came, I just used to tick it and hope for the best. I knew 'a' was sandwiches, so I lived off sandwiches. The officers won't fill your menus out, they say just ask a prisoner.' This is particularly poignant as it highlights one of the most basic rights in prison, the ability to make your food choices.¹¹ This further highlights the power a prison regime has over people to undermine their autonomy and prohibits them from making decisions about their own lives. The literature points to the structural inaccessibility of the system for neurodivergent prisoners. They are subjected to normative expectations in making requests without the diversity of needs being considered and access to information in an accessible format. Without these adjustments being met, daily life can become challenging for neurodiverse prisoners who face oppression through 'daily denials'. This deeply entrenched structural discrimination has the potential to leave neurodivergent prisoners without access to their basic rights in prison, but also force them into risky social relationships and social exclusion.

Mental health is also a key concern as literature reflects that neurodivergent prisoners have a greater propensity to mental health problems such as psychosis, anxiety, depression, personality disorder and thoughts of suicide and self-harming behaviour that neurotypical

prisoners.¹² A study in 2019 found that of the 87 prisoners who screened positive for neurodevelopmental difficulties, 69 had concurrent mental health issues.¹³ In addition, it was found that 44 per cent of prisoners who had screened positive on The Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire (LDSQ) had a current mental health problem. Of this group, 25 per cent had thought about suicide in the last month and 63 per cent had attempted suicide in the past.¹⁴ These are significant statistics across two separate studies, revealing that this group of prisoners are a disproportionately vulnerable in terms of having concurrent mental health difficulties. Despite the principle of 'equivalence of care' in prison medicine, it is understood that mental health services 'are not adequate', there is a high proportion of prisoners with unmet need for treatment.

The behaviour of neurodivergent prisoners is often perceived by operational staff as 'difficult'.¹⁵ Despite a large population of neurodivergent prisoners, there is only a brief mention of neurodiversity in initial prison officer entry level training (POELT). Staff need to be trained in identifying and interpreting different behaviours and being able to adapt to these, ensuring reasonable adjustments are made.¹⁶ This is consistent with a study which found in their survey that most staff said they were 'not very confident' on supporting prisoners with learning difficulties and disabilities, with no staff involved in the survey responding they were 'very confident' either. These staff identified the main obstacles to providing support as shortages in resources, staff training and awareness. It was noted that staff attempted to adjust where they could — mainly around taking more time with individuals that needed it.¹⁷ The amount of knowledge you have about neurodiversity can affect the way staff respond to and

Understanding of the prisoners' various conditions, found them challenging and their behaviour challenging, whereas the staff with more information, saw this behaviour as part of the prisoners' formation.

10. See footnote 7.

11. See footnote 4.

12. Crocker, A. G., Proki, A., Morin, D., & Reyes, A. (2014). Intellectual disability and co occurring mental health and physical disorders in aggressive behaviour. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 58(11), 1032-1044.

13. McCarthy, J., Chaplin, E., Forrester, A., Underwood, L., Hayward, H., Sabet, J., & Murphy, D. (2019). Prisoners with neurodevelopmental difficulties: Vulnerabilities for mental illness and self harm. *Criminal behaviour and mental health*, 29(5-6), 308-320.

14. Chaplin, E., McCarthy, J., Underwood, L., Forrester, A., Hayward, H., Sabet, J., & Murphy, D. (2017). Characteristics of prisoners with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 61(12), 1185-1195.

15. Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (2021) Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System: A Review of Evidence

16. Kirby, A., & Saunders, L. (2015). A case study of an embedded system in prison to support individuals with learning difficulties and disabilities in the criminal justice system. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities and Offending Behaviour*, 6(2), 112-124.

17. Loucks, N., & Talbot, J. (2007). *No one knows: identifying and supporting prisoners with learning difficulties and learning disabilities: the views of prison staff in Scotland*. London, UK: Prison Reform Trust.

interact with a prisoner. Further, research has found that officers who had a lesser understanding of the prisoners' various conditions, found them challenging and their behaviour challenging, whereas the staff with more information, saw this behaviour as part of the prisoners' formation. Thus, this awareness allowed them to manage their emotional reaction to a prisoner.¹⁸ This is important as it would aid the formation of a strong working relationship between prisoner and officer. Lack of staff training and knowledge has clearly been understood to be an issue over the past decade, yet there is a dearth of literature around successfully adapting the prison setting to be inclusive for the neurodivergent population.

Recommendations

In this section, five recommendations are made identified by reflecting on the main themes of the literature review. It is recognised that due to the breadth of the term neurodiversity, these recommendations are generalised, there is no one-size fits all intervention or adaption. The impact of estate-wide adjustments such as easy-reads, and communication could have little impact without a person-centred care plans and appropriate support with individualised communication needs. Crucially, an effective screening tool is needed in order to understand what specific needs individuals have and to start gathering data to make a more targeted response.

1. Screening

A common screening tool which is implicated across the whole prison-estate should be used. The screening tool should identify both the challenges and strengths of the person, contextualised within the prison environment. There have been pockets of good practice identified within the current prison estate. HMP/YOI Parc uses the 'Do It Profiler' a modular computer system, which screens for neurodiversity. At HMP/YOI Parc they supplement this with a basic educational skills test and an assessment by a learning disabilities nurse. The Do-It Profiler can provide staff

with care and support strategies which are 'written to be able to be implemented in line with the Five-Minute Intervention (FMI) approach'. Producing a strategy for staff is a key deliverable for a screening tool, without which the tool would not improve the outcome of the prisoners' experience. It is therefore particularly important that the Do-It Profiler assimilates to FMI (a strategy which teaches officers to turn conversations into interventions) as it reduces the amount of new training needed. The Do-It Profiler will offer advice for every new profile, therefore developing staff knowledge on successful adaption approaches over time. Another success HMP Parc is the way the Do-It Profiler is incorporated into the induction process. Prisoners will complete the assessment on the Do-It

Profiler in the first 48-hours on the induction unit, with prisoner Peer Support Mentors on hand to support the process if needed. This is important as it mitigates the problems of self-identification in reception, which is a potentially very stressful and emotional environment, thus helping to identify more prisoners with support needs at earlier stages. This reflects recommendations in previous reviews, which emphasise that effective screening tools need to improve the rates at which we identify support needs.¹⁹

2. Care Planning

Person-centred care plans should be created with a joined-up approach between residential, healthcare and education staff. Effective screening should identify the needs of neurodiverse prisoners and reveal areas of day-to-day life which may need adapting to ensure its accessibility. Individual Care Plans could be an effective way to ensure that neurodiverse prisoners needs are understood and being met through any reasonable adjustments. Whilst generalised adaptations are useful, care plans are an example of how prison staff can ensure a person-centred approach. A care plan would ensure individualised support is given to neurodiverse prisoners by advising staff on how best to support them — e.g., making allowances such as showers outside of allotted association time. This exhibits an approach which looks at the 'whole-person' rather than the 'offender' which can help the development of positive

Producing a strategy for staff is a key deliverable for a screening tool, without which the tool would not improve the outcome of the prisoners' experience.

18. Cooke, E., Stephenson, Z., & Rose, J. (2017). How do professionals experience working with offenders diagnosed with personality disorder within a prison environment?. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 28(6), 841-862.
19. Bradley, K (2009). *The Bradley Report: Lord Bradley's Review of People with Mental Health Problems or Learning Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System*.

self-identity. This is compatible with existing literature on desistance which emphasises the importance of the professional relationship as a powerful 'vehicle for change', enabling self-realisation and personal growth.²⁰ Care plans are being used in the prison estate; however, these are generally 'owned' by mental health services, often not shared with residential staff and at times, prisoners themselves were not aware of their care plan. This contradicts a person-centred practice which is based around skilled 'interpersonal processes, which focus on the need to understand an individual's needs, perceptions, and motivations in life. Some exceptional practice is being seen at HMP/YOI Parc, who have implemented 'Supported Living Plans' (SLP) for those with additional needs. SLP's are a means of information and supporting residential staff in appropriately caring for neurodiverse individuals. An SLP can be opened by any member of staff, but healthcare input is always required, and an initial assessment is made by a Learning Disabilities Nurse. Residential staff are the 'owners' of the SLP as the highest level of interaction with prisoners and can therefore best identify the individuals needs for additional support, but they are supported by specialist areas such as health, learning and skills. This exemplifies a joined-up approach to care planning which puts the neurodiverse prisoners' needs at the centre. Where Care Plans have been successful in residential and hospital settings, the approach ensures that the voice of the resident themselves is consistently involved to ensure that care is matched. Care planning in prison should place the neurodiverse prisoner and their voice at the centre, with the residential staff 'owning' the plan with the input of healthcare staff and ideally a Learning Disability Nurse.

3. Easy Reads

Easy Read alternatives to all applications, to be co-produced with neurodiverse people. These should be homogenous across the prison-estate and supported by staff training for individualised needs. One of the key themes throughout the literature review was the inaccessibility of prison structures. This recommendation focusses on creating accessible

SLP's are a means of information and supporting residential staff in appropriately caring for neurodiverse individuals.

information which could be rolled-out throughout the prison estate to ensure continuity across a prisoner's journey through different estates. Accessible information aims to modify the content and the method of delivery so that the meaning is understandable for neurodivergent people. Accessible information promotes active participation and allows neurodiverse prisoners to be self-determining (where possible) within the custodial environment. In order to make the 'paper-based regime' more accessible, the prison estate could implement 'Easy Reads'. These are characterized by plain language, simple layout and format and the use of images to illustrate key messages in the text.²¹ There have already been some successes in using this model within the CJS. The Hampshire Constabulary custody centre developed Widget Symbol custody sheets which explained information about rights and entitlements for people entering custody.²² Staff who used this felt that improved understanding, supporting better relationships whilst preventing escalation of incidents. Service-users felt that this kind of support could have a space within standard procedures and practices as it explained essential information without jargon. One user explained that the symbols meant they 'could understand it straight away and I'd know what was going on'. The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) was commissioned by NOMS to produce a set of Easy Read Leaflets, however, access to these is limited, and some are now outdated. To ensure that Easy Reads were effective and accessible, it would be important that these were co-produced with neurodiverse people. This approach is integral in reflecting the voice and agency of the neurodiverse community, which in the social model of neurodiversity, foregrounds the capabilities of neurodiverse people, therefore addressing the power imbalance.²³

4. Communication

Staff training in how to adapt their communication to match the needs of the neurodiverse prisoner. Verbal communication is another central element of access. It gives an individual autonomy and can open opportunities for learning, mutual support and being

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20. McNeill, F. (2006). A desistance paradigm for offender management. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 6(1), 39-62.
 21. Turnpenny, A., Caiels, J., Whelton, B., Richardson, L., Beadle Brown, J., Crowther, T., ... & Rand, S. (2018). Developing an easy read version of the adult social care outcomes toolkit (ASCOT). *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 31(1), e36-e48.
 22. Parsons, S., & Sherwood, G. (2016). Vulnerability in custody: perceptions and practices of police officers and criminal justice professionals in meeting the communication needs of offenders with learning disabilities and learning difficulties. *Disability & Society*, 31(4), 553-572.
 23. Dowse, L. (2009). 'It's like being in a zoo.' Researching with people with intellectual disability. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 9(3), 141-153.

part of a community.²⁴ Prison staff should have awareness and communication training which will enable them to recognise when an individual has a communication difficulty and teach staff to adapt their communication in order to better support these prisoners. It is important for staff to realise that they're behaviour, actions and the way in which they communicate can impact a prisoners' behaviour. Making small adjustments in our approach, e.g., checking for understanding, could impact the outcome of an individual's behaviour. Staff training should highlight how communicational breakdowns in a prison setting can have very real consequences on the lives and sentences of a prisoner. One study demonstrated that prison staff often assume prisoners understanding of jargon and the details of what is required of them, which can leave neurodiverse individuals feeling anxious, frustrated and embarrassed.²⁵ This could also contribute to reoffending, one participant in their study returned to prison after failing to comply to the conditions of his license, which he did not understand. Communication guides could be a useful tool to give to staff; these would highlight simple changes neurotypical staff could make to meet the needs of a neurodiverse prisoner. The prison service could adapt guides that are already in existence, such as the examples beneath which are adapted from Mencap and United Response communication guides.

Interventions

Rehabilitative support in terms of adapted interventions or initiatives to provide holistic, long-term support for neurodiverse prisoners is currently very limited. Studies have shown that there is a correlation between neurodiversity and poor outcomes in rehabilitative interventions.²⁶ This is problematic, particularly for prisoners who must meet specific requirements in their sentence plans in order to progress. It is argued that engagement is a key variable in treatment outcome and prisoners with low intellectual ability have a limited capacity to engage due to 'deficits in cognitive ability.' Under the principle of 'risk, need, responsivity', these interventions are not being delivered in a way in which the neurodiverse prisoner can benefit, therefore it is ineffective through not meeting responsivity. It is recommended that there should be adapted programmes which promote

inclusion of the neurodiverse population in prisons. There have already been some successes in adapting accredited programmes. For example, the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities adapted the Thinking Skills Programme. Working with voluntary agencies might be one approach that could be successful for future programme adaptations, as it ensures great understanding about the experiences of neurodivergent people and thus adjusts the services in accordance with their needs. There is a need to expand the suite of interventions for neurodiverse prisoners and in doing so it is useful to look at successful frameworks such as the Good Lives Model (GLM).

Conclusion

There is a growing body of literature which demonstrates the potential impact neurodiversity has on prison experience. Reviewing this literature has demonstrated where prison structures fail to consider the needs of the neurodiverse prison population, revealing that they are at a structural disadvantage despite the legal obligation of protection. There are barriers present which affect the daily living of neurodiverse prisoners as well as the ability to engage in sentence plans and purposeful activity. The most concerning outcomes of these barriers are the negative effects on mental health, increased vulnerability and longer sentences. It is an institutional failing of the prison service to not meet their legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments for this overrepresented population of prisoners. Without proper screening, the onus falls on the neurodiverse person to ensure that prison staff understand their needs and then to navigate a prison structure which is not adjusted to meet them. Government reports and bodies have made recommendations which have remained consistent over the past decade demonstrating that there has been little progress made. Although there are some examples of excellence, these are singular and not system-wide which also impacts the consistency of experience across the prison estate. This review began with reference to the remand prison, where it is most important to identify neurodiversity and follow-up diagnosis with personcentred care plans. It is recognised that general recommendations such as improvements to communication and staff training will only be effective when followed-up with person-centred planning.

24. Nind, M., & Seale, J. (2009). Concepts of access for people with learning difficulties: towards a shared understanding. *Disability & Society*, 24(3), 273-287.

25. Houston, S., & Butler, M. (2019). 'More than Just a Number': Meeting the Needs of Those with Mental Illness, Learning Difficulties and Speech and Language Difficulties in the Criminal Justice System. *Irish Probation Journal*, 16.

26. Newberry, M., & Shuker, R. (2011). The relationship between intellectual ability and the treatment needs of offenders in a therapeutic community prison. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 22(3), 455-471.

Women With Learning Disabilities In Prison: What Else Needs To Be Done?

A review of how the Prison Service supports female prisoners with learning disabilities.

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It is well understood that women in custody have a range of complex needs. Women in the justice system are a minority and both the Prisons Strategy White Paper and the Female Offender Strategy places a needed focus on gender specific interventions and research.^{1,2} Women in prison are more likely to have a learning disability than men,³ however, women with learning disabilities in prison have received very little attention and as a group are under researched.⁴

This article outlines the findings from a consultative review undertaken by the author whilst working as a Band 3 prison officer at a women’s closed prison. The review sought to provide a multi-perspective analysis of the current support and gaps in provision for women prisoners with learning disabilities in England and Wales and in conclusion, makes recommendations intended to improve the support provided to this vulnerable and marginalised group.

The Learning Disability Landscape

Learning Disabilities within The Community

This article uses the terms both ‘learning disabilities’ and ‘learning difficulties’ interchangeably in

line with the scope of disability as set out within the Equality Act 2010 s6, to describe women in prison who have a learning disability or learning difficulty and who find activities that involve thinking and understanding difficult, and who need additional help and support in everyday living.⁵

Within the community around 1.2 million people in England have a learning disability, which is slightly more than 2 per cent of the general population (children and adults).⁶ Since the creation of the Equality Act 2010, there has been a statutory legal duty on service providers and public authorities to consider the way services are provided and carried out and to consider whether people with disabilities may be at a disadvantage. Where it is a disadvantage, reasonable adjustment should be undertaken to remove it.

Within the community, children and young people up to the age of 25 with learning disabilities can apply for the instatement of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. The plan is a legal document which describes a child or young person’s special educational needs (SEN), the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.^{7,8}

An EHC Plan is generally split into sections, with the following being the most important:

Table of contents	
Child/ young person’s Information	Section A
Needs of the child/young person in relation to: Communication Cognition and learning Sensory needs Social, emotional and mental health Life Skills	Section B
Provision required to meet needs outlined in section B	Section F

1. Ministry of Justice. (2021). *Prisons Strategy White Paper*. London: Ministry of Justice.
2. Ministry of Justice. (2018). *Female Offender Strategy*. London: Ministry of Justice.
3. Talbot, J. (2007). *No One Knows: Identifying and Supporting Prisoners with Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities: The Views of Prison Staff (England and Wales)*. London: Prison Reform Trust.
4. Hammond, T., Talbot, J., Earle, J., Murray, A. (2019) *Out of the Shadows. Women with Learning Disabilities in contact with or on the edges of the criminal justice system*. London: Prison Reform Trust.
5. Equality Act 2010. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>.
6. NHS England. (2016). *Strategic direction for health services in the justice system: 2016-2020*. Leeds: NHS England
7. Children and Families Act 2014. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>
8. Cochrane, H., & Soni, A. (2020). Education, health and care plans: What do we know so far? *Support for Learning*, 35(3), 372-388.

EHC support plans are only available to children and young people in the community setting until the age of 25 years, after which time they are to be supported through the social care systems within their local authority.⁹

Learning Disabilities in The Prison Setting

Data held on NOMIS (National Offender Management Information System) shows that 29 per cent of the offender population has a learning disability.¹⁰ Unlike in the community, there are no legally binding support documents available to support people with learning disabilities in the adult prison estate. At present, the SEN Code of practice sets out the duties of an EHC plan must be maintained and reviewed whilst a child is in youth custody. However, these duties no longer apply once the young person is transferred to the adult secure estate.

Why Focus on Women with Learning Disabilities?

The review of evidence 'Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System' carried out by the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection in 2021, outlines how the prison system can better support people with learning disabilities. However, contributors to the paper have criticised the report for a failure to consider female specific support in the recommendations.¹¹ Evidence shows that neurodivergent conditions present differently in women and thus they have different needs to men with neurodivergent conditions.¹²

The complexities of female needs were explored in a report by the Prison Reform Trust (2019) which demonstrates that a significant number of female offender's experience chaotic lifestyles with some of the main drivers behind women's offending being trauma, loss, poverty, mental health conditions, social exclusion and drug and alcohol misuse.¹³ Approximately half of female prisoner's report having been victims of physical, sexual or domestic abuse and statistics show that

women in prison are more likely than men to have a traumatic brain injury.¹⁴ All these factors contribute to a wide range of cognitive, communicative, behavioural and emotional difficulties that affect a woman's everyday engagement in prison, especially if they have a learning disability.¹⁵

The Female Offender Strategy 2018 and the Prison Policy White Paper 2021 outline commitment to the gender specific approach first described by Baroness Corston, stating that newly implemented provision would address vulnerability and the role of gender, acknowledging the need for a tailored, gender-specific approach to meeting the complex needs of women who offend through a multi-agency 'whole system approach'.¹⁶ However, neither paper makes any specific recommendations for women with learning disabilities. Again, in the 2022 paper 'Improving Outcomes for Women in the Criminal Justice System', the Ministry recognises a need for a different approach to achieve better outcomes for women, noting that women offenders have specific vulnerabilities which often drive their offence.¹⁷ However, there was no discussion of women with learning disabilities within the report.

At present, it appears that there is limited literature and policy support around the issues of learning disability support for women within custody. Little is known from the existing literature about what support is currently on offer.

It appears that there is limited literature and policy support around the issues of learning disability support for women within custody.

Consultative Approach

To ensure that the review reflected the views of staff from different aspects of prison life, three key departments within the prison were consulted with:

- Education Department
- Offender Management Unit (OMU)
- Resettlement Department

In addition, to provide strategic consideration of the issues identified at prison level, consultation was

9. Children and Families Act 2014. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>
10. Criminal Justice Joint Inspection. (2021). *Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice system: A review of Evidence*. London: Criminal Justice Joint Inspection
11. See footnote 10
12. See footnote 10
13. Prison Reform Trust. (2019). *Why focus on reducing women's imprisonment?* London: Prison Reform Trust
14. The Disabilities Trust. (2019). *Making the link: Female offending and brain injury*. London: The Disabilities Trust
15. Lindsay, W., Smith, A., Quinn, K., Anderson, A., Smith, A., Allan, R. and Law, J. (2004). Women with intellectual disability who have offended: characteristics and outcome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 48(6), pp.580–590.
16. Ministry of Justice. (2018). *Female Offender Strategy*. London: Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Justice. (2021). *Prisons Strategy White Paper*. London: Ministry of Justice.
17. Ministry of Justice. (2022). *Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system*. London. Ministry of Justice

also undertaken with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) policy teams with responsibility for female offenders and neurodiversity.

All consultations were conducted solely by the lead researcher and took place between March and June 2022 and took the form of a discussion focusing on exploring the support received by females with learning disabilities in prison prior to release.

Results And Findings

There were three main findings which were drawn out from the consultations:

1. The education provision in prison is not currently meeting the needs of women with learning disabilities.
2. Women with learning disabilities are not supported to develop crucial life skills in the prisons setting, which they often lack in the community. A lack of suitable provisions for female offenders with learning disabilities has meant they are often poorly prepared to live a law-abiding life on release.
3. Staff working in prison do not have sufficient training to support women with learning disabilities.

Education And Curriculum

Education teaching staff identified that on entering the prison, every resident undertakes an initial screening in education. The testing will show tendencies towards dyslexia, autism, Asperger's and other conditions. On meeting and observing the resident, education staff will often pick up on any additional learning needs which might indicate they have a learning disability. Some women will self-disclose that they have a learning disability, whilst others are reluctant to share details about their disability diagnosis, for fear of being bullied or judged by other residents within the class.

Once teaching staff have identified a resident with learning disabilities, a basic learning disabilities plan will be written, which includes a 'contact statement', outlining a summary of the individuals main needs and a strategy regarding the best ways to support the individual with their learning whilst in the education facility.

Education staff reported that there was no specific provision or SEN programmes in place to support women with learning disabilities in education. A policy team within the Ministry of Justice also highlighted that whilst there are learning disability accredited programmes within prisons, these programmes are targeted at males with additional learning needs. Lack of research around female offenders with learning disabilities has meant that their educational needs have not been clearly identified and thus suitable provision has not been implemented into the educational curriculum.

The education staff highlighted that the curriculum within the prison was not learning disability friendly. In order to combat this barrier, the teaching staff often adapt the delivery of their mainstream classes where possible, to try to help women with learning disabilities to take part in the mainstream provision offer. These strategies are built up over time after getting to know each resident and their learning needs.

Outlined below are examples of the types of strategies which teaching staff may use to support women with learning disabilities in mainstream classes.

Environmental adjustments:

- Providing the learner with the same teaching staff every time they come to education.
- Consistency of the layout of the teaching room.

Communication adjustments:

- Explaining instructions slowly and using concrete language.
- Providing easy read versions of documents.
- Dyslexia-friendly materials or aids (different fonts, coloured paper and overlays).
- Magnifiers and reading rulers
- Offering verbal explanations as alternative to written text.

Sensory adjustments:

- Using quieter, less busy spaces for teaching where possible (Though there were not SEN specific teaching spaces).

Ministry of Justice also highlighted that whilst there are learning disability accredited programmes within prisons, these programmes are targeted at males with additional learning needs.

Social, emotional and mental health adjustments:

- ❑ Fidget items
- ❑ Distraction packs

Standardised English and maths examinations are used as an assessment tool to measure academic progress within the prison setting. These results are used to mark the performance of the education department. However, teaching staff highlighted that many women with learning disabilities are unable to engage in courses such as Maths and English, which are courses tailored for the general mainstream population in prison. Those with learning disabilities who do undertake Maths and English courses, often receive poor results and consequently are statistically shown to make poor academic progress in prison. Consequently, it can be very difficult to measure the progress and development of women with learning disabilities.

Life Skills

A significant area of concern highlighted by the Education Department, OMU and Resettlement Department, was that many female prisoners with learning disabilities lacked crucial life skills. Life skills may include:

- ❑ Ability to budget and balance finances
- ❑ Personal hygiene
- ❑ Social skills (communicating and holding eye contact)
- ❑ Cooking, cleaning and doing laundry
- ❑ Using public transport
- ❑ Managing own time
- ❑ Having and maintaining a job
- ❑ Building family and community links

Whilst there were education classes available in cookery, DIY and art therapy which could provide tools to improve some basic life skills, these courses tended to be short and did not go beyond level 1 qualifications.

OMU staff explained that prison regimes massively restrict the opportunity to practice day to day life skills. This is because many responsibilities such as washing clothes, cooking meals, travelling and independently managing time, are removed from women in the prison setting. As such, women with learning disabilities often regress in confidence and independence once they enter the prison system.

OMU staff also highlighted that many residents with learning disabilities display behavioural needs and thus are unlikely to become enhanced or be given

additional privileges within the prison. This means that women with learning disabilities are often unable to progress off the general population landings and are unable to apply to certain jobs which would help them develop more life skills, such as servery or laundry.

The resettlement team are involved in the progression of residents onto the open conditions unit. This unit is available to women who either meet the requirements for open conditions and are enhanced prisoners showing exemplary behaviour or are on closed conditions but have obtained their enhancement and are within two years of release. On the open conditions unit, residents have greater independence and are given the responsibility to manage their own time, cook their meals and most importantly are expected to leave the prison on release on temporary license (ROTL).

Often, women with learning disabilities will not meet the requirements to move to the open conditions unit or to undertake ROTLs and consequently, they are not given the opportunity to build any of these crucial life skills before release.

During discussions around life skills, education staff made parallels to the support provided to children and young people within the community using EHC Plans, which provides a specific section outlining life skill needs for the individual, their life skill

goals and the provision which has been put in place to help them to meet their goals. They stressed that they felt there needs to be an alternative curriculum for residents with learning disabilities, which focuses on key life skills, using a tailored goal setting plan for each individual, outlining the provision they require to meet the goals. This plan would closely mirror the format of the EHC Plans, which are a successful support mechanism in the community. The use of goal setting would provide a better way to measure both individual progress of a resident with learning disabilities but also the overall success of educational programmes for residents learning disabilities within the prison.

Staff Knowledge And Understanding

Despite working with large populations of women with disabilities, there were currently no SEN trained individuals working within the prison. Education teaching staff reported that whilst they had received basic learning disability training during their initial

Those with learning disabilities who do undertake Maths and English courses, often receive poor results and consequently are statistically shown to make poor academic progress in prison.

teaching training, they had not attended any courses or obtained any specific SEN qualifications. Similarly, officers (Band 3 and above) received only a basic overview of learning disabilities at the initial Prison Officer Entry Level Training and there were no further accreditations or courses on offer. Officers working as key worker through OMIC scheme, for women with learning disabilities were also not given any further additional training. Consequently, staff in all positions generally felt under confident with how best to support their female residents with learning disabilities.

Education staff felt it would be invaluable to have a full-time qualified SEN teacher working within the education department to run specialist classes. Other practitioners such as speech and language therapists (SLTs) should be on hand to provide specific and tailored learning interventions. Additionally, education staff felt that further practitioner training should be made available to education staff around neurodivergent conditions such as autism.

The MOJ policy team focusing on neurodiversity acknowledged that staff currently lack the knowledge and understanding to support women with learning disabilities. They reported that there is currently a roll out of a new position within every prison across the male and female estate called the 'Neurodiversity Support Manager' (NSM). This role should be filled by a professional within the learning disabilities field, have a PGCE certification and have qualifications in supporting the learning of those with SEND.

The professional in the role of the NSM will raise awareness of neurodiversity within the prison setting and help strengthen approaches for identifying and supporting individuals with neurodivergent needs. It is hoped that the professional in this role will link up across departments to improve learning disability support across all areas of prison life, including life on the landing, offender management, resettlement and education provision. The government has also committed to applying good practice from prisons that have been awarded Autism Accreditation from the National Autistic Society to inform how the prison environment is adapted to better respond to the needs of people with autism. Staff in education, offender management, resettlement and prison officers should work closely with the neurodiversity lead in the prison.

Whilst consulting with a team the MOJ team focusing on female offending policy they explained that women centres in the community are currently being piloted, which will provide women-specific services from professionals who can support to vulnerable women with complex needs. The team felt that learning from the multi-agency support provision put into the women centres, may be invaluable to understanding what further training is required for staff working with women within the prison setting.

Discussion And Recommendations

It is important to highlight that the prison environment is a difficult landscape for all women in custody, due to the range of complex needs many of these women have. These needs contribute to a wide range of cognitive, communicative, behavioural and emotional difficulties which affect a woman's everyday engagement in prison. However, having a learning disability adds a further barrier and level of disadvantage to an already vulnerable and marginalised group.

This author also notes that although this review found a lack of suitable support provision for women with learning disabilities, there were many brilliant examples of where staff had independently decided to adapt their approach when supporting residents with learning disabilities. This was seen especially in the education department, where staff had adapted their teaching approaches where possible to allow those with learning disabilities to access some of the mainstream provision. However, it is not sufficient to rely on staff working in the prison setting to adapt mainstream provision. Instead, the focus needs to be on creating learning disability specific support for women with learning disabilities.

Although there are clear commonalities of theme within the findings of this report, it must be recognised that the small number of consultations, primarily specific to women prisons do limit the generalisability of the findings. However, much of the findings are reinforced by the recommendations from the Female Offender Strategy and White Paper 2021, to create gender specific provision for vulnerable women. On this basis, the following key recommendations are made:

Recommendation 1: Learning disability training to be provided for staff working within female prisons.

The MOJ policy team focusing on Neurodiversity acknowledged that staff currently lack the knowledge and understanding to support women with learning disabilities.

All prison staff should undertake a specific training course on learning disabilities to learn how to better support women with learning disabilities in their care. Teaching staff working in the education department should receive a specific teacher training qualification in learning disability teaching support.

Recommendation 2: Creation of a learning and life skills support plan.

Following a similar format to an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, a specific prison learning and life skills support plan should be created, to support women with learning disabilities to meet their needs in the areas of:

- Communication
- Cognition and learning
- Sensory needs
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Life Skills

Each intervention plan should be tailored specifically to the resident, outlining their needs, their personal development goals and the provision required to meet each goal. The use of goal setting will provide a benchmark for measuring individual learning progress. Plan content and goals should be reviewed tri-annually to ensure suitability. The implementation of the learning and life skills support plan for each resident should be written in conjunction with the neurodiversity lead in each female establishment.¹⁸

Recommendation 3: An alternative life skills curriculum course to be created for women with learning disabilities.

An alternative curriculum to be created for women with learning disabilities who cannot access the

mainstream provision offer. This curriculum should focus solely on life skills which women with learning disabilities in the prison system often lack, such as:

- Learning to budget and balance finances
- Personal hygiene
- Building social skills (communicating and holding eye contact)
- Cooking, cleaning and doing laundry
- Managing own time
- Having and maintaining a job
- Building family and community links

This course can be carried out by education teaching staff or by a qualified SEN teacher and will allow women with learning disabilities the chance to grow in confidence, independence and provide crucial skills they require once they go out into the community. The curriculum should be followed in conjunction with goals set out in each prisoners Learning and life skills support plan, as referred to in recommendation 2.

Recommendation 4: Further research to be conducted into the needs of women with learning disabilities in the prison setting.

As the landscape currently stands, there is limited research and understanding around the needs and disadvantages of women with learning disabilities within the prison estate. Recent policy recommendations outline commitment to a gendered approach to meet the complex needs of vulnerable women within the prison system. Consequently, it is essential that further research is conducted into the needs of women with learning disabilities.

18. Please contact author to see a mock version of an example plan

Trauma Informed Practice in a Women's prison

Iona Warren works for StandOut charity, supporting men leaving prison and settling back into the community and is an ambassador of the Unlocked Graduates Programme. Prior to this, she studied Psychology at the University of Bristol.

Introduction

Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) in prison environments has been a popular discussion in recent years.¹ With TIP having swiftly become a more common policy response in criminal justice, it seems peculiar that there is such a gap in research when it comes to assessing the implementation of this practice in the women's prison estate in particular. Women's prisons are notoriously complex environments, and hence offer the ideal setting for the inclusion of such practices derived from psychological and therapeutic studies.

This paper draws upon findings from an empirical study set in a closed women's prison, examining the women's experiences of trauma-informed staff practice. This article presents the ways in which prison officers and staff can behave in a more trauma-informed way in their day-to-day practice, according to the mixed-methods data from these female prisoners. More specifically, after assessing prison officers against the five principles of TIP,² this article reports staff were successfully implementing safety and collaboration into their daily practice. However, reported inconsistency and unreliability of staff decreased the prisoner's trust of staff, which then also affected their sense of safety.

When an individual has experienced trauma, their reaction to the world around them and their thought patterns are altered.³ The prison environment has been shown to exacerbate the effects of this trauma, creating

symptoms of stress, anxiety, and panic,⁴ and Crewe et al. demonstrated how the pains of imprisonment are gendered.⁵ Furthermore, it is well established that prisoners in the women's prison estate have experienced elevated levels of abuse. For example, 57 per cent of women in prison report having been a victim of domestic violence,⁶ and 53 per cent of women in prison report having experienced abuse in childhood.⁷ TIP is a way of working with traumatised individuals (such as those who have experienced abuse) which recognises the impact of trauma, and modifies practice to avoid re-traumatising individuals.⁸ It has been recognised as a vital practice to develop within the prison environment, yet apart from a 'Becoming Trauma Informed' programme for prison officers running in the women's estate from 2015, new prison officer (POELT)⁹ training in England and Wales does not yet include sufficient trauma-informed content. Consequently, prison officers are mostly unaware as to why they should utilise TIP, and how they can behave in a trauma-informed way.

Research that focuses on TIP and staff practice has advised that prison staff should assume every individual in their care is a survivor of trauma, and should utilise TIP in a uniform way to avoid re-traumatising individuals.¹⁰ To achieve this vision, Fallot and Harris together with Covington developed the five principles of TIP to act as a practical way to direct professionals in how to act in a trauma-informed way.¹¹ These five principles are:

1. Bradley, A. (2021). Viewing Her Majesty's Prison Service through a trauma-informed lens. *Prison Service Journal*, 255, 4-11.
2. Covington, S. (2016). *Becoming Trauma Informed: A Training Programme for Criminal Justice Professionals*. La Jolla, CA: Women's Estate Center for Gender and Justice.
3. Becker-Blease, K. A. (2017). As the world becomes trauma-informed, work to do. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 18(2), 131-138.
4. Covington S. S. (2019). Healing trauma. Available at: <https://www.stephaniecovington.com/healingtrauma.php>
5. Crewe, B., Hulley, S., & Wright, S. (2017). The gendered pains of life imprisonment. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 57(6), 1359-1378.
6. Prison Reform Trust (2017), "Bromley briefings prison fact file", available at: www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/News/ItemId/498/vw/1
7. Williams, A. M., Helm, H. M., & Clemens, E. V. (2012). The Effect of Childhood Trauma, Personal Wellness, Supervisory Working Alliance, and Organizational Factors on Vicarious Traumatization. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 34(2), 133-153.
8. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (SAMHSA) (2014). SAMHSA's *Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*. Available at: https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf.
9. Prison Officer Entry Level Training
10. Harris, M. E., & Fallot, R. D. (2001). *Using trauma theory to design service systems*. Jossey-Bass/Wiley.
11. Fallot, R. D., & Harris, M. (2006). *Trauma-informed services: A self-assessment and planning protocol*. Washington, DC: Community Connections.

1. Safety: Ensuring physical and emotional safety
2. Trustworthiness: Modelling trust; maintaining appropriate boundaries; consistency in practice
3. Choice: Maximising the individual's choice and control over their life
4. Collaboration: Sharing power, allowing input into their rehabilitation
5. Empowerment: Skill building, providing opportunities so individuals can progress

These five principles have been used as an assessment tool in recent research, and the present study uses them as the foundational cornerstones from which to explore how effectively staff were using TIP in their daily practice.

Despite TIP becoming more common in English and Welsh prisons, there is remarkably little research observing how the implementation of this practice has positively or negatively affected prisoners. Further, no research has yet exclusively assessed staff practice from the perspective of the prisoners themselves. The current study contributes to this knowledge gap and centres on women's perceptions by identifying the areas of staff practice and prison life in which changes can be made to help women feel safer and more valued.

Situating the Study

TIP is sometimes misunderstood as simply 'good practice', which although is technically true, one could argue it misses the nuance and complexity of this psychologically informed set of behaviours and thought processes. Even though TIP is carried out in therapeutic settings by highly skilled experts, TIP can also be carried out in prison by simply making small changes such as explaining decisions so that prisoners feel more in control, creating a safe spaces for prisoners, and by understanding how to minimise power dynamics between staff and prisoners.¹²

Previous studies on TIP have often focussed on topics such as the prevalence of trauma in prison, or the prison environment and trauma, though very few have focussed directly on the effects of staff practice on those who have experienced trauma. The most relevant and similar study to the current research, explored the prevalence of TIP in two women's prisons through both staff practice and the prison environment.¹³ After asking the women to rate how much they agreed with multiple statements, they found their results largely disappointing. Nevertheless, they significantly contributed to the growing expertise and deepening commitment to trauma-informed practice in prison by concluding these practices are worth investing in, particularly in the female estate. The current study

provides a similar contribution to the field, emboldened by front-line expertise, whilst further providing clarity on the specific areas needed for improvement and how to put these into practice.

One study has shown decreased staff assaults and prisoner suicide attempts after implementing TIP into a US prison.¹⁴ Additionally, recent research by Kelman and colleagues confirmed how impactful staff practice can be for prisoners, finding that aspects of staff behaviour were triggering and re-traumatising for prisoners.¹⁵ These two studies indicate how significantly staff

practice may positively or negatively impact prisoners. They re-affirm the need for deeper insight into how prisoners are affected by staff behaviour, and more specifically how staff can avoid re-traumatising prisoners, and start helping them feel safe in this environment. Further, with a recent study finding that the core features of staff-prisoner relationships in a women's prison were blurred boundaries, inconsistency, and favouritism,¹⁶ the importance of deeply examining staff practice is clear, which is why the current article draws upon recent data to suggest ways in which this practice can be improved.

One cannot
understand
women's experience
of prison without
understanding the
magnitude of
complexities created
by past abuse.

12. See footnote 11.

13. Auty, K. M., Liebling, A., Schliehe, A., & Crewe, B. (2022). What is trauma-informed practice? Towards operationalisation of the concept in two prisons for women. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*.

14. Bissonnette, L. (2013, April 17). Personal Communication with Lynn Bissonnette. www.cjinvolvedwomen.org/innovator-massachusetts-correctional-institution-at-framingham/

15. Kelman, J., Gribble, R., Harvey, J., Palmer, L., & MacManus, D. (2022). How does a history of trauma affect the experience of imprisonment for individuals in women's prisons: A qualitative exploration. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 1-21.

16. Crewe, B., Schliehe, A., & Przybylska, D. A. (2022). 'It causes a lot of problems': Relational ambiguities and dynamics between prisoners and staff in a women's prison. *European Journal of Criminology*, 14773708221140870.

Crewe et al. introduced the now-well known concept the 'gendered pains of imprisonment' arguing that women have a more painful experience of prison than their male counterparts.¹⁷ The paper strongly emphasised that one cannot understand women's experience of prison without understanding the magnitude of complexities created by past abuse. This 'gendered justice' has been argued to be a pivotal concept within criminal justice, of which policy makers have not taken enough notice. Women's crimes and subsequent experience of prison are embedded in the conditions of their former lives. Their complex pasts form the foundation of their complex behaviour, and this behaviour is clearly significantly impacted by the way staff interact with them.

Waite discovered that women transferring to open prison experienced higher trust from staff, yet their experiences of closed prison were shaped by distrust.¹⁸ They distrusted staff and staff distrusted prisoners, meaning trust of prisoners had to be earned rather than lost. This study showed that some women leave closed prisons with little trust in staff. This lack of trust disables women to build positive relationships with staff, and therefore hinders their access to staff's aid. With trust being one of the five 'core principles' examined in the current study, Waite's research provides a foundation from which to build.

In this field, very few researchers have developed tools for measuring TIP, yet Fallot and Harris created a Trauma-Informed Program Self-Assessment Scale tool for providers to assess their own trauma informed programmes.¹⁹ They present example questions based on the five principles of TIP, to assess how effectively they have employed this practice, and how they can improve in this domain. The researcher chose to incorporate insight from this tool but to create their own unique questions. This was due to having had

frontline experience in this prison, and therefore is able to pinpoint the exact areas of prison life that would bring the most clarity to their research questions.

With such a plethora of research supporting staff implementation of TIP, and momentum growing in this area within the female estate, it is clear that if custodial environments are to positively alter staff-prisoner relationships and improve prisoner outcomes, they need to holistically implement this method in the day-to-day practice of frontline staff.²⁰ Nevertheless, as shown, there is currently very little research on the effect and impact of TIP in prisons, particularly in the female estate,²¹ and even fewer consult the prisoners themselves to hear their experiences.²² Consequently, the current research uses the five core principles of TIP

outlined by Harris and Fallot, and Covington, to assess from the prisoners' perspective, how effectively staff in a women's prison implemented TIP into their daily practice.²³ This study highlights the aspects of TIP that the women in this prison felt were implemented effectively, and also things which could be changed in policy and in the daily practice of staff to make them feel more safe and heard.

Women transferring to open prison experienced higher trust from staff, yet their experiences of closed prison were shaped by distrust.

Method

This paper draws upon a mixed methods study analysing the experiences of 18 women who had all served more than 18 months imprisoned at the research site. The research was conducted in one closed women's prison serving England and Wales. Ethical approval was granted by Leeds Trinity University ethics committee and HMPPS National Research Committee. This sample, selected through purposive sampling, was used to draw a broad range of responses from a wide range of women.

A 17-question questionnaire developed by the researcher drew together quantitative data from Likert Scale-style questions, and qualitative data from open

17. See footnote 5.

18. Waite, S. (2022). Imprisoned Women's Experiences of Trust in Staff-Prisoner Relationships in an English Open Prison. In *The Routledge Handbook of Women's Experiences of Criminal Justice* (pp. 511-522). Routledge.

19. See footnote 11.

20. Jewkes, Y., Jordan, M., Wright, S., & Bendelow, G. (2019). Designing 'healthy' prisons for women: Incorporating trauma-informed care and practice (TICP) into prison planning and design. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(20), 3818; Petrillo, M. (2021). 'We've all got a big story': Experiences of a Trauma Informed Intervention in Prison. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 60(2), 232-250; Vaswani, N., & Paul, S. (2019). 'It's Knowing the Right Things to Say and Do': Challenges and Opportunities for Trauma informed Practice in the Prison Context. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 58(4), 513-534.

21. Ministry of Justice (2016). *Prison Safety and Reform*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565014/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-_web_.pdf

22. See footnote 12.

23. See footnotes 4 and 10.

questions. This questionnaire asked the women about their personal experience of the five principles of trauma-informed practice, and therefore how they experienced TIP in this establishment. The primary research question for this study was: 'To what extent do the women in this women's prison feel they positively or negatively experience: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment in staff practice?'

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, while the qualitative data were analysed using an inductive approach of thematic analysis to draw out overarching themes. This method was chosen to allow participants to freely express their thoughts on the topic, whilst also allowing the researcher to identify patterns in the data and collate themes. These themes were then critically analysed and compared with the current body of research. The researcher hypothesised that participants would report they experienced a lack of trust and choice within the prison, stemming from poor communication between prisoners and staff. This may mean they did not feel empowered to make their own decisions or encouraged to create their own sense of identity and progress within the prison.

Findings: The five principles of TIP

Safety

The overarching report arising from the thematic analysis on 'safety', was that women in this prison generally felt safe, yet staff inconsistencies decreased their experience of safety. Over recent years, with the increase in prison population and short-staffing issues, reports of prisoner's safety have decreased.²⁴ Therefore it is also no coincidence that the data shows staff inconsistency when there are nationwide issues with under-staffing, and cross-detailing in prisons. Though these issues are not quickly solved, this report of poor consistency suggests the need for a trauma-informed approach from officers. Prisoners clearly require a consistent and stable environment to increase the already established feeling of safety.

Over recent years, with the increase in prison population and short-staffing issues, reports of prisoner's safety have decreased.

Despite this positive headline of prisoners feeling safe, the prison certainly has room for improvement. Qualitative data showed that a lack of procedural justice contributed to the distrust between prisoners and staff. As an example of this, one participant reported that when she queried why a decision had been made to an officer, they replied, '*don't need to tell you why, because that's my decision*'. When staff explain their decisions to prisoners, this will often correlate with the feeling of safety,²⁵ and decreased feelings of fear.²⁶ This suggests that if staff improve their transparency in decision-making, prisoners will experience fairness and consistency which may help to diminish the 'pains of imprisonment' and improve their already established sense of safety.²⁷

Trustworthiness

The women reported staff were generally not trustworthy in the study, with only half of participants agreeing they trusted staff to follow through with 'promises', and only 55.6 per cent agreeing that staff communication was clear and consistent. Participants desired consistency in order to trust staff. They called for consistency in actions, and consistency in staff detailing to reduce cross-deployment. Prison management may do well to heed their advice and focus on improving the detailing of staff, and staff on the prison landings, to increase their

reliability and to be more pragmatic in what they 'promise' prisoners.

Some participants spoke of favouritism, with one stating that officers '*treat people differently and are untrustworthy and inconsistent*.' Yet others felt that all prisoners were 'painted with the same brush' by staff — '*don't judge us by the worst prisoner*', meaning women felt judged and largely distrusted. Comments like this call for trusted identity, something which prisoners are rarely enabled to feel. This disempowerment is regularly reported in the prison system and hinders prisoners from feeling like an individual with agency or ability to make their own decisions. A lack of such an identity deters positive behaviour and progression towards behaviour change. Many of the improvements that participants called for

24. See footnote 21.

25. van der Laan, A., & Eichelsheim, V. (2013). Juvenile adaptation to imprisonment: Feelings of safety, autonomy and well-being, and behaviour in prison. *European Journal of Criminology*, 10(4), 424-443.

26. Biggam, F. H., & Power, K. G. (1997). Social support and psychological distress in a group of incarcerated young offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 41(3), 213-230.

27. See footnote 5.

in this study, such as consistency, integrity and reliability, embody TIP and thus indicate the critical need for staff to engage with this practice on a daily basis.

Trust of prison staff has improved over recent decades, with fewer prisoners seeing officers as 'the enemy'.²⁸ However, the researcher had expected more frequent reports of trust from participants since the prison in question is relatively small (approx. capacity 350), so the 'us-them' mentality between prisoners and staff might be lesser than in larger prisons, which should in theory create stronger cohesiveness.²⁹ Building relationships with staff generates trust; therefore smaller prisons generally display higher trust levels because there are fewer staff to get to know and greater familiarity between people.³⁰

One reason why the data may have been more negative than expected is that this study was conducted after nearly 18 months of Covid 19-impacted regime. During this time, communication with prisoners diminished due to the overly structured regime, which may have resulted in less meaningful relationships with staff, and reduced levels of trust. Though the prisoners reported lower trust in staff than one might have expected for the prison size, they reported high trust in their landing staff particularly more than cross-deployed staff, which supports this body of research on consistency helping to build trust.³¹

Choice

Participants expressed a lack of control over the choices available to them. One reported '*we are told what to do and when*', and only 38.9 per cent of participants agreed that they had some control and choice in their life. In a recent study in two women's prisons,³² researchers were disappointed by the

participants' negativity in their reported confidence and control, supporting the current results. This shows the lack of choice and control prisoners can experience when confined to such a prescriptive daily regime. Further, it is supportive of the fact that the prison regime may favour those who are passive, submissive and accept their agency being removed.³³ In the current study, one participant reported '*life in HMP XXX is what you make of it*'; indicating those who sit back often avoid confrontation and disputes, yet they miss out on opportunities available to them. Those who speak out or seek betterment are sometimes labelled 'needy' or 'tiresome' by staff, yet they may better access support and opportunities.

Research shows that prisoners learn to rely on others to make decisions on their behalf due to their autonomy being withdrawn from them.³⁴ Therefore, when our participants reported needing 'high self-motivation' to progress, this could be affected by the learned passivity that research describes. Nevertheless, staff could improve their communication with prisoners in order to make their options clearer and more accessible.

Participants in the current study reported they desired more of a 'voice' in their prison, and to be heard when they gave ideas to staff and management. Only 33.3 per cent of participants agreed their preferences were taken seriously when voiced to

staff. This mirrors the recent study by Auty and colleagues, where researchers were concerned to find only 16 per cent of participants reported they felt seen and heard in their prison.³⁵ These shocking and saddening results show how urgently a change in staff practice is needed. Women in prison are feeling the 'pains of imprisonment' more keenly because of the practices of staff in charge of them. Prisoners can feel

Building relationships with staff generates trust; therefore smaller prisons generally display higher trust levels because there are fewer staff to get to know and greater familiarity between people.

28. Crewe, B. (2005). Codes and conventions: the terms and conditions of contemporary inmate values. In A. Liebling and S. Maruna (Eds) *The Effects of Imprisonment*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing, 177–208.
29. Tait, S. (2008). Prison officers and gender. In J. Bennett, B. Crewe and A. Wahidin (Eds) *Understanding Prison Staff*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing, 65–91.
30. See footnote 29.
31. See footnote 18; Liebling, A. (2011). Distinctions and distinctiveness in the work of prison officers: Legitimacy and authority revisited. *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), 484–499.
32. See footnote 18.
33. Woodall, J., Dixey, R., & South, J. (2014). Control and choice in English prisons: developing health-promoting prisons. *Health promotion international*, 29(3), 474–482.
34. Haney, C. (2003). The psychological impact of incarceration: Implications for post-prison adjustment. Retrieved from: <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/psychological-impact-incarceration-implications-post-prison>
35. See footnote 13.

infantilised and degraded by the lack of autonomy that the prison environment affords, and this in turn can cause re-traumatisation for those who have experienced past trauma.³⁶ If we add dehumanising or uninformed staff behaviours on top of this, we may be enlarging an already critical issue.

Self-determination theory states that choice and autonomy are a vital part of psychological functioning.³⁷ Further, perceived afforded choice has been shown to correlate with quality of life in prison, supporting our finding that better communication of opportunities is needed in this prison. Staff can give prisoners as much autonomy as possible by clearly presenting all options available to them. For example, notice boards could be utilised more effectively, officers could report upcoming opportunities to people on each landing, and a weekly or monthly newsletter could be published with the courses and groups coming up, and how to access them.

Collaboration

Findings from collaboration data build on the trustworthiness data; and show that not only do the women in this prison want their voices to be heard, but to be acted upon. In the quantitative data, 61.1 per cent of participants agreed their voice was heard in the prison, yet when given the opportunity to expand on their answers, they said '*I think my voice is heard — but not always listened to*'. Fallot describes what a 'right' relationship between staff and prisoners should look like; respectful but with a 'quiet flow of power'.³⁸ This hints towards an active role of staff, who show listening and empathy skills, but also show collaboration by using their power to do something about the prisoner's requests. Wachtel and McCold described this nuanced position as 'supportive limit setting',³⁹ rather than punitive, domineering authority. With Auty et al. also finding this distinctive result that prisoners felt they

were listened to,⁴⁰ but not acted upon, it is clear that whilst cooperation is strong, there is work to be done on true collaboration.

Listening to prisoners is clearly not enough to constitute a 'good' officer; staff need to be actively giving prisoners agency in their own decisions and partnering with them in pursuing goals. SAMHSA summarise this well saying, 'working collaboratively to facilitate the individual's sense of control, and to maximise their autonomy and choices throughout the engagement process, is crucial in trauma-informed and trauma-responsive services'.⁴¹

Empowerment

Listening to prisoners is clearly not enough to constitute a 'good' officer; staff need to be actively giving prisoners agency in their own decisions and partnering with them in pursuing goals.

Participants gave mixed reports about empowerment in this women's prison; 44.4 per cent reported they were 'not sure' if staff helped them make their own decisions, yet 61.1 per cent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were given opportunities to develop new skills and learn new things in the prison. Qualitative results revealed educational opportunities were particularly empowering for participants. One participant reported:

'We create our reality, so if the staff and residents want a reality where we all feel valued and true rehabilitation is a real experience, then let's keep the new momentum (that has just started within education) going and push this snowball dinosaur down the hill or positive and forward thinking reformation whooping and cheering all the way.'

These results indicate that staff have room for growth in their empowering practice, but that the prison establishment has some good opportunities on offer, which in-turn empowers women. The availability

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36. Kilty, J. M. (2008). *Resisting confined identities: Women's strategies of coping in prison* (Doctoral dissertation, School of Criminology-Simon Fraser University).
37. Van der Kaap-Deeder, J., Audenaert, E., Vandeveld, 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.
38. See footnote 11.
39. Wachtel, T., & McCold, P. (2001). Restorative justice in everyday life. In H. Strang and J Braithwaite (eds) *Restorative Justice and Civil Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 114–129.
40. See footnote 13.
41. See footnote 8.

of education, good facilities and courses have been regarded in research as the backbone of empowerment.⁴² The availability of higher education in US prisons has been shown to increase empowerment.⁴³ Therefore, although staff in the current prison could certainly improve this area of their practice, the prison showed promising availability of opportunity through courses and education, which is shown by the body of research to be important for empowerment. Thus overall, empowerment is one of the stronger principles of TIP experienced by women in this prison. One participant concluded:

'LISTEN when we struggle, HELP in meeting unusual needs, PUSH the archaic boundaries on our behalf, WORK WITH us to offer the SINCERE re-assurance that would help so much'.

This quotation neatly summarises the areas identified in this study that need improved TIP. This participant calls for staff to listen to their needs and to act upon them — a desire which shows the need for improved choice and collaboration. They call for staff to work collaboratively with prisoners, not for prisoners, to ensure they feel empowered in their choices, and build safe and trusted relationships with staff. Finally, they call for staff to *'push the archaic boundaries'* on their behalf, acknowledging the 'flow of power' within prisons, and asking that staff build rather than

dismantle trust, and to encourage identity rather than to dehumanise prisoners with their actions.

Conclusion

This article examines the implementation of TIP in a closed women's prison. The study investigated prisoner's reflections of staff practice through Covington's five principles. The overarching results showed that women in this prison felt safe, empowered, and that regular landing staff were mostly reliable and good role models. However, the reported lack of staff consistency and unreliable communication reduced their sense of trust, choice, and safety in this prison. Further the women wanted to be heard and their words acted upon.

Creating trauma-informed environments in women's prisons is an extremely challenging task due to the high rates of prior abuse, prevalence of trauma, and complexity of backgrounds of the prisoners. This article builds on our knowledge as to how we can improve women's experience of this inherently hostile environment. Whilst taking into account the dynamic and complex nature of women's prisons, it calls for a gendered justice approach to making change, as well as improved consistency and trust from prison staff. It presents small adaptations to practice, with the hope of allowing prison staff to move towards this improved way of working, as a contribution to the wider drive towards a trauma-sensitive prison estate.

42. Liebling, A., & Arnold, H. (2012). Social relationships between prisoners in a maximum security prison: Violence, faith, and the declining nature of trust. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40(5), 413-424.

43. Evans, D. N., Pelletier, E., & Szkola, J. (2018). Education in prison and the self-stigma: Empowerment continuum. *Crime & Delinquency*, 64(2), 255-280.

'Feeling Safe in an Unsafe Place'

Improving well-being through the use of Trauma-Informed spaces

Scarlett Thomas was a Prison Officer at HMP Liverpool and is now an ambassador of the Unlocked Graduates Programme.

Previous research has reliably shown that rates of mental health issues amongst prisoners are significantly higher than for those in the general population¹. There is also wealth of data demonstrating that prisons are not synonymous with safety. In the 12 months to December 2022, there was a 21 per cent increase in serious assault incidents, and the number of self-harm incidents has increased by 5 per cent in the 12 months to September 2022. Many of these figures represent individuals with pre-existing trauma, for example, 24 per cent of adult prisoners are care leavers, and 41 per cent observed violence in their homes growing up². Similarly, prison staff can also be victims of trauma, with research illustrating how officers can experience poor mental health and vicarious trauma as a result of events witnessed in prison^{3,4}. This project aimed to create well-being by building a Trauma-Informed Care Practice (TICP) safe space in a Category B local jail. The report demonstrates through literature and studies how re-traumatisation for staff and prisoners is not a rarity in the prison estate and therefore, it is important to create an environment that does not inadvertently remind individuals of their trauma⁵ but rather understands that people are a product of their environment⁶. Therefore, using the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership⁷ the researcher and volunteers created two TICP spaces conducive to TICP design. The two spaces were built successfully and have produced a myriad of

positive outcomes for staff and prisoner well-being that will be outlined throughout this report.

Reflections from my own practice

I'm on day eight of a long stretch. I feel physically sick as I pull up into the car park. I walk along the wall, by the time I get to the prison gates I've already been heckled by the public, shouting 'you rat'. I attempt to brush it off, but I can feel anger building inside me, thinking 'what a thankless job this'. Before I have time to overthink this, I'm back to the landings. An arena of sounds, the clashing of gates, the banging of cell doors, observation panels being smashed, and the incongruously casual shout for exercise amid the chaos. I feel myself becoming more institutionalised as the days go on. The sight of self-harm has no shock factor anymore, the word 'slag' is just a follow-up to 'miss' when I say the word 'no', and for a girl who had never been in a fight, violence seems to have found comfort in the rhythm of my every day. I remember the words of a prisoner 'it's just an Amazon factory for humans here, we're a part of it and so are you'. I remind myself that prisons are there to keep the public safe, but I couldn't help feeling complicit in a system that didn't match my moral code. Locking vulnerable and mentally ill men away into a concrete box whilst saying 'mental health staff are busy today, but they said put an app in on the kiosk'. I asked my staff 'are you okay?' knowing that the answer 'I'm fine' was just how we've taught ourselves to reply to cope with the fact that things really

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(9), 871-881.
2. Halliday, M., & Hewson, A. (2022). *Bromley briefings prison factfile: Winter 2022*.
3. Kinman, G., Clements, A. J., & Hart, J. (2017). Job demands, resources and mental health in UK prison officers. *Occupational Medicine*, 67(6), 456-460.
4. Woodfield, R., Boduszek, D., & Willmott, D. (2022). Latent profiles of PTSD, anxiety and depression and association with trauma exposure within prison personnel. *European Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 6(3), 100268.
5. Menschner, C., & Maul, A. (2016). *Key ingredients for successful trauma-informed care implementation*. Trenton: Centre for Health Care Strategies, Incorporated.
6. Choitz, V., & Wagner, S. (2021). *A trauma-informed approach to workforce: An introductory guide for employers and workforce development organizations*.
7. Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2010). *The five practices of exemplary leadership* (Vol. 237). John Wiley & Sons.

aren't fine. I was edging towards the end of the day when I had to deliver the news to one of the men that his father had passed away. Deliver this news where? Outside of his cell? In the tiny room at the end of the landing surrounded by windows so that everyone could witness the distress pending? I walked this broken man back into his cell, locked the door, and locked his emotions within the 5.5m² cell and allowed him to grieve. Delivering the news of death or even hearing of death always hits my emotions hard. Despite it being over 4 years ago, a part of my consciousness remains trapped in 2018, the year that cancer knocked on our door and took my nana Jean away. I just wanted somewhere to go to feel calm and be kind to myself. It was then that I told myself that no prisoner or staff member will be left vulnerable to their emotions on the landings. I don't know how to fix them, but I know how to help. I decided that I was going to create a place of safety in this unsafe place for staff and prisoners to go when they need it most.

Literature Review

Trauma experienced by individuals in prisons

Prisons hold a well-established place in the public dialogue, but how we describe them does not always roll off the tongue so easily. The media can sensationalise it, academics study it, but only housed within it — prisoners and staff — can accurately depict it. Levenson and Willis describe every stage of the prison experience as traumatic, as the events that encompass a prison sentence from arrest, awaiting trial, and having a paucity of autonomy can erect feelings of fear and helplessness⁸. A general health questionnaire distributed across 12 prisons found that levels of distress were high, with prisoners on induction wings

and those who are un-sentenced experiencing the most distress⁹. This is mirrored by statistical research in the UK which highlights that more than one in five self-inflicted deaths in the last five years occurred in the first 30 days of arrival in prison and almost half of these deaths were in the first week¹⁰. Additionally, studies surrounding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) illustrate how adults who are exposed to four or more ACEs, were eleven times more likely to have been incarcerated at some point in their lifetime¹¹. These studies demonstrate that prisons are not only creating trauma, but they are a catalyst for previous trauma to re-emerge.

Trauma experienced by prison officers

There is an abundance of literature highlighting how prison officers can experience trauma too. As a result, the myriad of negative emotions that house themselves within the prison walls can begin to house themselves within the officer too. Research conducted with French correctional employees describes how officers work in an environment in which they are regularly exposed to extreme distress and potentially traumatic events such as suicide, self-harm, and violence¹². Working in an environment that poses such a

Working in an environment that poses such a risk can have serious effects on staff well-being and create feelings of fear and uncertainty.

risk can have serious effects on staff well-being and create feelings of fear and uncertainty. A side effect of such high levels of stress is that many officers experience emotional exhaustion and burnout¹³. Many also experience compassion fatigue, resulting in staff becoming disengaged emotionally from prisoners and describing themselves as being emotionally detached¹⁴. Such coping strategies can be perceived as a reaction to the vicarious trauma that is experienced daily by staff and is understood as 'managing their crisis'¹⁵.

8. Levenson, J. S., & Willis, G. M. (2019). Implementing trauma-informed care in correctional treatment and supervision. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 28(4), 481-501.
9. Liebling, A. and Ludlow, A. (2016) 'Suicide, distress and the quality of prison life', in: Y. Jewkes, J. Bennett and B. Crewe (Eds.), *Handbook on Prisons*, Abingdon: Routledge
10. Ministry of Justice. (2021). Safety in custody statistics. Quarterly update to September 2020. England and Wales.
11. Bellis, M. A., Hughes, K., Leckenby, N., Hardcastle, K. A., Perkins, C., & Lowey, H. (2015). Measuring mortality and the burden of adult disease associated with adverse childhood experiences in England: a national survey. *Journal of public health*, 37(3), 445-454.
12. Boudoukha, A. H., Altintas, E., Rusinek, S., Fantini-Hauwel, C., & Hautekeete, M. (2013). Inmates-to-staff assaults, PTSD and burnout: Profiles of risk and vulnerability. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 28(11), 2332-2350.
13. Kinman, G., Clements, A. J., & Hart, J. (2016). Work-related wellbeing in UK prison officers: A benchmarking approach. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 9(3), 290-307.
14. Arnold, H. (2017). The psychological and emotional effects of prison on prison staff. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Forensic Psychology in Secure Settings* (pp. 283-299). Routledge.
15. Miller, N. A., & Najavits, L. M. (2012). Creating trauma-informed correctional care: A balance of goals and environment. *European journal of psychotraumatology*, 3(1), 17246.

Unfortunately, in an us vs them environment, this adds a layer of well-documented tension between care and control, whereby officers through vicarious trauma, lean towards control as a protective tool. In addition, as an officer's well-being and professionalism can improve relationships with prisoners, the negative emotional effects officers are experiencing neglect the possibility of new relationships being formed.¹⁶ Additionally, research has highlighted how if TICP is introduced into prisons, it would be prison officers who would play a major role in minimising triggers¹⁷. In this scenario, staff and prisoner relationships are the day-to-day fabric of both trauma recovery and of re-traumatisation. For example, since 2015, across the women's estate, prison officers are a part of the Becoming Trauma Informed (BTI) initiative which seeks to embed trauma-informed practice in prisons through staff training and the delivery of trauma-informed interventions. This highlights the vital role prison officers have in assisting prisoners with trauma and rehabilitation, as well as prioritising their own well-being.

Prison Environment: How space can induce trauma

As officers and prisoners must inhabit the same environment, it is possible that shared experiences will foster a form of community cohesion which is not conducive with TICP. This harsh emotional environment mirrors the punitive physical environment. Prisons are, by design, disempowering places where rules are rigidly and unilaterally applied by authority figures. Previous research describes how the oppressive architecture of prisons can induce trauma, as trauma theorists demonstrate how trauma lingers in the body and can be triggered by what survivors see, hear, feel and smell^{18,19}. Consequently, prisons are not an appropriate environment for programs such as the Healing Trauma intervention to occur, as a distressing space may act in juxtaposition to its goal of elevating trauma. Therefore, further efforts must be made to create a TICP physical space. Losing one's liberty is

considered the ultimate punishment, therefore, by creating an infrastructure that punishes further is not aligned with a rehabilitative thought process. Additionally, it is suggested that environments can act as a catalyst in re-offending whilst in prison. Therefore, if prisons are kept to a low standard, for example, with cell windows smashed, the way one behaves may be influenced by this. Deprivation theorists agree with this, stating that if individuals are subjected to a restrictive environment, they adapt to their new surroundings by satisfying their needs using maladaptive behaviour. From this, many environmental psychologists and scholars call for further research into the links between prison architecture and prison misconduct²⁰.

Prison buildings cannot on their own turn people's lives around but by using the latest building techniques and improving the way people use the interior and exterior spaces, they can support wider culture change.²¹

Prisons are, by design, disempowering places where rules are rigidly and unilaterally applied by authority figures.

Seeing as there seems to be a correlation between the built environment and people's wellbeing, it seems as though the prison system has misunderstood what creates a positive environment for staff and prisoners. One study explored the effects of the physical

environment associated with confinement, such as metal staircases, bleak colours, and bars on windows — all of which can be sobering reminders of one's imprisonment and the accompanying lack of liberty. However, in contrast to this, the TICP model can reduce the institutionalised atmosphere in prisons, lessen stress, aggression, and violence, and generally increase prisoners' and staff wellbeing²².

Approach Taken and Outcome

The available literature clearly indicated that there is a need for the prison environment to be more aligned with TICP. This was supported by consultations

16. Liebling, A., Price, D., & Shefer, G. (2010). *The prison officer*. Routledge.
17. Vaswani, N., & Paul, S. (2019). 'It's Knowing the Right Things to Say and Do': Challenges and Opportunities for Trauma informed Practice in the Prison Context. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 58(4), 513-534.
18. Petrillo, M. (2021). 'We've all got a big story': Experiences of a Trauma Informed Intervention in Prison. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 60(2), 232-250.
19. Van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Mind, brain and body in the transformation of trauma*. penguin UK.
20. Lahm, K. F. (2008). Inmate-on-inmate assault: A multilevel examination of prison violence. *Criminal justice and behavior*, 35(1), 120-137.
21. Karthaus, R., Block, L., & Hu, A. (2019). Redesigning prison: The architecture and ethics of rehabilitation. *The Journal of Architecture*, 24(2), 193-222.
22. Jewkes, Y., Jordan, M., Wright, S., & Bendelow, G. (2019). Designing 'healthy'prisons for women: Incorporating trauma-informed care and practice (TICP) into prison planning and design. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(20), 3818.

conducted at HMP Liverpool, which was undertaken in order to determine whether this opinion was shared by prisoners, officers, governors, and other agencies working within the prison. The overarching aim of this project was to create safe spaces on the induction wing at HMP Liverpool that were designed and influenced by TICP, so that staff and prisoners could go to an environment that would reduce feelings of stress and anxiety as well as acting as place that, unlike jail, would not induce trauma. Two TICP spaces were created and designed after a successful application for funding from Unlocked Graduates. The staffroom is in full use and available for all staff thanks to the help of staff and prisoner volunteers. The prisoner/staff well-being space has been fully renovated and designed; it is currently in use for those in crisis. In the six months following creating these spaces, all staff members working on the wing have utilised the rooms, as well as over 70 prisoners for ACCT assessments, multi-disciplinary

meetings, key work sessions, and talking to those in crisis.

As can be seen in figures 1-4 below, particular attention was paid to spatial layout and visual interest, without sensory overload. Both rooms create physical safety by having no obstacles surrounding the entrance to and from the door with few barriers so that individuals inside the room are not crowded by objects. The choice of limited furniture for this space, as well as the use of colours that contrasted with the wing, sought to alleviate any negative emotions associated with trauma so that individuals occupying this space feel safe. Furthermore, although the rooms meet the criteria for a TICP space, it is important that individuals using the room feel as though the values and behaviours practiced in the space adhere to TICP principles too. For example, both spaces aim to create a sense of normality and diminish any feelings of institutionalisation.

Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4: Pictures of the spaces created using TICP principles



Discussion

This discussion will outline the progress of the TICP projects so far, examining how their results compare to existing literature surrounding TICP in prisons, as well as explaining any positive findings. Current and possible limitations of producing this project will be outlined and

complimented with further recommendations for HMP Liverpool, and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) as a whole. As this project is a pilot study for further TICP spaces to be created across prisons, it will focus solely on the experiences the researcher had in creating this space. It also seeks to describe the future vision of this project, on a larger

scale that is still aligned with TICP. The spaces successfully challenge the cultural punitive stereotypes through design, as many TICP themes have emerged since the creation of the spaces, such as staff members on the wing discussing how the room encourages feelings of safety and comfort, whilst also feeling valued and respected²³. It is accepted that soft furnishings such as couches and rugs create a sense of well-being and erect feelings of relaxation. This supports the goal of the space having a homely feel to it, as many staff members will spend more time in a working week in the prison than at home, and for prisoners, it creates a sense of normality whilst they are away from home.

This project recognises the important correlation between environment and well-being. Additionally, it acknowledges comments made by the HMPPS Evidence-Based Practice Team that the *'quality of the immediate prison environment has both immediate and longer-term consequences for safety and wellbeing'*. Additionally, the Prison Service Instruction (PSI)'s guidance on Early days in custody - reception in, first night in custody, and induction to custody (PSI 07/2015) was also considered upon the creation of this space, as it highlights how the first nights in custody is 'one of the most stressful times for prisoners' whereby 'many self-inflicted deaths and self-harm incidents occur within the first 24 hours, the first week and the first month'. The PSI recommends that extra emphasis placed on tackling safer custody issues during the first 24 hours and beyond is likely to produce most benefit in this early period. This project aimed to adhere to this and even offer further support by ensuring that individuals who do find themselves in crisis, can be helped in a space that mirrors TICP.

Stories shared by staff and prisoners highlight that the room has been successful in its aim of promoting trauma-informed care. For instance, staff and prisoners will have a cup of tea and talk when informed by safer custody or the chaplaincy that a prisoner is in crisis or in receipt of bad news. The clean and comfortable environment allows successful morning and afternoon briefings, in addition to a place to have lunch and

generate good conversations for staff. Feelings of well-being have also been promoted and encouraged, as on notice boards staff advertise well-being events, and signpost each other to relevant agencies for help, such as Mental Health Allies. Such outcomes mirror previous research which found that environmental improvements provide a better work environment for staff as well as reduce staff stress^{24,25}. Prison Officers are a part of the 'forgotten service' and receive little recognition for all their hard work. It is hoped through creating a space for the staff they would feel valued for working in an emotionally demanding job.

Outside agencies utilising the space on the wing for group sessions have been successful, for example, drug charity Change Grow Live (CGL) hosts weekly meetings in this space. As therapeutic environments aid recovery, it is just not feasible to expect individuals to

become healthy in an unhealthy environment. The consistency of a safe space has been commented on by staff and prisoners involved, as well as them feeling removed from the noisiness of the wing with the opportunity of having private conversations without fear of judgment. Additionally, it is advocated that all the communities using this space adopt 'universal precautions'

when working with prisoners²⁶. Universal precautions encourage professionals to assume a trauma history is present with all individuals we interact with and interact with them in a trauma-informed manner. This is now the case at HMP Liverpool, as all prisoners can access the TICP space, they do not need to acquire any special privileges such as being enhanced or explain their trauma to staff. All that is required is for the space is treated with respect so other individuals can continue to make use of it. This was paramount to the project, as research highlights how sometimes, an individual is not even aware that [they] have been experiencing trauma until weeks, months, or even years have passed.

Limitations

An obvious limitation of this project is that the two rooms have only recently been developed and therefore, due to the short nature of their existence,

Prison Officers are a part of the 'forgotten service' and receive little recognition for all their hard work.

23. Vaswani, N., & Paul, S. (2019). 'It's Knowing the Right Things to Say and Do': Challenges and Opportunities for Trauma informed Practice in the Prison Context. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 58(4), 513-534.

24. Breugh, J. (2021). Too stressed to be engaged? The role of basic needs satisfaction in understanding work stress and public sector engagement. *Public personnel management*, 50(1), 84-108.

25. Ricciardelli, R., & Power, N. G. (2020). How "conditions of confinement" impact "conditions of employment": The work-related well-being of provincial correctional officers in Atlantic Canada. *Violence and victims*, 35(1), 88-107.

26. Racine, N., Killam, T., & Madigan, S. (2020). Trauma-informed care as a universal precaution: beyond the adverse childhood experiences questionnaire. *JAMA pediatrics*, 174(1), 5-6.

robust data has not yet been collected and the impact of the rooms has not been evaluated. However, as mentioned previously, this project seeks to be a pilot for further TICP spaces across HMPPS. In these spaces, across a larger time frame, both qualitative and quantitative data can be collected. It is hoped from this, that staff will be able to mirror the Healing Trauma workshops being performed across the female estate and act as BTI lead to help individuals with trauma in a purpose-built TICP space. However, Covid-19 has created limitations on such activities, as they have been unable to be implemented, or delayed. For instance, prisoners suggested practicing well-being through yoga and guided meditation in this space. This would present the opportunity to measure well-being, as improved emotional regulation can decrease violence, in addition to enhancing positive emotions such as relaxation. Literature suggests that practicing mindfulness in prisons has a myriad of advantages, such as more effective cognitive control and emotional regulation²⁷.

The researcher's lack of previous experience and knowledge of how to create a trauma-informed space in a prison created further challenges, as did the lack of existing TICP spaces for prisoners at HMP Liverpool. Although literature exists on TICP in jails, a huge gap exists surrounding TICP environments in male prisons due to the disparity in how much attention is given to differences in gender²⁸. However, given the fact many researchers highlight how 'trauma is gendered'²⁹ and thus must be approached as such, more research on male estates would have been advantageous to this study.

Recommendations

Through the development and creation of the TICP spaces at HMP Liverpool, a set of recommendations have been produced aimed more broadly to HMPPS. It is hoped such recommendations can be acknowledged and, if applied successfully, help create a TICP culture more widely within HMPPS.

1. This research suggests that the Prison Service Instruction (PSI) Early days in custody - reception in, first night in custody, and induction to custody (PSI 07/2015) should be amended to incorporate a focus on TICP. The PSI is successful in highlighting the importance of prisoners' welfare upon arrival into prison, and in demonstrating the vulnerability of prisoners in

their early days of custody. However, it is recommended that the PSI acknowledges that entering prison in itself is a traumatic/re-traumatising experience. Therefore, HMPPS should ensure that spaces such as reception and the induction wing not only meet 'decency standards' (PSI 17/2012') but be trauma-informed through design.

2. Additionally, if it is agreed that all staff should be trained in Becoming Trauma-Informed. It is recommended that all Custodial Managers and Governors are trained in TICP so that staff in their care feel comfortable approaching them with any queries. Therefore, prisons should aim to establish environments whereby the values of TICP are mirrored through built design.
3. Future research should monitor the success of TICP spaces and potential other spaces that will be created by firstly monitoring the popularity of the space, and secondly, examining important data that emerges from the presence of the space. For example, it is recommended that data such as the number of ACCTs present on the wing be monitored prior to the space being opened, this would offer an indication of whether the spaces has helped improve prisoners' well-being. Additionally, metrics such as analysing the number of Control and Restraints used on prisoners could be analysed, if decreased, this could give an indication that staff and prisoner relationships have improved as well as less violence on the wing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the aim of this project was to produce a space that was sympathetic to TICP and provide the male estate with an opportunity to produce eventual evidence that demonstrates that TICP is beneficial to this population. In addition, the researcher produced the project based on their own experiences as a prison officer and hoped that this project would benefit colleagues who experience any form of trauma or stress as a side effect of the job. The project always kept leadership and TICP at the centre, whilst embodying resilience and reflection throughout. It is hoped that a future direction of this project will be that every prison has an environment where one can feel safe in an otherwise unsafe place.

27. Auty, K. M. (2019). The benefits of mindfulness-based interventions in the criminal justice system: A review of the evidence. *The Routledge Companion to Rehabilitative Work in Criminal Justice*, 453-467.

28. Vaswani, N., & Paul, S. (2019). 'It's Knowing the Right Things to Say and Do': Challenges and Opportunities for Trauma informed Practice in the Prison Context. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 58(4), 513-534.

29. Malik, N., Facer-Irwin, E., Dickson, H., Bird, A., & MacManus, D. (2021). The effectiveness of trauma-focused interventions in prison settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 15248380211043890.

Sustaining Change and Effectiveness in Prisons

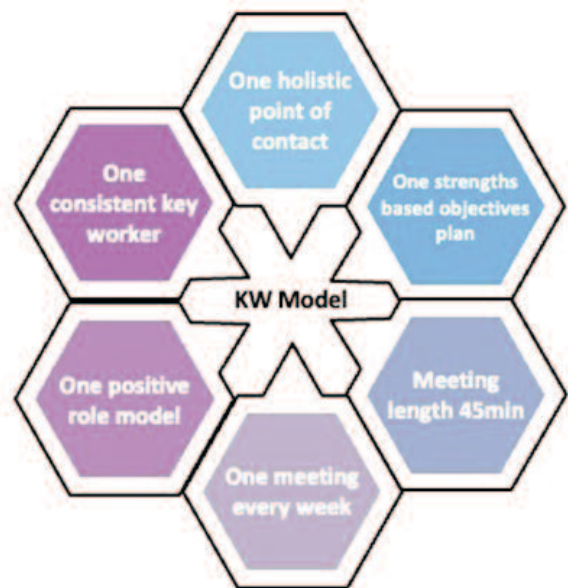
A study of the perceptions, experiences and attitudes of operational prison staff towards the keyworker scheme in a young offender establishment

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Introduction

The keyworker scheme was introduced in 2018 as part of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model,¹ proposed by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS, now His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service),² in response to the increasing levels of self-harm and violence in

prisons.³ The OMiC model built on the personal officer scheme, which sought to achieve positive staff-prisoner interaction and encouraged the development of constructive staff-prisoner relationships, associated with improved safety and security and offender rehabilitation.⁴



Note. Models adapted from HMPPS OMiC Key Work Guidance (2018)

Figure 1. Overarching Aspects of the keywork model.

Figure 2. Implementation Goals of the keywork model.

1. Her Majesty Prison & Probation Service. (2018). HMPPS OMiC Key Work Guidance. *HMPPS Intranet*.
2. Ministry of Justice. (2016). *Prison safety and reform. Presented to Parliament by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice by Command of Her Majesty*.
3. Ministry of Justice. (2021) *The UK's response to the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment's visit report from October 2020*.
4. House of Commons. (2009, November 03). *National Offender Management Service*. Parliament.UK.

The OMiC guidance outlined that all those in male closed establishments, should be allocated a trained keyworker for an average of 45 minutes per week who will support them holistically.⁵ Additionally, the keyworker was appointed as a singular point of contact for different departments working with the offender, taking part in sentence management, and assisting in formulating a personalised support plan (Figures 1 and 2).⁶

The keyworker model is well established in other disciplines, for example, social and residential care,⁷ probation services,⁸ secure accommodation,⁹ personality disorder treatment units,¹⁰ and homelessness support,¹¹ with research demonstrating numerous benefits for both the service users and the practitioners. However, research has also demonstrated that factors such as inconsistencies in keyworker allocation and their dual responsibility for both care and control can produce unpredictability in relationships, with the potential to undermine trust in others and the formation of future meaningful relationships.¹² Therefore, continuity, consistency and stability are central to establishing trust and ensuring positive outcomes.

In prison settings, keyworker meetings are part of rehabilitative work conducted by prison staff in supporting offenders' positive development through trusting relationships.¹³ Batty recognised that an end-to-end approach to rehabilitation which is holistic, consistent, flexible and recognises individuals' strengths was necessary to achieve lasting change. In addition to promoting rehabilitative values, strengthening staff-prisoner relationships through

consistent engagement can improve safety and dynamic security by providing intelligence, enhancing trust, and offering clarity and transparency of expectations related to prison policies.¹⁴

A review of the early implementation of the scheme examined attitudes towards keywork in prisons and found that both officers and offenders appreciated the opportunity to share time together and develop positive relationships.¹⁵ Specifically, prisoners valued being listened to and the opportunity to get involved in their rehabilitation, while officers appreciated the prospect of making a difference and positively impacting offenders' future. In an unpublished study investigating offenders' experiences and perceptions of keywork, Martin and Wheatley found that some individuals had constructive experiences, including perceptions of genuine care and identification of keyworkers as positive role models, who provided practical and emotional support. However, others did not feel that they benefited from the scheme or developed therapeutic relationships with their keyworker. These individuals did not value support from a keyworker, either because they did not feel they needed it, because they did not get on with or feel genuinely supported by them, or because they felt that they overstepped personal boundaries. The researchers also found discrepancies between the intentions of the OMiC policy and its practical implementation, resulting in inconsistencies between keyworker approaches and reduced satisfaction of the scheme.

More recently, HM Inspectorate of Probation concluded that the OMiC model is not delivering the

In prison settings,
keyworker meetings
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relationships.

5. Ministry of Justice. (2018) *Policy name: Manage the Custodial Sentence Policy Framework*. HM Prison and Probation Service.
6. Her Majesty Prison & Probation Service. (2018). HMPPS OMiC Key Work Guidance. *HMPPS Intranet*.
7. Cahill, O., Holt, S., & Kirwan, G. (2016). Keyworking in residential child care: Lessons from research. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 65, 216-223.
8. Batty, E. (2020). 'Without the Right Support Network I'd Probably Be Either Dead or in the Prison System': The Role of Support in Helping Offenders on their Journey to Desistance. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 59(2), 174-193.
9. Shaw, J., & Forster, O. (2018). How do high-risk young adult prisoners with emerging personality disorders describe the process of change in therapy?. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 20(1), 32-41.
10. McMurrin, M., & Delight, S. (2017). Processes of change in an offender personality disorder pathway prison progression unit. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 27(3), 254-264.
11. McGrath, L. (1999). *Keyworker and resident perceptions of keyworking relationships in hostels for young homeless people*. [PhD thesis, University of London, University College London]. ProQuest.
12. McKellar, A., & Kendrick, A. (2013). Key working and the quality of relationships in secure accommodation. *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, 12(1), 46-57.
13. Ministry of Justice. (2018) *Policy name: Manage the Custodial Sentence Policy Framework*. HM Prison and Probation Service.
14. Lieblich, A. (2011). Distinctions and distinctiveness in the work of prison officers: Legitimacy and authority revisited. *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), 484-499.
15. Talbot, S. (2018, October 4). Changing the way we manage prisoners. Working in the Prison and Probation Service. *Gov.Uk*.

expected theoretical standards in practice and needs reframing in order to overcome implementation challenges and achieve realistic positive outcomes.¹⁶ Some of the issues identified were lack of interdepartmental communication, lack of continuity and consistency and a lack of understanding of the OMiC model and its practical implementation, among probation staff, prison staff and the prisoners. The model was deemed overly complex and too inflexible to be successfully implemented in practice, particularly within the current context of staff shortages. The model's potential to enhance rehabilitative culture and support individuals in prison has been undermined by limited training and resources, diminishing staff motivation and perceived capability in delivering keywork.¹⁷ Nevertheless, as noted by the Inspectorate, prison staff continue in their efforts to deliver the model, often motivated by short-term positive outcomes observed for the individuals in their care.

It is important to note that the implementation and consistency of the scheme was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in widespread staff shortages, social distancing, and regime changes, along with limited resources being available to prison staff which were coupled with the added strain from the required time, materials, and training investment to successfully implement the model in prisons.

Change Management

Similar issues with effectiveness and inconsistency in implementing new models of work, which deviated from their design, were identified by the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) and Professor Liebling.¹⁸ For example, PRT found that the Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) Scheme lacked integration into wider regimes and focused extensively on maintaining control, thus

deviating from its rehabilitative principles. A major concern was the accelerated introduction of the scheme overlooked important change management stages, such as communication of vision and goals, training provision and leadership investment. Liebling similarly described a lack of clarity and training, ineffective management and discrepancies between policy and practice related to the scheme. This suggests a pattern of inadequate change implementation in prisons, with differing investment priorities and inconsistent change management strategy.¹⁹ Issues with uncertainty and prior unsuccessful change strategies can lead to frustration and change fatigue, depleting staff motivation and undermining the change process.²⁰

Change management models provide a structured framework for considering organisational change processes and a frame of reference that can be applied to the practical implementation of new initiatives to ensure that they are effectively implemented and support organisational transformation.²¹ Öhman combined fundamentals of the three most influential change management theories: Lewin's Three-Step Model,²² Kotter's Eight-Step Model,²³ and Hiatt's ADKAR Model,²⁴ to develop a five-part Successful Change Process (SCP) model (Figure 3).²⁵

The five elements of achieving successful organisational change identified were:

1. Exploring the purpose and need for change.
2. Including employees in the change effort.
3. Recognising the differences in perspectives, beliefs and expectations of the different generations.
4. Providing training and developing skills, and
5. Leadership-by-example.

Communication, evaluation, and celebration of short-term achievements should be present within each step.

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16. HM Inspectorate of Probation (2022) Offender Management in Custody (pre-release) – A joint inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons November 2022.
 17. Cracknell, M. (2021). 'Trying to make it matter': The challenges of assimilating a resettlement culture into a 'local' prison. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 00(0),1-18.
 18. Prison Reform Trust. (1999). Prison Incentive Schemes. *Probation Journal*, 46(2),130-130; Liebling, A. (2008). Incentives and earned privileges revisited: Fairness, discretion, and the quality of prison life. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 9(S1), 25-41.
 19. Bovey, W. H., & Hede, A. (2001). Resistance to organisational change: the role of defence mechanisms. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 16(7), 534-548
 20. Cracknell, M. (2021). 'Trying to make it matter': The challenges of assimilating a resettlement culture into a 'local' prison. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 00(0),1-18; Gozzoli, C., D'Angelo, C., & Tamanza, G. (2018). Training and resistance to change: Work with a group of prison guards. *World Futures*, 74(6), 426-449.
 21. Harrison, R., Fischer, S., Walpola, R. L., Chauhan, A., Babalola, T., Mears, S., & Le-Dao, H. (2021). Where do models for change management, improvement and implementation meet? A systematic review of the applications of change management models in healthcare. *Journal of Healthcare Leadership*, 13, 85.
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 23. Kotter, J. P. (1995). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(2), 59-67
 24. Hiatt, J. M. (2006). The Essence of ADKAR: a model for individual change management. *Fort Collins Colorado: Prosci*.
 25. Öhman, J. (2018). *Developing a model for successful organizational change: Case 3M Nordic Region*. [MS Thesis, Arcada International Business Management]. Theseus.



Note. Model adapted from Öhman (2018)

Figure 3. *The Successful Change Process Model.*

Rationale and Research Objectives

This study investigated the management of change in a young offender establishment (with the support of the governor) using the implementation and effectiveness of the OMiC model as an example of an organisational change strategy. To understand how the policy was implemented, the perceptions, experiences, and attitudes

of prison staff and management were explored. The SCP model was applied to provide context to the findings and inform recommendations to address the challenges identified in the implementation of the OMiC model.

The following research questions and objectives were addressed:

1	Research Question 1	What are prison staff experiences, perceptions and attitudes towards the keyworker scheme implementation and effectiveness in prisons?
2	Research Question 2	What factors influence sustaining change in prisons?
3	Research Objective 1	Investigate the concept of prison staff resistance to change.
4	Research Objective 2	Evaluate the implementation of the keyworker scheme using the SCP model as a change management framework.

Figure 4. *Research Questions and Objectives.*

Methodology

Design

A qualitative study design was used in this research to gather rich, meaningful data closely associated with participants' experienced reality and interpretation of events. The face-to-face, semi-structured interviews facilitated the researchers' active participation in the study, enabling the collection of valid and reliable responses. Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the raw participant data to provide trustworthy and insightful findings. Ethical approval was obtained from Leeds Trinity University and HMPPS National Research Committee. Data collection took place between 10/02/2022 and 23/04/2022.

Participants

Purposive sampling was used in recruiting participants to enable criteria-driven selection of individuals with experiences directly related to the research subject matter. The eligibility criteria for participation included: 1) Operational prison staff and 2a) Current keyworker with proven keywork meetings in the past three months or 2b) Keywork managers involved in the implementation of OMiC. Eight participants were recruited, including two New Staff Members (NSMs) with no experience of the initial OMiC model launch, four Experienced Staff Members (ESMs) with experience of the initial OMiC model launch and training, and two keywork managers.

Process

Participant responses were structured into thematic network diagrams, representing the frequency analysis for each theme and the relationships between themes. Quotations were included from participants to provide a detailed account of their lived experiences, perceptions, and attitudes.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of the OMiC model

The OMiC policy expected that keyworkers be equipped with skills to coach self-efficacy strategies,

such as self-management and self-motivation, and foster rehabilitative attitudes. Accordingly, the regime was expected to provide flexibility to enable individuals to take responsibility for their daily routines to aid rehabilitation. However, the researcher's personal experience as a keyworker differed from the policy expectations in terms of facilitating understanding of the role, providing the required skill development, and enabling a flexible environment to conduct quality keyworker meetings. They were unable to support individuals holistically due to the lack of continuity in keyworker allocations, inconsistent meeting allocations and available support. Participants saw the lack of continuity and follow-up as a barrier to encouraging autonomy, however, there was also the perception of wider organisational barriers preventing individuals from taking control over aspects of their lives, which diminished the prospects of the expected long-term rehabilitative benefits for prisoners.

Meaningful data closely associated with participants' experienced reality and interpretation of events.

'It's a 'Can you do this for me?' but that's partially also because for a lot of the stuff they want, they literally have no power over it.' (NSM)

'... it's kind of just easier to do it for them because you don't really feel they're gonna do it because you're not having that follow up.' (ESM)

Issues with consistency and continuity in the facilitation of new policies are not uncommon in the prison system.²⁶ For example, PRT noted the presence of systemic barriers in the implementation of the IEP scheme, such as ineffective integration into the daily regime, rushed introduction and lack of understanding by operational staff.²⁷ Participants drew attention to significant discrepancies between policy and practice in the sustained implementation of the keyworker scheme. For example, policy objectives regarding continuity and consistency and interdepartmental collaboration, were not effectively implemented, leading to the perception amongst keyworkers that the model 'doesn't work' and is a 'waste of time'.

'...it doesn't work, because we are just chucked onto a different landing every single

26. Liebling, A. (2008). Incentives and earned privileges revisited: Fairness, discretion, and the quality of prison life. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 9(S1), 25-41.
27. Prison Reform Trust. (1999). Prison Incentive Schemes. *Probation Journal*, 46(2), 130-130

day that you're key worker, and you're rarely on key worker' (NSM)

'...the main role of the keyworker, it's to follow them from First Nights through being on the wings to release. I think that's, for most part, what we don't get.' (ESM)

'If we go by the OMiC model, the key workers should be in contact with the POMs in OMU and the POMs should be in contact with the units, which was not possible during covid.' (Manager)

Participants also discussed issues with the practical aspects of OMiC delivery within the establishment, identifying concerns for both prison staff delivering the model and prisoners subjected to it. Overall impressions were that the model did not reflect the policy intentions, referring to it as 'poor', due to implementation challenges, some of which stemmed from the pandemic, such as time allocation for keywork.

'...what key working was originally designed for in the depth of understanding, it doesn't reflect well, any amount of time we actually get with them.' (NSM)

'...the delivery of the key working model is poor due to the influence of covid in the last couple of years.' (Manager)

Participants noted practical difficulties which resulted in reduced engagement from prisoners, arising from systemic blockages, including uncertainty of the offer, and required support, lack of availability of safe and private spaces for keywork meetings, and an inability to set effective goals or follow-up progress.

'...when it first started, then you could use the OMiC room to do your interviews and

stuff which was really good and there were certain rooms on the units that you could use. Now we... have to stay at the door half the time...' (ESM)

'So [now] you could probably set short goals, but then you can't really follow them up to see if they are reached or not because you've got different lads.' (ESM)

'...he had a key worker session the day before with a totally different prison officer... so he's obviously thinking 'What's the point at the moment of talking to a key worker? Of talking to someone different every day?'" (ESM)

Effective communication is essential for maintaining employee motivation to ensure the success of the change effort.

Vision

Introducing lasting organisational transformation requires clear communication through a variety of channels of the vision and benefit of the change through demonstrating why the change is needed and how it will benefit the establishment, employees and

beneficiaries to ignite staff interest and underpin its success.²⁸ Staff support is essential for policy and change implementation, with evidence suggesting that employees do not typically resist change itself, but oppose uncertainty, impractical ideas, management styles, and systemic obstacles.²⁹ Ineffective communication, expressed in a lack of feedback and clarity of expectation, has been linked in prison research to increased perceived difficulty of the job, work-related strain and staff burnout.³⁰ Therefore, effective communication is essential for maintaining employee motivation to ensure the success of the change effort. Participants' comments on implementation suggested that they were not cited on the vision for the model and lacked buy-in to its potential. For example, they referred to keywork as a 'tick-box exercise' and 'pointless' and noted uncertainty about task expectations and performance. Their interpretations of keywork delivery related to increased perceived

28. Öhman, J. (2018). *Developing a model for successful organizational change: Case 3M Nordic Region*. [MS Thesis, Arcada International Business Management]. Theseus.

29. Dent, E. B., & Goldberg, S. G. (1999). Challenging "resistance to change". *The Journal of applied Behavioral Science*, 35(1), 25-41.

30. Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., Dial, K. C., Jiang, S., & Khondaker, M. I. (2012). Is the job burning me out? An exploratory test of the job characteristics model on the emotional burnout of prison staff. *The Prison Journal*, 92(1), 3-23.

difficulty of their role and scepticism about implementing change.

'I think there's more of a mend it while you go along sort of thing.' (NSM)

So, there is just, it's not [lack of] motivation of getting them done it's just physically can't get it done... it's just hard... to get it done.' (ESM)

Lack of clarity is considered a key factor in staff resistance towards organisational change.³¹ Participants characterised the implementation of the OMiC model as having uncertainty of purpose and direction. For example, keyworkers considered that there was a lack of clarity of the overall role of keyworkers which they wish to see more clearly defined and perceived the model as 'not taken seriously' and executed 'half-heartedly'.

'... what I would say is keyword is not taken seriously. It seems almost spare.' (NSM)

'So, I do think it can work when you invest in it... but we've always done things half-heartedly' (Manager)

Procedural barriers were also evident in participants' accounts, including conflicting security recommendations, such as an inability to grant time out of cell during the evening patrol, yet time for keyword sessions was allocated during the evening patrol.

'...that period in the evening is a bit funny because... it technically is patrol state, but it's not. So, we could open the door to do it but it's still not best practice to.' (NSM)

'It's all good keeping these 90 minutes... when they are supposed to be banged up. ...'

you can't be unlocking lads unfortunately at that time.' (ESM)

Involvement in the change effort

Unsuccessful change implementation is common within organisations, constituting a short-lived success followed by a return to the status quo.³² However, the failure to produce sustainable change can result in longer-term dismissive attitudes among employees,³³ diminishing management credibility and fostering scepticism of future change initiatives.³⁴ Including and empowering employees to support change are integral aspects of successful change implementation in Öhman's model, with staff involvement being seen as providing invaluable input and motivating the development of positive attitudes. Deep organisational structural and cultural shifts are typically required to provide opportunities for employees to be included in change initiatives.³⁵ Nevertheless, this is possible to implement in a prison context, with Coyle arguing that effective change implementation can be driven collectively by employees at all organisational levels through involvement in decision-making.³⁶ There was a contrast

Unsuccessful
change
implementation is
common within
organisations,
constituting a short-
lived success
followed by a return
to the status quo.

between NSMs' aspirations for involvement and ESMs' distrust in management, demonstrating lack of rapport between the ranks.

'... I've just started picking my own [people to keyword]... if I've had a lad for a day and I feel like I've made progress, or I've got something set up for them for when they get released...' (NSM)

'No, you never get asked [to share ideas], for them you're just a number. Why would they ask us?' (ESM)

31. Dent, E. B., & Goldberg, S. G. (1999). Challenging "resistance to change". *The Journal of applied Behavioral Science*, 35(1), 25-41.
32. Roberto, M. A., & Levesque, L. C. (2005). The art of making change initiatives stick. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 46(4), 53.
33. Gozzoli, C., D'Angelo, C., & Tamanza, G. (2018). Training and resistance to change: Work with a group of prison guards. *World Futures*, 74(6), 426-449.
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35. Bovey, W. H., & Hede, A. (2001). Resistance to organisational change: the role of defence mechanisms. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 16(7), 534-548.
36. Coyle, A. (2013). Change management in prisons. In *Understanding Prison Staff*, 250-265. Willan.

Employee benefit is an important part of the communication stage in change management models, to reduce resistance and encourage involvement in the change effort.³⁷ Opportunity for keyworker contribution and development was intended to be an integral part of the OMiC model, which included ongoing quality monitoring, performance development reviews and support through keywork champions. However, participants indicated that these opportunities were no longer available to them, resulting in low perceived value of their involvement in keywork. Importantly, there was a discrepancy between keyworkers and managers perspectives, demonstrating that the benefit to staff was not explicitly considered by management when evaluating the benefits of OMiC.

'...you used to get scored for that quality work... I was so proud of my key working sessions and was getting good scores' (ESM)

'...score them and then let people know as well where their weaknesses are or where their strengths are. They don't really tell you.' (ESM)

'How can we measure the quality of the key working sessions? ...in time we will be looking for correlations between key worker delivery and violence, self-harm...' (Manager)

Recognising differences in perspective

Recognising individual-based differences in experiences, perspectives and expectations is another key step in successful change implementation. Knowledge gaps between individuals, such as different training or experiences, and shared direct experiences of ineffective change implementation have been linked to change-related resistance and cynicism.³⁸ Participants' accounts revealed significant differences in experience between NSMs and ESMs. The latter compared the initial and current implementation and observed that while the initial implementation was

aligned with the OMiC policy and worked well in practice, this gradually changed into different practices, which lacked clarity of vision, training, and effective management and which they regarded as unsatisfactory.

'I remember when we started originally, it was really brilliant, because you were allocated time, and that time couldn't be changed.' (ESM)

'Yeah... keywork scheme ... my experience is that when you're doing it, it does work well.' (ESM)

A lack of understanding and communication between the different ranks in the establishment also resulted in frustration between staff and managers.

'The keyworker got less and less and less...' (ESM)

NSMs' accounts demonstrated that they lacked knowledge of the initial purpose of the keyworker scheme and instead grounded their practice on observations of ESMs, who were equally confused.

'... a lot of it is just making up. You personally, as an officer as you go along.' (NSM)

'No one really tells you what is expected of you as a key worker anymore.' (ESM)

A lack of understanding and communication between the different ranks in the establishment also resulted in frustration between staff and managers, indicating mutual blame for the shortfalls of the OMiC implementation.

'I also don't think management style of keywork is very good because ... I think that promotes the box-ticking nature of it...' (NSM)

'So, it is not managed well. But at the start it was managed.' (ESM)

37. Öhman, J. (2018). *Developing a model for successful organizational change: Case 3M Nordic Region*. [MS Thesis, Arcada International Business Management]. Theseus.

38. DeCelles, K. A., Tesluk, P. E., & Taxman, F. S. (2013). A field investigation of multilevel cynicism toward change. *Organization Science*, 24(1), 154-171.

'The keyworker meetings are not good, there is no quality, and the quantity is insufficient as keyworkers are not conducting and recording the meetings.' (Manager)

'I was trained about three years ago. It was a very intensive training; it was really good to be fair. There has been nothing since the training.' (ESM)

Training and skills development

Developing skills through training is an essential part of change management models, enabling leaders to clearly communicate employees' roles and responsibilities in implementing organisational change.³⁹ Coyle proposed that prison leaders should aim to inspire the vision for change and establish the change parameters, by providing training and resources, while allowing staff to take initiative in modelling the practical elements of change delivery.⁴⁰ Initial and ongoing training was intended to be an integral part of OMiC. Participants agreed on the importance of skill development for the successful delivery of OMiC, concluding that training provision required improvement, corresponding with Öhman's change management model's recommendations. Organisations often fail to invest the necessary training resources to facilitate and sustain the planned change,⁴¹ and often the initial training does not translate well into the lived experience of the prison environment.⁴² This was evident in participants' accounts.

'Specific training — No! I want to say when we first got trained, they've taught us something, but at that point, I didn't know what anything meant because before I've never set foot in a prison ... it's not the same as actually doing it.' (NSM)

Developing skills through training is an essential part of change management models, enabling leaders to clearly communicate employees' roles and responsibilities in implementing organisational change.

Leadership

Successfully implementing organisational change requires effective leadership and cooperation between employees and management. Participants' observations paralleled Liebling's findings of lack of decision-making accountability and ineffective management in the implementation of the IEP scheme.⁴³ For example, all participants expressed concerns regarding management and the low priority of keywork delivery in the establishment. Frontline staff experiences differed from those of managers, indicating lack of communication and mutual understanding of the purposes and procedures, along with differing perceptions of accountability for the delivery and outcomes. For example, frontline staff emphasised poor management whereas managerial staff emphasised poor delivery.

Employee empowerment is an important aspect of change management models, with a leadership by example strategy, consisting of management 'living the change' and offering support and coaching to inspire employee motivation and participation.⁴⁴ The OMiC model recommended effective leadership strategies and continuous support for keyworkers through group meetings to aid motivation and resolve potential challenges. However, participants expressed concerns regarding management and the low priority of keywork delivery in the establishment, referring to the current structure as 'skeleton' like, while managers

39. Öhman, J. (2018). *Developing a model for successful organizational change: Case 3M Nordic Region*. [MS Thesis, Arcada International Business Management]. Theseus.
40. Coyle, A. (2013). Change management in prisons. In *Understanding Prison Staff*, 250-265. Willan.
41. Bovey, W. H., & Hede, A. (2001). Resistance to organisational change: the role of defence mechanisms. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 16(7), 534-548.
42. Coyle, A. (2002). *Managing prisons in a time of change*. London: International Centre for Prison Studies.
43. Liebling, A. (2008). Incentives and earned privileges revisited: Fairness, discretion, and the quality of prison life. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 9(S1), 25-41.
44. Öhman, J. (2018). *Developing a model for successful organizational change: Case 3M Nordic Region*. [MS Thesis, Arcada International Business Management]. Theseus.

agreed that currently the OMiC delivery is not prioritised.

'The difficulty is ... the prison service...I would say runs quite skeleton stuff.' (NSM)

'Unfortunately, at the moment the keyworker scheme is not seen as a big priority. Therefore, we prioritise everything before the keyworker scheme and that's why people get re-deployed so often.' (Manager)

Change management models stipulate that motivation for change must be considered and generated before any change can be initiated, with the SCP model including focus on maintaining motivation throughout the change process through continuous communication, evaluation, and recognition of effort. Positive employee attitudes are essential for the successful implementation of policy in the prison system and require clarity and understanding of the policy's benefits.⁴⁵ Further, Coyle argued that change is dependent on staff attitudes and motivation, which in turn rely on factors, such as confidence in management and consistency of leadership investment.⁴⁶ Participants' positive perceptions and attitudes of the OMiC potential in creating a constructive change in the establishment and motivation to support its efficacy were identified as prospective contributors to future effectiveness.

'100 per cent keyworker sessions do work. If you've got the time to do them.' (NSM)

'We saw the initial benefit of the keyworker scheme before covid. It has a massive influence on security, self-harm.' (Manager)

However, these optimistic views were combined with scepticism arising from past experiences of systemic barriers, inconsistency, and superficial application.

'I'll be honest, it is just firefighting. There is very little about it, that is ... 'Let's look post your sentence. Let's look at your life. Let's look at how you manage '... There isn't anything to do with how to stop offending behaviour.' (NSM)

Staff investment is fundamental for the OMiC policy delivery, as emphasised by one manager's reflections on what needed to change to counteract the present pessimistic outlook.

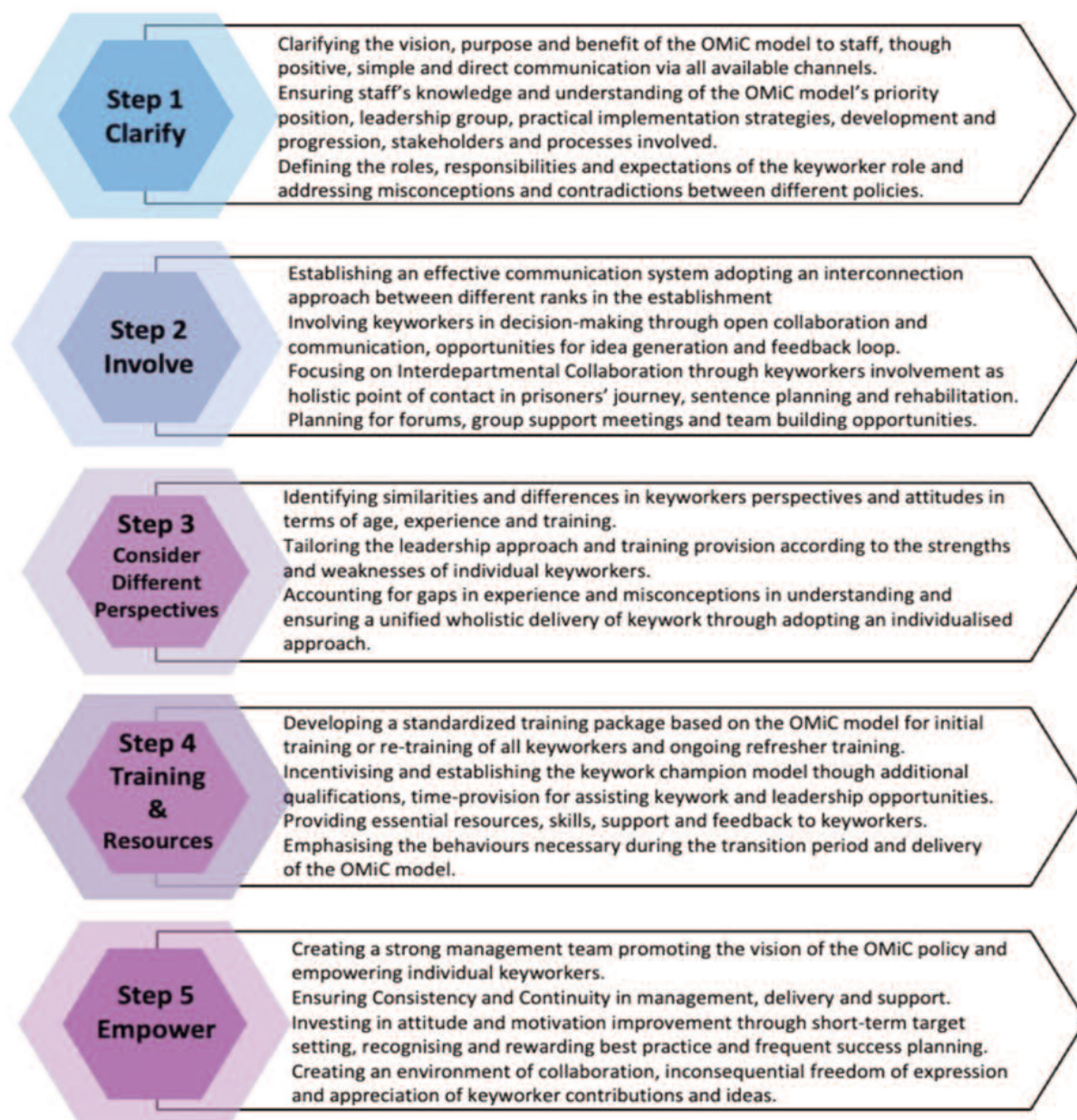
'We will need a complete change of mindset to be able to do the keyworker scheme appropriately.' (Manager)

Positive employee attitudes are essential for the successful implementation of policy in the prison system.

Recommendations

The research recommendations drew on staff concerns and suggestions for improvement and were also informed by the existing literature on change management and Öhman's SCP framework.⁴⁷ The primary recommendation is the adoption of a five-step action plan (illustrated in Figure 5) to refresh the implementation of OMiC at the establishment. Fundamental to the plan is the development of a strong transformational leadership team, determined to remove systemic blockages and adopt robust communication strategies.⁴⁸ Replacing the current top-down hierarchical form of communication with an interconnective communication system, through encouraging individuals to express ideas, provide feedback and get actively involved in the change effort would promote positive relationships development and collaborative environment.⁴⁹ To optimise effectiveness, communication and evaluation should begin before the start of the change effort and be applied alongside all five stages.⁵⁰ Splitting the change effort into small, short-term targets would create space to evaluate and adjust, recognise and reward best practice, and improve the relationship between the leadership team and keyworkers.

45. Liebling, A. (2008). Incentives and earned privileges revisited: Fairness, discretion, and the quality of prison life. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 9(S1), 25-41.
46. Coyle, A. (2002). *Managing prisons in a time of change*. London: International Centre for Prison Studies.
47. Coyle, A. (2013). Change management in prisons. In *Understanding Prison Staff*, 250-265. Willan.
48. DeCelles, K. A., Tesluk, P. E., & Taxman, F. S. (2013). A field investigation of multilevel cynicism toward change. *Organization Science*, 24(1), 154-171.
49. Finnegan, R. (2005). *Communicating: The multiple modes of human interconnection*. Routledge.
50. Öhman, J. (2018). *Developing a model for successful organizational change: Case 3M Nordic Region*. [MS Thesis, Arcada International Business Management]. Theseus



Note. This five-step recommendation plan was adapted from Öhman's (2018) SCP model of organisational change implementation.

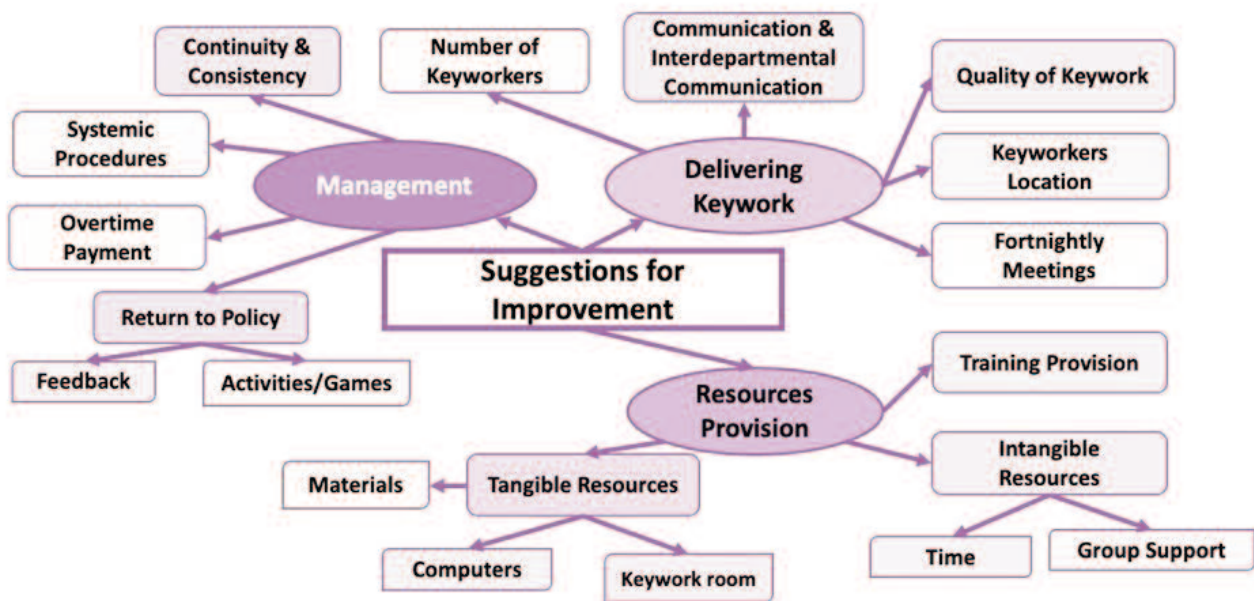
Figure 5. Recommendations for future implementation of the OMiC model.

Participants suggested improvement in the core areas identified to be implemented ineffectively, including management, continuity, and consistency, keywork delivery and training and resource provision. Notably, ESMs suggested a return to the approach prescribed in the policy, while managers discussed plans to better align policy and practice, suggesting overtime payment as an incentive to motivate staff.

Provision of resources and ongoing training were mentioned by all participants, as was the need for time allocation during the core regime. Tangible resources, such as computers and a keyworker hub, were discussed predominantly by ESMs and managers, who had knowledge of how these were used in early

implementation. Managers outlined plans for future implementation including providing keyworkers with opportunities for reflection, peer and group support and demonstrating understanding of the emotional and mental challenges associated with the role.

Other proposals related to changes in keywork delivery, such as improvements in communication and interdepartmental collaboration and quality assurance. In particular, keyworkers discussed implementation practicalities, such as number of assigned individuals, frequency and location of meetings, whereas managers discussed interdepartmental links, future plans and strategies for measuring impact.



Note. Colour Gradient represents frequency of mentions within the transcripts, with darker colour representing higher frequency. Each Organising Theme has the collective frequency of the subthemes.

Figure 6. *Thematic Network of Participant Responses on the Global Theme of Suggestions for Improvement.*

Conclusion

Participants' perspectives revealed major concerns around the practical implementation of OMiC policy, differential experiences of NSMs and ESMs, and opposing perspectives of management and keyworkers of the underlying reasons preventing effective implementation, resulting from ineffective communication strategies. Key elements of the policy, including continuity and consistency, communication and interdepartmental collaboration and keyworker involvement in decision making were not effectively applied in the delivery. Importantly, systemic blockages and misconceptions surrounding policy priorities, were

not accounted for in OMiC guidance and this posed challenges rather than solutions for individuals on the frontline.

Using a change management framework to develop the structural, procedural, and motivational conditions would provide a focus to the effective leadership and targeted action necessary to overcome the existing challenges and implement the OMiC policy successfully. While the recommendations are specific to improving delivery of keywork in one establishment, the SCP model framework could be applied to support change implementation efforts in other prisons where OMiC is known also not to be operating as intended as well as to future operational policy changes.

Recommendations for an Optimised Framework on the Implementation of Key Working and Training for Key Workers in UK Prisons

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The Key Worker role is part of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model. OMiC has the potential to overcome some of the core challenges facing His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The aim of the model is to assist offenders in their re-integration back into society¹, by providing an avenue of pre-release support, and an individualised case management approach. Yet feedback from frontline staff suggests that the model currently falls short of this potential. Reasons for this include the COVID-19 pandemic, poor staff retention, and inadequate training. Considering the high rates of reoffending and that the prison population is on the rise, Key Working risks becoming yet another failed policy.

There is little academic discussion to date on the efficacy of Key Working in prisons. Initial findings, and research on Key Working in other sectors, is largely positive². However, the reality on the frontline contrasts this. This article begins by examining the current literature relating to offender rehabilitation and the Key Worker scheme. It will then outline the findings from a consultative review undertaken with frontline staff working in the male estate. The review aimed to seek frontline staff's perspectives on the quality of Key Working, the training of staff, and their understanding of the role. These findings highlight that HMPPS still has some way to go in embedding the culture and values conducive to supporting offender rehabilitation.

Further, the Key Worker model — which has proven highly effective in other sectors — is not performing as envisioned. Consequently, two core recommendations are made: (1) That there should be a structured training programme for all Key Workers; and (2) There should be a unified model for implementation of the role across establishments.

Offender Rehabilitation and a Reduction in Reoffending as the Purpose of Prison

For decades academic and Ministerial discussion has focused on the function of prison³. In 2018, the then Justice Secretary, David Gauke, stated that 'rehabilitation' must be prioritised to reduce reoffending⁴. Despite this, academics rarely delineate a clear or concise criminological definition of rehabilitation⁵. For example, Raynor and Robinson define rehabilitation as a positive process for change involving some form of restoration to a former, or ideal state, usually with third-party intervention⁶; whereas Rotman describe it as being a right of the individual, and something penal policy should be orientated towards⁷. These definitions are reflected in contemporary penal discourse. European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) caselaw equates rehabilitation to being a fundamental human right of reintegration into society for all under Art 3 and Art 8 of the ECHR⁸.

Whilst the academic literature to date focuses on the purpose of prison, the values and culture that make

1. Ministry of Justice. (2018). *Manage the Custodial Sentence Policy Framework*. HM Prison and Probation Service.
2. Renehan, E., Goeman, D., Kock, S. (2017). Development of an optimised key worker framework for people with dementia, their family and caring unit living in the community. *BMC Health Services Research*, 17(1), 1-16.
3. Bullock, K., Bunce, A. (2018). 'The prison don't talk to you about getting out of prison': On why prisons in England and Wales fail to rehabilitate prisoners. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 20(1), 111-127.
4. Gauke, D. (2018, March 6). *Prisons Reform* [speech transcript]. Ministry of Justice.
5. Raynor, P., Robinson, G. (2005). *Rehabilitation, crime and justice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
6. Raynor, P., Robinson, G. (2005) see no. 5
7. Rotman, E. (1990) *Beyond Punishment: A New View of the Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders*. New York, Greenwood Press.
8. Martufi, A. (2019). The paths of offender rehabilitation and the European dimension of punishment: New challenges for an old ideal? *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law*, 25(6), 627-688.

a good Prison Officer⁹, and the factors supporting rehabilitation, it appears this research lacks application in UK prisons.¹⁰ As although prison policy places rehabilitation at the heart of the prison system, the reality in many prisons is still an outdated and anti-rehabilitation beliefs system, coupled with a prevailing traditional Prison Officer culture¹¹ Bullock and Bunce suggest that the Prison Service 'is failing to embed the cultures, relational processes and practices that have been found to facilitate effective implementation of rehabilitative regimes'.¹² In summary, the Criminal Justice Sector faces many challenges in its mission to reduce reoffending through achieving offender rehabilitation. These include Prison Officer cultures and negative attitudes towards rehabilitation¹³, balancing the competing aims of security and rehabilitation¹⁴ lack of training for staff and low staffing levels¹⁵.

How the Key Worker Role Can Overcome Some of the Challenges Facing the Prison Service, to Fulfil Prison's Role in Facilitating Rehabilitation

There is a clear gap between 'what works' in the penal discourse, and the prison reality in the delivery of rehabilitative interventions. High re-offending rates reaffirms this — at 24.3 per cent.¹⁶ Although there are many avenues of support, services, and interventions available in UK prisons, prisoners are often unaware of these and do not utilise or engage with them effectively. Further, many Prison Officers do not appear to be aware of these services. The Key Worker

role has the potential to bridge this gap between theory and practice and overcome some of the core challenges outlined above. By professionalising the service and embedding a culture of rehabilitation, the role could lead to a reduction in recidivism on a large scale.

Implemented in 2018, the OMiC model aims to promote rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. There are two strands to the model, the first is a Prison Offender Manager (POM). The POM's role is to act as a case manager and work with the prisoner to develop their sentence plan. They can assist with the identification of needs and can facilitate access to targeted interventions. POMs also bridge the gap between custody and community probation services¹⁷.

The second strand is a Key Worker for every prisoner in the closed prison estate. Within this model, each Prison Officer will be the Key Worker for 6 prisoners¹⁸ and they should meet with each prisoner for 45 minutes, once a week.¹⁹ The primary function of the role is to signpost prisoners to, and support them in accessing, internal and external support services.²⁰ A secondary function being to provide support and motivation to change. Ultimately, this should be a tailored and individualised service, reflecting the prisoner's individual needs. Over time, the Key Worker role could improve prisoner engagement with rehabilitative interventions; as well as enabling trusting and therapeutic relationships to develop.²¹ Both have been found to be effective in reducing recidivism.²² Considering its potential, Podmore argued that the 'Key Worker needs

There is a clear gap between 'what works' in the penal discourse, and the prison reality in the delivery of rehabilitative interventions.

9. Tait, S. (2011). A typology of prison officer approaches to care. *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), 440-454.
10. Social Exclusion Unit. (2002). *Reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners*.
11. Crawley, E., & Crawley, P. (2007). Understanding Prison Officers: Culture, Cohesion and Conflict. In J. Bennett, B. Crewe & A. Wahadin, *Understanding Prison Staff* (1st ed.). Routledge.
12. Bullock, K., Bunce, A. (2018). See n.3
13. Maycock, M., McGuckin, K., Morrison, K. (2020). 'We are "free range" prison officers', the experiences of Scottish Prison Service throughcare support officers working in custody and the community. *Probation Journal*, 67(4), 358-374;.
14. Ismail, N., Viggiani, N. (2018). Challenges for prison governors and staff in implementing the healthy prisons agenda in English prisons. *Public Health*, 192, 91-97.
15. Howard League for Penal Reform. (2017) The role of the prison officer. *Research Briefing*. London: Howard League.
16. Ministry of Justice. (2023). *Proven Reoffending Statistics: January to March 2021*. National Statistics.
17. *Custody and resettlement*. Justiceinspectorates.gov.uk. (2022).
18. House of Commons Justice Committee. (2021). *Through the Gate and new Resettlement Model*.
19. Ministry of Justice. (2018). *Manage the Custodial Sentence Policy Framework*. HM Prison and Probation Service.
20. Martin, G., Wheatley, R. (2022). The experiences of the Keyworker scheme from the perspective of men in prison. *Forensic Update*, 140 p11-17].
21. Podmore, J. (2014). *The Key Worker in Transforming Rehabilitation*.
22. Blagden, N., Winder, B., Hames, C. (2014). "They Treat Us Like Human Beings" – Experiencing a Therapeutic Sex Offenders Prison: Impact on Prisoners and Staff and Implications for Treatment. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60(4), 371-396.

to be bolstered and placed at the heart of how a future justice workforce should operate if it is to be effective'.²³

The vision for the role appears to draw from leading contemporary desistance theories. Prisoners can build pro-social bonds with their Key Worker, aligning with the Social Learning Theory.²⁴ The signposting function assists prisoners in accessing the services and resources proven to reduce reoffending. These include services to rebuild family ties;²⁵ access to substance misuse and mental health services; and employment and educational opportunities.²⁶ These are all identified in the seven pathways to reduce reoffending and align with Social Control Theory.²⁷ Finally, a Key Worker can provide motivation and support to prisoners to reduce their Criminogenic Needs, equipping them with the human goods necessary to live a better life. This is in accordance with the Risk Needs Responsibility Model and the Good Lives Model.²⁸

Since its implementation, Martin and Wheatley explored the benefits of the Key Worker scheme from the perspectives of 8 male prisoners.²⁹ They found prisoner experiences to be largely positive. Prisoners reported that they received practical and emotional support, that it felt personalised, and that therapeutic relationships developed. Further, it was suggested that this successfully managed the risk of violence. Their findings also highlighted that improvements needed to be made. For example, they found that not all sessions took place in private;

Key Worker can provide motivation and support to prisoners to reduce their Criminogenic Needs, equipping them with the human goods necessary to live a better life.

some prisoners felt there were inconsistencies in support given; and others thought their Key Workers were unprofessional.

Similar roles in other jurisdictions have been praised for their effectiveness. For example, the Throughcare Support Prison Officers in Scotland was widely regarded as a success. The role combines elements of the Key Worker, POM and probation role to provide an individualised case management approach during and after custody. The role was found to build therapeutic relationships; support access to services; encourage prisoner motivation; and provide a sense of purpose for the Prison Officers involved.³⁰ Additionally, penal systems in Sweden and Norway have placed the Personal Officer role as a core function of Prison Officers. Like Key Workers, Personal Officers have a small caseload of prisoners with which they do motivational work, provide counselling, and help with social planning for their release. The role led to improved job satisfaction; improved staff-prisoner relationships; and professionalised the service.³¹

The Key Worker role has also proven to add value in many sectors, ranging from support for those suffering with dementia,³² children with disabilities,³³ homeless individuals,³⁴ and 'troubled families'.³⁵ Key findings across the sectors suggest individuals with Key Workers experience a therapeutic relationship;³⁶ have improved access to services;³⁷ an improved quality of life;³⁸ and may experience a

23. Podmore, J. (2014). See n.21

24. Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Sampson, R., Laub, J. (2003). Desistance from crime over the life course. In *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 295-309). Springer, Boston.

25. Farmer. (2017). *The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*. Ministry of Justice.

26. Coates, S. (2016). *Unlocking Potential A review of education in prison*. Ministry of Justice.

27. Sampson, R., Laub, J. (2003). Desistance from crime over the life course. In *Handbook of the life course* (pp. 295-309). Springer, Boston; Social Exclusion Unit. (2002). *Reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners*.

28. Andrews, D., & Bonta, J. (2006). *The Psychology of criminal conduct* (4th ed). LexisNexis, Newark; Ward, T., Maruna, S. (2007). *Rehabilitation: Beyond the risk paradigm*. Routledge.

29. Martin, G., Wheatley, R. (2022). See n. 20

30. Maycock, M., McGuckin, K., Morrison, K. (2020) see n. 13

31. Bruhn, A., Nylander, P., Johnsen, B. (2017). From prison guards to... what? Occupational development of prison officers in Sweden and Norway. *Journal of Scandinavian studies in criminology and crime prevention*, 18(1), 68-83.

32. Renehan, E., Goeman, D., Kock, S. (2017). See n.2

33. Greco, V., Sloper, P., Webb, R., Beecham, J. (2005). *An exploration of different models of multi-agency partnerships in key worker services for disabled children: effectiveness and costs*. Social Policy Research Unit, University of York.

34. Manning, R. (2014). *An ecological perspective on recovery in homelessness: the influence of key worker values on consumer self-determination* (Doctoral Thesis). University of Limerick.

35. Parr, S. (2016). Conceptualizing "the relationship" in intensive key worker support as a therapeutic medium. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 30(1), 25-42.

36. Parr, S. (2016) see n,35

37. Renehan, E., Goeman, D., Kock, S. (2017). See n. 32

38. Greco, V., Sloper, P., Webb, R., Beecham, J. (2005). See n. 33

reduction in substance misuse.³⁹ However, each sector also faces similar challenges with the role. These include a varying quality of management; a lack of understanding of the role; and poor training and supervision of Key Workers.⁴⁰

Overall, it is clear to see the role has the potential to be a success, having a proven track record across a wide range of sectors, and receiving positive feedback from prisoners. To be successful however, requires evaluation and learning from similar roles, as well as ensuring that Key Workers are sufficiently trained and resourced to carry out the role effectively. To date, there remains large gaps in the literature on the efficacy of Key Working. In Martin and Wheatley's study, the sample size only totaled eight prisoners from a Category C prison. Therefore, it is hard to make an accurate assessment on the overall impact of the role without further studies.

To further understand the impact of the Keyworker Scheme, the current review sought to provide prison officers' perspectives of the role and the skillsets; and training required to be effective as a Key Worker.

The Review

To explore frontline staff perspectives on the role and quality of working, a review was undertaken involving consultative discussions with 25 officers from four male Category B local prisons and staff from the OMiC Policy Team. All consultations took place during December 2021 — May 2022 and were undertaken by the researcher, who at that time, was also working as a supervising officer at a Category B local prison in the Midlands. An inductive analysis of the data was undertaken, and four core themes emerged from the data. The findings and a review of the literature identified a need for additional training for Prison Officers around their role as Key Workers which will be discussed.

Findings

Four key themes were identified and are discussed below.

1. The performance and quality of Key Working

Overall, the findings indicated that the quality of Key Working falls below expected standards. The OMiC Policy team reported that only approximately one-third to half of Key Worker entries were of good quality, despite receiving much more positive feedback prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, all Prison Officers spoke quite negatively about the quality of some of their colleague's entries. Although some very positive examples were also cited, and there was some suggestion that quality was improving. However, concerningly, some reported they had heard colleagues bragging about making up entries. And many staff viewed being detailed Key Working as a day off or an easy shift, some referred to it as 'Key-Shirking'. Some Prison Officers reported no ring-fencing of time to complete the role and not being assigned designated Key Workers. Finally, many staff were not aware of the services available at their establishment, hindering their ability to fulfil their signposting function.

2. Examples of good and bad practice

The consultations highlighted some positive examples of initiatives to support Key Workers in the new role. Positively, staff at several establishments reported they had Keyworker Supervising Officers who provided quality assurance (QA), feedback, and support.

Generally, Prison Officers found emails commending them for high quality entries motivating. Some staff also had Keyworker hubs on their Houseblocks kitted out with desks, phones, and computers, which provided a quiet place to complete and record sessions. However, several difficulties were also identified. Most Prison Officers reported that it was difficult to access computers or phones. As a result, most Key Workers had little to no communication with POMs, mental health workers, or other stakeholders in the delivery of care. Some establishments had Key Worker booklets, acting as a guide to complete the role and outlining the support available. But it is unclear whether staff engaged with and utilised these. Finally, concerns were raised that many staff still did not know how to use The

The Keyworker Scheme, this current review seeks to provide prison officers' perspectives of the role and the skillsets; and training required to be effective as a Key Worker.

39. Manning, R. (2014). See n. 34

40. Greco, V., Sloper, P., Webb, R., Beecham, J. (2005). See n. 33

Big Word translation services, and that foreign nationals and non-English speakers may be under-supported by their Key Workers.

3. Prison Officers' understanding of their role as Key Workers

During the consultations it was evident that some Prison Officers were already clear about the purpose and value of Key Working. Some reported that they have seen benefits from the role, such as a decline in violent incidents and self-harm through queries and concerns being managed in a timelier manner. However, it was evident that there is a need for further and more comprehensive training around the role, as many Prison Officers did not clearly understand their role. Several stated that the role does not work, as all the prisoners ask for is help with queries, despite this being a key part of the role. More positively, some staff referred to a QA sheet, which they found helpful in improving their understanding of the role and how to conduct a session. Many Prison Officers however, had not received any feedback, support, or guidance. Additional resources are available on the Intranet, but many staff reported that they have never accessed these and would likely not. Of the staff spoken to, none had received additional training on the role.

This is despite prisons receiving funding to deliver six hours of training for each Prison Officers on this a year.

4. Prison Officers' belief in the notion of offender rehabilitation

The findings suggest that the HMPPS aims, values and culture are not yet fully embedded into the work of Prison Officers, although the Key Worker role may be pivotal in advancing this.⁴¹ Many Prison Officers stated they did not believe in rehabilitation; or that they once did but had become cynical from the job. Several Prison Officers believed their role did not extend to supporting rehabilitation and that only prisoners could change

themselves. Concerningly, many had a limited understanding of pathways to offending and how to support rehabilitation. Although some said that they would like additional training in these areas. Several Prison Officers spoke more positively about the role, stating they gained a sense of purpose from it; and that it provided them with the time to actually support prisoners in their rehabilitation.

Overcoming the Training Deficit

Overall, this highlighted a critique of the Key Worker model, that there is a training deficit. If unresolved, this deficit will limit the effectiveness of the role. Both Udechukwu and Castlebury found a positive correlation between a lack of training, low job satisfaction, and high staff turnover.⁴² The Howard League for Penal Reform outlined some of their concerns regarding high turnover rates and low staffing levels in UK prisons. They stated that it is 'difficult to have a rewarding career as a prison officer' due to an unclear job description; low pay; short training; limited development opportunities; and dangerously low staffing levels.⁴³ Conversely, Bullock et al. argued that employing well-trained staff with good inter-personal skills; making available supervision and mentoring; and providing feedback, are emphasised in the 'what works' literature.⁴⁴ Hence, improved training for Key Workers, should lead to better outcomes for both staff and prisoners. It will also result in Prison Officers feeling more fulfilled; lead to improvements in staff retention; and prisoners would receive a higher quality, consistent level of care.

At the time of writing, all Prison Officers must undertake the Level 3 Custody and Detention Officer Apprenticeship — an 8-week training course, coupled with several weeks shadowing (Recruitment Team, 2020). This training is among the shortest in Europe, and there are no requirements for any prior academic qualifications. Comparatively, training takes two years to complete in Norway, and in Denmark three. The

It is 'difficult to have a rewarding career as a prison officer' due to an unclear job description; low pay; short training; limited development opportunities; and dangerously low staffing levels.

41. Martin, G., Wheatley, R. (2022). See n. 20

42. Udechukwu, I. (2009). Correctional officer turnover: Of Maslow's needs hierarchy and Herzberg's motivation theory. *Public Personnel Management*, 38(2), 69-82.

43. Howard League for Penal Reform. (2017) The role of the prison officer. *Research Briefing*. London: Howard League.

44. Bullock, K., Bunce, A., Dodds. (2017) The Mechanics of Reform: Implementing Correctional Programmes in English Prisons. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 57(1), 3-20.

average training time in Europe is reported as being between six months to a year⁴⁵. It is advanced, that a structured national training plan for Key Workers is required to overcome some of the core challenges facing the Prison Service. This training should clearly set out expectations for the role, its benefits, and the required skillsets. As well as this, there should be local management, overseeing the quality of and providing sufficient support and resource allocation to Key Working. Similar recommendations have been made in literature on Key Working in other sectors.⁴⁶ Specialised training on local support and services available should also be provided.

Additionally, specialised training programmes in personality disorder awareness; developing communication skills; and motivational interviewing, have been found to be effective in developing the Prison Officers skillset.⁴⁷ Findings also suggest that blended training through lectures, workshops, and practical's, observational experience and peer supervision, as well as on-going training, yield the best results in embedding the skillsets relevant to the Prison Officer role.⁴⁸ Reflecting these findings, the Higher Certificate in Custodial Care (HCCC), taught to Irish Prison Officers, seeks to develop critical thinking, knowledge, and skillsets. The training programme utilises blended learning, comprising of academic, practical, mentoring, and digital learning.⁴⁹ A key focus of the training is on human rights, with all participants undertaking reflective practice to consider how learning about this impacted their treatment of prisoners.⁵⁰ Morrison also highlighted the value of reflective practice undertaken by Prison Officers in Scottish prisons, as it reinforces continuous learning.⁵¹ Finally, Blevins found that those who are effective communicators, problem solve, and possess knowledge

of the profession and working with at risk populations, are the most valuable.⁵²

Hence, there would be significant value in training around mental health, wellbeing, and human rights; as well as professional and skills-based development (if interested, please contact the author for a detailed outline of the recommended structure for the training of Key Workers). Alongside this, values-based recruitment of individuals already possessing rehabilitation supporting attitudes and skillsets, will go a long way in reducing of anti-rehabilitative sentiment and negative staff cultures.⁵³

Limitations

When considering the findings of this review, recognition must be given to its limitations. The author conducted consultative research with a small sample of staff at a limited number of Category B local prisons. Hence, the findings may not reflect the successes/failures of Key Working at all prisons. In addition, there may be many great initiatives to support its implementation not acknowledged in this article.

Further, the findings of the review are based on staff's perspectives, rather than on data, or a review of Key Working documentation. Some of those consulted may have presented an

inaccurate perspective of the Key Worker scheme, and not all perspectives may be reflected. Additionally, those consulted all knew and some worked with the author, which may have impacted what they chose to disclose during consultation.

Recommendations

Considering the above findings, the recommendations outline a comprehensive framework

A key focus of the training is on human rights, with all participants undertaking reflective practice to consider how learning about this impacted their treatment of prisoners.

45. Berlioz, D. (2019). "We are more like social workers than guards". Hesa Mag, (19).

46. Parr, S. (2016). See n. 35

47. Maltman, L., Hamilton, L. (2011). Preliminary evaluation of personality disorder awareness workshops for prison staff. *The British Journal of Forensic Practice*, 13(4), 244-256.

48. Ryan, C., Brennan, F., McNeill, S., O'Keefe, R. (2021). Prison officer training and education: a scoping review of the published literature. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 33(1), 110-138.

49. Leonard, L. (2020). Justice on the inside: teaching human rights and social justice to the recruit prison officers of the Irish prison service by developing professional integrity. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 23(2), 170-183.

50. Leonard, L. (202) See n. 49

51. Morrison, K. (2019). Reflective Practice at the Scottish Prison Service. *Work Based Learning e-Journal International*, 8(1), 122-128.

52. Blevins, M. (2004). The professionalisation of the correctional officer and the role of higher education. *Corrections Compendium*, 29(5), 7-11.

53. Robinson, D., Porporino, F., Simourd, L. (1997). The influence of educational attainment on the attitudes and job performance of correctional officers. *Crime and Delinquency*, 43(1), 60-77.

for the training of, and on-going support and supervision for Key Workers.

For Policy Makers

More comprehensive and centralised guidance and resources

- ❑ Structured guidance clearly outlining the aims and purpose of Key Working should be issued to ensure the role is understood and applied uniformly.⁵⁴ Modes of communication should be considered as Prison Officers often do not engage with resources on the Intranet.
- ❑ Resources to support Key Workers during sessions, such as worksheets on substance misuse, mental health, and goal setting, should be widely disseminated.

Recruitment of Prison Officers should be attribute and values-based

- ❑ Parallel to Manning's recommendation for Key Workers working with homeless individuals, Prison Officer recruitment should be based on individual's values, attributes, and views on rehabilitation.⁵⁵ This will ensure they possess the right attitudes and skillset in their role as Key Workers.

Training for Key Workers

- ❑ Top-up training should be devised centrally, and clear guidance given to establishments on its structure and content.
- ❑ Longer initial training for Key Workers should be put in place, covering skills in communication; motivational interviewing; working with vulnerable and complex prisoners; report writing; and reflective practice.⁵⁶ The author recommends that this takes place over a 5-day period with several additional sessions for on-going learning. This should also include some establishment specific training.⁵⁷
- ❑ Initial training should take place several months after the Prison Officers are in their role, to prevent an overload of information during initial training, and so they already understand the Prison Officer role.

- ❑ The training programme should be co-created by a range of professionals and stakeholders including academics, psychologist, mental health experts, and Prison Officers, to ensure it meets training needs and is in a format Prison Officers will engage with.⁵⁸

For Establishments

Key Worker Booklets specific to the establishment

- ❑ There should be two parts to this, the first being a unified guide to Key Working for staff at all establishments, outlining the purpose of Key Working; ways Prison Officers can support prisoners; and information on prison processes and national support.
- ❑ The second part should be prison specific, outlining what provision of support and services are available internally and externally, and key points of contact to signpost prisoners to. An email and phone directory should be included. This could be produced as a template for establishments to tailor to their own needs.
- ❑ This will need to be short and concise to ensure optimal engagement. Staff should be encouraged to use this in their day-to-day work.

Key Worker Hubs

- ❑ Each Houseblock should have a Key Worker hub containing computers, phones, resource booklets, worksheets, and Key Worker booklets, so staff can facilitate private sessions and have designated resources to complete the role.⁵⁹
- ❑ This may be hindered by prison design and limited space, especially in older prisons. But efforts should be made to overcome this, such as a central Key Working Hub for all Houseblocks if not possible on each Houseblock.

Key Worker Supervising Officers/Managers

- ❑ Each establishment should have a Supervising Officer or Manager overseeing and supporting Key Working. Their role would be to carry out QA; provide feedback; and support in training and supervision.

54. Renehan, E., Goeman, D., Kock, S. (2017). See n. 32

55. Manning, R. (2014). See n. 34

56. Morrison, K. (2019). See n. 51

57. For a more comprehensive overview of the recommended training, please contact the author.

58. Weel-Baumgarten, E., Benson, J., Hoshi, G., Hurlle, C., Mendive, J., Dowrick, C., Kassai, R. (2021). Co-creation and collaboration: A promising approach towards successful implementation. Experience from an integrated communication and mental health skills training programme for Japanese General Practice. *Patient Education and Counselling*, 104(19), 2386-2392.

59. Renehan, E., Goeman, D., Kock, S. (2017). See n.32

- They would be a key point of contact to the OMiC policy team, to share good practice and implement a unified approach.

These recommendations should be trialled and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness. Some recommendations are already in place at some establishments, so these will be easier to evaluate, such as the Key Worker Supervising Officer.

Conclusion

The Key Worker role has potential to overcome some of the challenges facing the UK Prison system in achieving its core aim of rehabilitation — namely negative staff cultures and high turnover rates. The role can ensure that all prisoners have access to the array of provisions and services available to support them in their reintegration back into society. This can only work however, if the workforce is sufficiently trained and professionalised, both as Prison Officers, and Key Workers. Otherwise, the gap between the 'What Works' literature and the prison reality will remain.

These findings suggest that there is still a long way to go in embedding a culture and skillset among all

Prison Officers, that aligns with HMPPS values. Selectivity in recruitment will ensure new recruits possess the values and skillsets necessary to support offender rehabilitation. Additionally, further training and education is required to ensure professionalisation of the role. It is the author's belief that with the right combination of blended learning, support, and provision of resources, the Key Worker role may transform the culture in UK prisons. In turn, this will improve the quality of services provided, and more positive outcomes will be achieved.

It is important to be realistic however, Key Working is not going to be a magical fix to reduce all reoffending. As leading desistance theories outline, offenders themselves must have the desire and agency to change.⁶⁰ And many internal and external factors may prevent a Key Worker from having a meaningful impact. Further, it is essential to ensure a strong focus on security remains, and that this is balanced with a focus on rehabilitation, not undermined by it. What Key Working can do though, is provide those with the propensity and desire to change, the motivation and access to support they would not have otherwise had.

60. Tyler, N., Heffernan, R., Fortune, C. (2020). Reorienting Locus of Control in Individuals Who Have Offended Through Strengths-Based Interventions: Personal Agency and the Good Lives Model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11.

Communication is 'Key': Barriers to Effective Staff Communication in a Custodial Setting

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Introduction

Effective internal communication is fundamental to success in every organisation. The effects of poor communication in a custodial environment manifest in quantifiable ways; to prisoners, it could increase violence; to staff, it can increase burnout or decrease work efficiency; to the organisation, it can limit the impact of rehabilitative culture and reduce its ability to achieve the mission of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to protect the public and to 'prevent victims by changing lives'. By utilising the researchers experience as a frontline Prison Officer, this paper seeks to explore barriers to effective staff communication in a custodial environment to suggest policy recommendations at establishment level, and inform wider HMPPS strategy from a national perspective.

In a prison setting, good systems of communication between all staff are the signifier of a well-managed establishment¹ and information channels are vital to the flow of knowledge and conducting complex processes within a prison.² Staff rely on effective communication for vital instructions to maintain security, safety, and conduct. Whilst communication in a custodial environment is acknowledged as 'essential for organisational success'³, it remains relatively unexplored as to what the specific barriers to communication are, particularly at establishment level.

HMPPS, as an organisation, recognises that internal prison communication needs improving and has embarked on projects to improve it; namely the High Reliability Organisation (HRO) model being piloted across fourteen prisons at the time of writing and a

focus on the Ways of Working Team's methods of communication. The HRO model is implementing learned operational concepts from the 'Structured Communications' initiative at HMP/YOI Isis from the 10 Prisons Project. HROs can be defined as organisation which 'potentially can-do catastrophic harm to itself and the public, but operates effectively, error-free over a long period of time'.⁴ Direct relevance of HRO theory has been applied to a custodial setting⁵, where Bogue identifies that prisons exhibit a 'sensitivity to operations' in incident management where the chain of command fluctuates to those who have a deeper feel for the current climate (i.e. officers have considerable expertise of specific prisoners in their care and their knowledge empowers decision making of senior personnel). The focus of the HRO pilot is to bring the Prison Service in-line with other industries, such as aviation and the military, to be highly reliable in their outcomes but to also recognise that when a service is run by people, there will undoubtedly be errors. Bennett and Hartley considered HRO theory in the context of prison security procedures and were cautious to endorse a blanket use of the model in prisons, as they believed it would be inappropriate to rely on this approach without emphasis on social aspects.⁶ Regardless, 'there still may be lessons that could be learned and applied' from HRO theory to prison management,⁷ particularly in communication strategy.

The Ways of Working Team at HMPPS HQ have identified one-way and two-way communication as a particular concern. They have pinpointed that most communication, for all grades, is one-way communication (i.e., staffroom printouts, newsletters, intranet, and briefings), while word-of-mouth and emails function as two-way communication flows.

1. Coyle, A. (2002). *Managing Prisons in a Time of Change* (Online ed.). London: International Centre for Prison Studies.
2. Hancock, P. G. & Raeside, R. (2009). Modelling factors central to recidivism: An investigation of sentence management in the Scottish Prison Service. *The Prison Journal*, 89(1), 99-118.
3. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2010). *Handbook for prison leaders: A basic training tool and curriculum for prison managers based on international standards and norms* (No. E.10.IV.4 ed.). New York: United Nations.
4. Bennett, J., & Hartley, A. (2006). High reliability organisations and high security prisons. *Prison Service Journal* (166), 11-16, p.11
5. Bogue, B. (2009). How Principles of High Reliability Organizations Relates to Corrections. *Federal Probation*, 73(3).
6. Bennett, J., & Hartley, A. (2006). High reliability organisations and high security prisons. *Prison Service Journal*, (166), 11-16, p.12
7. Ibid.

While HMPPS has acknowledged the need to improve staff communication and is making efforts to do so, significant communication issues remain both hierarchically (vertically) and interdepartmentally (horizontally) that are impacting operational delivery in prisons that, if ignored, will undermine the safety, security, and decency in prisons for both staff and prisoners. This paper explores current communication issues affecting frontline staff in a prison setting, to enrich the understanding of what communication challenges are, and those that are not being addressed by the current approaches.

Understanding the Problem with Staff Communication in a Custodial Setting

There has been limited research on staff communication in custodial settings. The literature which does consider this, often in the broader context of staff relationships and leadership, illustrates that prisons are hidden environments, where communication to the outside, even for staff, is constrained within a closed environment⁸, with significant professional isolation.⁹ This directly impacts the quality of communication, where, in frequent circumstances, even 'senior prison management [...] are not made aware [...] of the challenges encountered in prisons'.¹⁰ Considering that prison staff 'perform one of the most challenging and complex work of public services',¹¹ good systems of communication should be established and maintained to support staff and organisational management, to ensure that duties can be executed successfully and accurately. For example, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime emphasise the value of communication to staff outside primary information

transmission channels, 'improving internal communication among the staff and between the staff and the managers will increase employee morale, support a collaborative approach, encourage individual responsibility and initiative, and minimise grievances.'¹²

Overcoming a lack of information as a result of poor communication is not only significant to providing critical and necessary information to Prison Officers,¹³ but research shows this also has effects on 'job stress, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment'.¹⁴ In the current staffing climate, where the Prison Service is facing challenges with recruitment and retention of Prison Officers, improvement of communication channels would be likely to have a much wider impact on the job satisfaction and morale of the workforce.

Alarming, discontent of prison staff has been attributed in research to the 'organisational conditions and relationships between [prison] authorities and staff', rather than staff/prisoner interaction.¹⁵ Both the hierarchical structure and consequential depersonalised relationships have negative impacts on the contentment of staff towards their role, and the communication between frontline staff and their management intensify the risk of stress.¹⁰

To comprehend communication structures in a prison, it is essential to understand the impact of the vertical (hierarchical) and horizontal (interdepartmental) forms.

Vertical communication stems from prisons being hierarchical bodies following a strict structure whereby each rank reports to the rank above to feed information upwards, thereby ensuring only critical information gets reported up to the Governors. This was recognised by Coyle (2002) who noted that there is 'no upwards feedback and there is very little

Good systems of communication should be established and maintained to support staff and organisational management, to ensure that duties can be executed successfully and accurately.

8. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2018). Unique features of the prison environment. Handbook on Anti-Corruption Measures in Prisons, pp. 7-17.
9. Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situations of mental patients and other inmates*. Doubleday.
10. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2018). Unique features of the prison environment. Handbook on Anti-Corruption Measures in Prisons, pp. 7-17.
11. Ibid.
12. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2010). Handbook for prison leaders: A basic training tool and curriculum for prison managers based on international standards and norms (No. E.10.IV.4 ed.). New York: United Nations, p.41
13. Lambert, E., Barton, S., Hogan, N., & Clarke, A. (2002). The impact of instrumental communication and integration on correctional staff. *Justice Professional*, 15, 181-193.
14. Lambert, E., Hogan, N. L., Paoline, E. A., & Stevenson, M. T. (2008). I Want to Know and I Want to Be Part of It: The Impact of Instrumental Communication and Integration on Private Prison Staff. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 3(2), 205-229.
15. Fraser, A. (2014). Staff health and well-being in prisons: leadership and training. *Prisons and Health*, pp. 185-189.

information passed across the organisation'.¹¹ Consequential to their low position in this hierarchical structure, prison officers receive the least information and dialogue in a prison setting.⁹ Most prison staff desire instrumental communication¹⁶, defined as 'the degree to which information about the job is formally transmitted by the employer to employees'.¹⁷ This suggests issues with the communication channels themselves rather than lower grade staff having disregard for communication per se. To exacerbate this issue, the lack of upward feedback noted above, creates a separation in objectives between the senior leadership and frontline staff.

The need for **horizontal communication** is recognised to address the hierarchical boundary through a multi-layered communication system that encourages a transparent dialogue between junior staff and senior management.¹⁸ The broader importance of communication in a prison setting across hierarchical structures has been recognised, as 'a well-managed prison [...] will have a good system for communications between everyone'.¹⁹ Good communication in a prison cannot happen if there is no trust between staff, particularly across the hierarchical boundaries within the staffing structure.²⁰ Formal hierarchical, or vertical, communication channels are argued to be just as critical to achieving organisational success;²¹ additionally, little information is passed across the organisation because each department has 'no formal means of communication with each other'.²² From the researcher's personal experience, the limited information passed across the organisation is symptomatic of this vertical communication structure and creates an entanglement of communication networks.

The definition of communication was left open to staff to allow for open discussion and to identify where current understanding and expectations of communication within the prison setting lie.

Researching the Problem

Having experienced the direct effects of poor communication in a prison as a Prison Officer, the author wished to identify the barriers that inhibit effective communication between staff. Consultative research was conducted in early 2022 with serving prison staff to better understand perspectives from the frontline of current challenges related to communication. The staff interviewed worked in various grades in one establishment, a training prison in the Midlands which holds category C male prisoners. A total of 12 staff, who all had varying degrees of time-in-service and experience, were consulted, using semi-structured interview questions. These included Prison Officers, Supervising Officers, Custodial Managers, and a Governor grade, all of whom are uniformed staff.

Research findings primarily examined differences of opinion between the different grades by looking thematically at general, methodological, and cultural perceptions of communication. The definition of communication was left open to staff to allow for open discussion and to identify where current understanding and expectations of communication within the prison setting lie.

General perceptions towards communication from all grades was negative, although feelings about communication within the establishment from the Custodial Manager (CM) group were a lot less emotive than from the Prison Officer (PO) or Supervising Officer (SO) group.

The Governor grade interviewee expressed similarly negative perceptions to the POs and SOs but demonstrated consideration to how each grade is affected differently. Negative elements identified were a 'lack of visibility' from management, a 'weak sense of

16. Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., & Allen, R. I. (2006). Correlates of Correctional Officer Job Stress: the Impact of Organisational Structure. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 30(2), 227-246, p.238
17. Mueller, C., Boyer, E., Price, J., & Iverson, R. (1994). Employee attachment and noncoercive conditions of work. *Work and Occupations*, 21, 179-212, p.188
18. Coyle, A. (2002). Book Review: The prison officer. *Punishment & Society*, 4(4), 491-495.
19. Coyle, A. (2002). *Managing Prisons in a Time of Change* (Online ed.). London: International Centre for Prison Studies. P.93
20. Ibid.
21. Lambert, E., Hogan, N. L., Paoline, E. A., & Stevenson, M. T. (2008). I Want to Know and I Want to Be Part of It: The Impact of Instrumental Communication and Integration on Private Prison Staff. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 3(2), 205-229.
22. Coyle, A. (2002). *Managing Prisons in a Time of Change* (Online ed.). London: International Centre for Prison Studies. P.93

direction', and so-called 'blanket bollockings' to lower grades when errors occurred. Only the Governor grade interviewee referred to operational delivery in a collective sense; 'how are we as [residential unit] getting things done' as opposed to lower grades who typically expressed individual perspectives 'I have to dig to find out what I need to do'. This demonstrates the importance of those in leadership positions understanding that communication barriers extend beyond the means of communication alone.

Views differed amongst the grades about what the word 'communication' meant within the context of the establishment. For POs, communication came from the SO or the CM for that unit, following the hierarchical structure embedded into the communication networks. Notably, those in the CM group stated that communication for them was about understanding why a decision has been made, including having an opportunity to voice their opinion. These expectations were not raised by the PO and SO group who felt that communication was principally to know things and have clear and guided 'expectations.' Despite these concerns, there was a general lack of understanding from those it affects of the reasons why communication can be problematic. A Supervising Officer with over 20 years' experience exemplified this by stating: 'the communication is shocking but if you're going to ask me how to fix it, don't bother'.

Methodological perceptions of communication can be understood as methods of communication practiced between staff, including for example, face-to-face (briefings), emails, intranet, and word-of-mouth. All grades emphasised the importance of face-to-face communication, establishing verbal communication as the most valuable. Face-to-face communication, depending on the format, generally is conducive to two-way communication, thereby allowing individuals both to relay information and check understanding. There were expectations from the lower grades for management to be competent communicators and pass on the information their staff need. Whilst the higher grades also acknowledged this, the SOs particularly felt they were the 'middle-men' yet received insufficient information to be confident that the information they were passing on was of quality and

informative. SOs were the only grade to express that they felt they did have positive relationships in their peer group but did not have enough face-to-face contact with each other. Thus, SOs felt disadvantaged by the fact that they had to be reliant on written communication between each other when they had preference for verbal communication. POs expressed that communication was 'diluted' and felt this was due to the numerous stages of passing information that were needed prior to reaching them. POs felt that discussion about messaging being conveyed would be beneficial in an open forum with higher grades present. While for them the current delivery method—which was primarily in the form of daily morning briefings—was useful, it did not allow for long discussions due to

time-constraints. Too often, they felt such briefings were not the time or place to contribute information, rather they were to receive instructions for the day.

An intranet is used by HMPPS to distribute information, policies, resources for departments, and localised information. Whilst technology can enhance methods of work,²³ at an establishment level the use of technology in prisons can splinter communication channels. For example, methodological concerns of POs generally concentrated on their ability, or

lack thereof, to access emails. For them, the primary source of information was verbal, through staff briefings and/or other forms of face-to-face communication. They felt frustrated when information was communicated to them via email due to lack of facility time to access them. POs collectively stated that they do not use the intranet, with one officer describing it as a 'poor tool'. This is in direct contrast to SOs, CMs and Governors who all stipulated that the Intranet is essentially their 'idiots guide'. One CM acknowledged that in their promotion from SO they relied on the resources on the Intranet to support them.

Cultural perceptions of communication can be understood as organisational culture that impacts on communication in a custodial environment. Under this category, the themes: confidence in information, relationship with others, trust, and feeling united in a common goal were explored.

Prison staff stressed that trust among colleagues was essential,²⁴ and effective communication from

Cultural perceptions of communication can be understood as organisational culture that impacts on communication in a custodial environment.

23. See, for example, Cascio, W. F., & Montealegre, R. (2016). How Technology Is Changing Work and Organizations. *The Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 349–375.

24. See, for example, Hacin, R., & Meško, G. (2019). *The Dual Nature of Legitimacy in the Prison Environment*. Springer International Publishing.

leaders was the best way to improve trust with employees within an organisation, demonstrating the coalescence of the two. For participants in this study, the lack of trust between different grades was palpable. The POs and SOs specifically sought out their sources of information dependent on their trust of individuals. For example, an SO disclosed that communication helped them 'weed out who they can trust', this would then have a direct impact on what sources of information they would utilise. Whilst staff briefings were mentioned by all to be the main source of communication, one PO emphasised that the 'staff briefing is only as good as the person running it'. Every grade, except for the Governor, stated that communication 'depends on the person', highlighting the importance of trusted relationships on how communication is received. Importantly, each grade felt the communication between others of the same grade was positive, but between grades was often less so. Additionally, POs and SOs highlighted that their lack of trust for managers was due to their 'competing values' of being operational whilst instigating senior management's objectives which were seen as more strategic. Regardless of their rank, the more the staff member felt they 'got on well' and had similar ways of working to their senior, the more they expressed trust.

Addressing the Effectiveness of Staff Communication

Research participants discussed their perceptions of barriers to effective staff communication. Three themes were identified: (1) methodological and cultural issues; (2) different grades using different sources; and (3) over-reliance on one-way communication channels.

Barriers comprised both **methodological and cultural issues**. Each rank from PO through to Governor, emphasised different perspectives about why communication in the prison was problematic. For example, the POs focused explicitly on cultural factors and made the following observations: 'lack of trust in managers', 'it's hierarchical', 'too many working parts', and 'the relationships between us and manager'. CMs however focused more on methodological factors such as lack of face-to-face communication and technological restrictions. The Governor tended to focus on cultural factors by identifying the lack of

'diversity of personalities in communication'. POs and SOs highlighted the importance of face-to-face communication in the execution of their roles, and the lack of trusting relationships outside of their peer group with management. CMs and the Governor however placed greater emphasis on methodological concerns, largely related to the use of emails, as well as a knowledge disconnect to the front-line. While examining methodology and culture independently helps to unpack and understand communication issues, they should not be treated as mutually exclusive, they are intertwined and overlap in complex ways. Accordingly, any recommendations or solutions must encompass and address both. Taking such an approach would mitigate the risk of implementing improvements

that are either so simplistic that they do not capture the roots of the issue or perceive the communication barrier too broadly to have applicable solutions. For example, if a weekly newsletter was implemented to improve senior leadership information, this is unlikely also to improve the trust that underlies effective communication.

Different grades used different sources of information and relied on different channels of information flow. Varying prioritisation of communication methods from different grades resulted in differential amounts of information gained. This

difference in knowledge base impacts on job execution and related teamwork, trust, and relationships. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity over where responsibility for communication lies despite the entrenched hierarchical model. As a result, the different sources of information which flow through multiple communication channels often contradict each other. This suggests that, following development and operational change post-COVID-19, senior leadership should consider where, how and why information can or should be accessed to build confidence in these sources. Correct utilisation of technology should be adopted to compliment, rather than replace, face-to-face communication as a priority and all sources of information should support each other, rather than compete with one another.

Participants highlighted **significant overuse of one-way communication channels** for information sharing. This undermines effective communication because it restricts feedback, understanding assurance, and hinders information sharing. Both methodological

Varying
prioritisation of
communication
methods from
different grades
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of information
gained.

and cultural factors discussed by interviewees emphasised issues with one-way communication, with negative perceptions expressed including not feeling heard and being given diluted information. While front-line staff have periodic opportunities to raise issues to overcome the one-way channels, the ability to do this with HQ is near impossible. One member of staff expressed that 'if a Governor doesn't understand our problems, why do HQ staff think they do'. This has the effect of isolating those staff from engaging in organisational discussions outside of their establishment. The Governor grade, who identified the importance of consulting with staff prior to decision-making, evidently engaged in additional two-way communication, such as discussions with staff and encouraging feedback. Both POs and SOs spoke about this individual extremely positively and valued their visibility that enabled face-to-face communication. Nevertheless, tools which managers utilise for two-way communication, namely emails, are regularly perceived as a one-way tool from subordinate POs and SOs. It is important to recognise that substantial value is placed on two-way communication from front-line staff, particularly in an environment where critical information is changing rapidly.

Synthesising Experiences from Across the Prison Estate

It is important that these findings from one establishment are situated within experiences of other initiatives across the prison estate to give a fuller, more holistic understanding of staff, and to establish both the extent to which the findings align with similar perspectives or highlight isolated experiences, and whether they can provide valuable insight to further develop the national initiatives. The findings were therefore tested with three staff at another establishment (a PO, an SO and a Governor grade) who had experienced the implementation of a 'structured communications' project (the theoretical predecessor to the HRO pilot) which focused specifically on 'check-listing' as an active attempt to bridge the hierarchical divide.

The check-listing tool, which continues to be utilised in the HRO pilot, is regarded as an effective teamwork tool already in use within HMPPS and other industries. This approach seeks to provide consistency of information delivery, ensuring that all essential

information is discussed and responsibility for improving the communication channels is identified. A staff member, not dependent on seniority, will lead on briefing and all staff are encouraged to contribute by engaging in questions to ensure that the information imparted is understood. It is important that the information delivered is accurate, concise, and establishes responsibility or escalation for actions.

The feedback from use of this method was overwhelmingly positive. The SO stated that they felt methodologically that checklist-briefings were ideal for informing staff in a custodial environment, and that they '[were] empowering lower grades', 'encouraged people to be more included', and developed 'better cooperative teamwork'. An important part of the

It is important to recognise that substantial value is placed on two-way communication from front-line staff, particularly in an environment where critical information is changing rapidly.

approach is empowering staff of lower grades to make decisions within their team, whilst having the supervision of management to support the process. This shifts the communication away from being directive, and towards collaborative discussion across the grades. Additionally, it ensures all staff are aware of critical information, thereby reducing the likelihood of incidents and making the environment safer for staff and prisoners. Importantly, this model requires visibility and support from managers and supervisors who also engage in the briefings. While staff stated that check-listing does not fully solve the

influence of human factors in communication barriers, they identified that having a consistent space for open communication, with various managers present, illuminated potential risk factors before they escalated. Prison managers also felt able to get to know their staff better and therefore more able to recognise subtle changes which may require intervention.

On the other hand, the implementation of communication strategies from HMPPS for operational staff was felt to be limited to 'upward' communication improvement. For example, while it was considered essential to have a Governor grade present at morning briefings to improve their visibility and awareness, consequently improving communication channels, the perception of the SO was that information flow was solely upwards. It was stressed that while messages were more adequately conveyed, 'downward feedback remained the same', echoing similar feelings of exclusion as the staff in the initial establishment.

Two strategic tools were identified as making a notable improvement by the staff in the second

establishment: (1) communication workshops, and (2) daily briefings from Governing Governor with SOs. Workshops were described by the staff member as being 'vitaly important in improving communication interdepartmentally and between grades'. The approach comprised team building mornings where games were played to teach and encourage improved communication. Secondly, having the Governing Governor facilitate a briefing with SOs each afternoon, was seen as facilitating better relationships whereby front-line supervisors were fully aware of changes and had a space to escalate concerns which could then be discussed and swiftly resolved. Additionally, it improved morale by increasing understanding of what is colloquially termed 'prison business' to work towards a common goal through bridging the hierarchical divide. All those consulted agreed that both tools not only improved communication directly but impacted the culture of the prison by strengthening staff relationships and collaborative working.

Whilst staff in this prison were positive about communication improvements, similar to those in the first establishment, the staff also recognised the complexity of the hierarchical structure of staff in prison and acknowledged that there was no simple solution to overcome these barriers. Communication between staff in both prisons continue to need significant development to be more effective, both in understanding localised issues and cultures, and in addressing the issue of embedded hierarchical structures across the prison estate.

Recommendations to Improve Staff Communication at Establishment Level

The key points which need to be addressed to improve communication in the first establishment are methodological vs. cultural issues, discrepancies in sources of information, and challenges with existing methods of one-way and two-way communication.

It is recommended that **the checklist briefing tool used in the HMPPS pilots be introduced by senior leaders in residential morning meetings.** This would shift an existing and established channel of communication (briefings) from one-way to two-way communication which would have several benefits.

Firstly, the format would allow management staff to 'manage' whilst operating their management style in an inclusive framework that empowers frontline staff. Secondly, positive feedback from end users who had experienced the tool showed that it addressed the primary barriers to communication, by establishing a consistent means of critical information delivery where lower grades were more involved, were given greater responsibility, and were better engaged in teamwork.

It is recommended that a **local 'Communication Strategy' should be developed and published,** in consultation with staff. The strategy should outline where, how, and when communication should be executed within the operational function of the staffing group. This would help all grades assimilate to the variety of communication methods that exist within a custodial environment, as well as establishing clear expectations and responsibilities and enabling staff to support one another in facilitating effective communication. An essential element of this strategy should be staff development sessions that focus on teambuilding, improving communication delivery, and reflection for continuous development. Specifically, team building exercises that encourage collaborative working and teamwork should be utilised (for example, team sports events, competitive games, and problem-solving exercises), consisting of both departmental and inter-departmental sessions. These

sessions should be a standard part of operational delivery and be conducted, at least bi-annually. Additional research focusing on the impact of this, and consideration for the individual needs for a specific establishment, should be conducted to enhance the strategy, and explore the complexities of interdepartmental communication to support the internal communication throughout the establishment, not just within the operational grades.

It is recommended that **increased focus on communication should be implemented, through mentoring, training, and engagement, for middle management grades.** Since these roles (Supervising Officers and Custodial Managers) have high levels of responsibility for communicating essential and strategic information interchangeably through from Governor grades to front-line operational delivery, they need ongoing support for, and review of, their

Communication
between staff in
both prisons
continue to need
significant
development to be
more effective, both
in understanding
localised issues
and cultures.

communication styles. Prisons can induce a 'prevailing authoritarian chain of command' from managers, and support should be implemented to ensure those stepping into these roles 'enforce a democratic style of leadership, based upon establishing and maintaining good relations with all of their subordinates'.²⁵ Investing time and resources into communication specific guidance for Supervising Officers and Custodial Managers, in conjunction with regular informal performance reviews with a mentor, would develop communication for the operational grades and improve the culture for staff. Governing Governors have recently been given guidance—under the 'Free, Flex, and Fixed' model—that enables them to have clearer understanding of where they have existing flexibility and freedom in their role and empowers them to access and use those powers more readily. A similar approach to devolving responsibility and empowering Supervising Officer and Custodial Managers could equally be applied to simplify communication and support the delivery of business plans from senior leaders. With greater transparency about role responsibility and accountability, all staff would have greater confidence in communication delivery and a better understanding of where discretion can be exercised.

Whilst these recommendations cannot entirely address the barriers to effective communication, they are expected to improve the current communication climate for operation staff.

Conclusion

Due to the complexities of communication in a custodial environment, there is no 'quick fix' set of solutions that can be applied to address the barriers to effective communication for staff. Nevertheless, through consideration for specific issues at a category C prison in the West Midlands and ideas trialled at other establishments, the recommendations for implementation at a local level are expected to improve communication at an establishment level. These recommendations seek to overcome the divide in communication within the hierarchical structure of operational prison staff in both methodological and cultural practices, to shift the working environment and communication practices to be more inclusive than directive.

HMPPS should prioritise efforts to improve staff communication channels as the impact of communication has a direct influence on security, safety, and conduct within a prison. By creating an environment with effective communication, staff would have better organisational commitment through knowledge sharing to improve the service and greater relationships with their peers and management. This in turn, should increase retention and job satisfaction and create workplace environments that are solution focused for continuous learning and development.

25. Hacin, R., & Meško, G. (2019). *The Dual Nature of Legitimacy in the Prison Environment*. Springer International Publishing, pp.66

Use of Force and Rehabilitative Culture

Max Baker is a Band 5 Apprenticeship Coach at HMPPS and an ambassador of the Unlocked Graduates Programme.

This study aimed to understand the link between using force and rehabilitative culture at HMP/YOI Belmarsh. Questionnaires examined Prison Officers (N = 46) attitudes towards social skills, prisoners, and use of force. Participants were also able to provide open responses to questions regarding rehabilitative culture. The research found a strong link between use of force and rehabilitative culture at HMP/YOI Belmarsh. Significant relationships were identified between gender, experience, attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and use of force, of prison officers and their opinions of rehabilitative culture, showing an inextricable link. Qualitative data showed many Prison Officers believe there is no current rehabilitative culture at HMP/YOI Belmarsh, indicating staff who support a rehabilitative culture will also have positive attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and use of force.

Introduction

The purpose of prisons is to 'promote rehabilitation and reform to reduce reoffending'.¹ Working as a Prison Officer is a varied role which involves balancing the needs of prisoners with security and safety. This regularly pits rehabilitation against security, which is where use of force (UoF) can sit precariously balanced, this study aimed to investigate rehabilitative culture (RC) and its link to UoF at HMP/YOI Belmarsh.

Prison Service Order (PSO) 1600 describes UoF as 'any and all types of force that may be used against a prisoner, the use of planned and unplanned CandR and the use of any type of force in order to give effect to a lawful order'.² There has been a recent dramatic rise in

prison violence in England and Wales. There was a 20 per cent increase in UoF incidents in prisons in 2018 compared to the previous year. Regarding HMP/YOI Belmarsh specifically, the number of UoF incidents had doubled from 2018 to 2021.³

HMPPS has committed to creating a RC in its prisons, but there are concerns it is being used as an attractive buzzword. It can be summarised as a culture within prison which provides the opportunity to change by tackling the reasons people commit crime and supporting them to lead a better life in and outside of prison.⁴ A significant barrier for rehabilitation is prison violence, whether that means UoF incidents or prisoner-on-prisoner fights, highlighting the need to closely examine UoF and its relation to rehabilitative culture, even in establishments with relatively low levels of violence.⁵

Legitimacy is both the perception of fairness of force used and its legal legitimacy.⁶ The lawful rules for using force in prisons are outlined in PSO 1600 and include making sure:

- ❑ it is reasonable in the circumstances
- ❑ it is necessary
- ❑ no more force than is necessary is used
- ❑ it is proportionate to the seriousness of the circumstances

It is argued UoF legal legitimacy is generally upheld, suggesting the perception of legitimacy by the prisoners is key in terms of non-escalation of violence taking place.⁷ There is an important link to be made between social skills and the prevention of UoF instances. Social skills form the foundation of Prison Officer work.⁸ One of the ways in which social skills prevent force is they increase the self-legitimacy in

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1. Ministry of Justice. (2021). *Prison Strategy White Paper*. London: Ministry of Justice.
 2. HM Prison Service. (2005). *Use of Force*. Prison Service Order 1600. Ministry of Justice.
 3. HMIP. (2022). Report on an independent review of progress at HMP Belmarsh.
 4. Mann, R., Howard, F. F., & Tew, J. (2018). What is a rehabilitative prison culture. *Prison Service Journal*, 235, 3-9.
 5. Blagden, N., Winder, B., & Hames, C. (2016). "They treat us like human beings"—Experiencing a therapeutic sex offenders prison: Impact on prisoners and staff and implications for treatment. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 60(4), 371-396.
 6. Trinkner, R., Kerrison, E. M., & Goff, P. A. (2019). The force of fear: Police stereotype threat, self-legitimacy, and support for excessive force. *Law and Human behavior*, 43(5), 421.
 7. Klahm, C. F., Papp, J., & Rubino, L. (2016). Police shootings in black and white: Exploring newspaper coverage of officer-involved shootings. In *The politics of policing: Between force and legitimacy* (Vol. 21, pp. 197-217). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
 8. Beijersbergen, K. A., Dirkzwager, A. J., Molleman, T., van der Laan, P. H., & Nieuwbeerta, P. (2015). Procedural justice in prison: The importance of staff characteristics. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 59(4), 337-358.

prison staff.⁹ Toxic masculinity and macho attitudes have been found amongst prison staff, leading to a culture of praising force.¹⁰

Linking Use of Force and Rehabilitative Culture

Though prison violence in any form has serious implications for safety and security, there is a wider issue in terms of rehabilitation. This report aimed to understand Prison Officer attitudes towards UoF at HMP/YOI Belmarsh, and how this relates to their views on RC. The feeling of unfairness that is common in recipients of force can lead to the development of aggressive tendencies, psychological trauma, an increased likelihood of reoffending, and increased acts of rule-breaking within prison.¹¹ The sum of these consequences in relation to RC is that it makes reoffending far more likely. Social skills can prevent UoF incidents by improving staff-prisoner relationships and improving de-escalation skills.¹² It has been shown that the MoJ and HMPPS seek to improve the rehabilitative provision of prisons. By ensuring prisoners are respected, legitimacy is upheld, social skills are valued, and UoF is carefully overseen by all staff, RC can be allowed to flourish.

Research Aims

To understand the relationship between the gender identity and experience of Prison Officers in relation to their attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF, as well as their opinions on RC.

Hypotheses

1. Male prison officers will be significantly more likely to have negative attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF than female prison officers.
2. More experienced prison officers will be significantly more likely to have negative attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF.
3. Attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF are all linked — for example, those with poor attitudes towards prisoners will also have poor attitudes towards UoF.
4. Prison officers who score higher on the attitude scales will also have significantly more negative opinions about RC.

Method

Questionnaire

This mixed methods study consisted of a questionnaire, capturing gender identity, age, and experience. Participants were then asked seventeen attitude statements, which were self-Likert scaled (Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree)). The questionnaire used in this study was created by Kop and Euwema¹³ and adapted where needed. Questionnaires were distributed and completed by participants in patrol state periods.

Data was collected from one establishment meaning data may have limited generalisability, and this was highlighted in the findings.

Table 1: The three attitude scales used in this study and their related terms

Scale Reference	Attitude Type	Subject Matter for Attitude
S1	Attitude Towards Prisoners	Prisoners
S2	Attitude Towards Social Skills	Social Skills
S3	Attitude Towards Use of Force	Use of Force

Measures

The predictor variables for the study were age, gender, and years of experience of participants. The outcome variables for the study were attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF. This study used five measures.

9. Hacin, R., & Meško, G. (2018). Prisoners' perception of legitimacy of the prison staff: A qualitative study in Slovene prisons. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 62(13), 4332-4350.

10. Gariglio, L. (2017). *'Doing' coercion in male custodial settings: an ethnography of italian prison officers using force*. Routledge.

11. Klahm, C. F., Papp, J., & Rubino, L. (2016). Police shootings in black and white: Exploring newspaper coverage of officer-involved shootings. In *The politics of policing: Between force and legitimacy* (Vol. 21, pp. 197-217). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

12. Beijersbergen, K. A., Dirkzwager, A. J., Eichelsheim, V. I., Van der Laan, P. H., & Nieuwbeerta, P. (2014). Procedural justice and prisoners' mental health problems: A longitudinal study. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 24(2), 100-112.

13. Kop, N., & Euwema, M. C. (2001). Occupational stress and the use of force by Dutch police officers. *Criminal justice and behavior*, 28(5), 631-652.

Demographic data were collected in the form of gender identity, age, and experience as a Prison Officer. Attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF were also collected. Finally, RC was measured as qualitative data through three open questions.

Participants

Participants were recruited using exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling. Questionnaires were given to Prison Officers working only on residential houseblocks. An equal number of male and female participants were recruited. 23 of the participants were male, 22 were female, and 1 preferred not to state their gender.

Data and Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was undertaken to understand relationships between measured variables and to reduce bias in answers. Experience as a Prison Officer was divided into those with one year or less and those with more than one year experience. Data were tested for normality using a Shapiro-Wilk test and either an

independent samples t-test or Mann-Whitney U test was completed for each discrete predictor variable. A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine correlations between the continuous variables. The significance level and confidence level for this study were both 95 per cent.

Responses to Open Questions

Coding was completed to three open questions to give semantic and latent codes. An open coding technique was used to allow themes to appear from responses. There were two rounds of coding. In the first round of coding, codes were descriptive. A second level of coding collated codes into broader descriptions, resulting in fewer codes.

Results

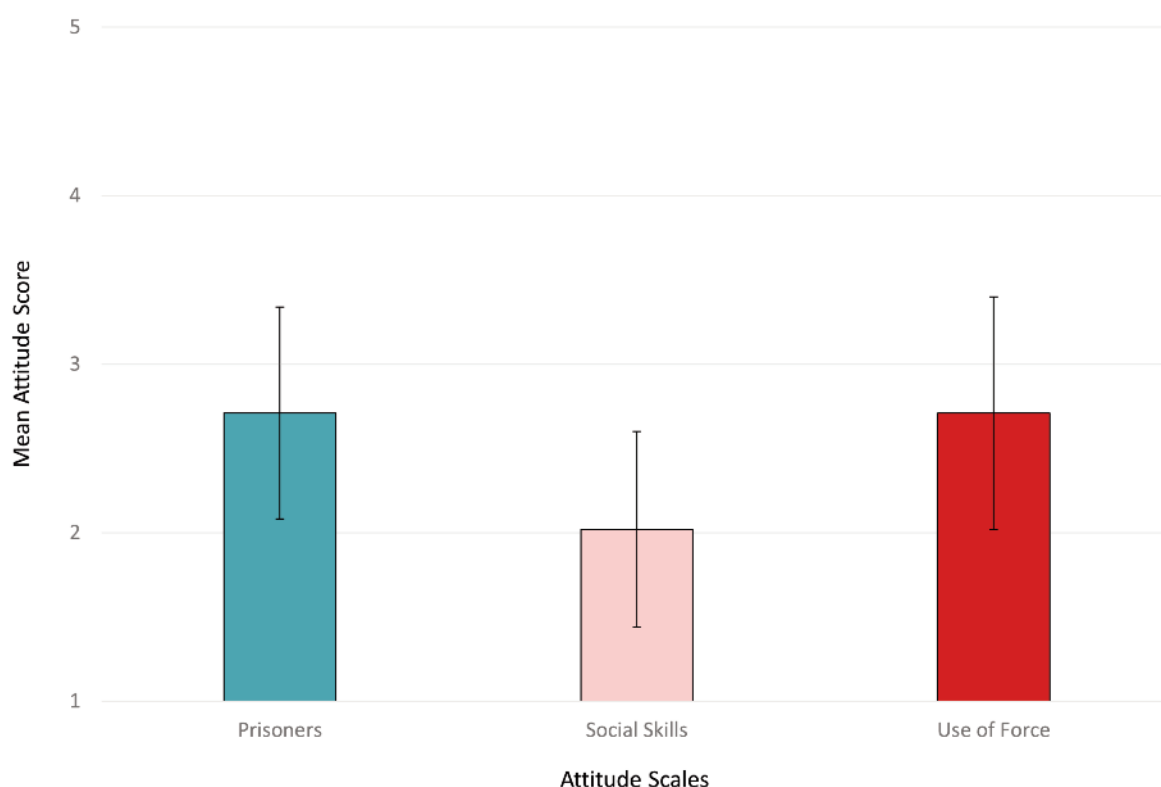
Descriptive Statistics

The mean age of each participant was 30.41 years (SD = 8.13). The mean experience of each participant was 3.09 years (SD = 5.55).

Table 2: Descriptive Mean Statistics.

Category	N	Mean (years)	Standard Deviation
Age	46	30.41	8.13
Experience	46	3.0	5.55

Figure 1: Bar chart showing mean attitude score by attitude scale.



The mean score for S1 (attitude towards prisoners) was 2.71 (SD = 0.63). The mean score for S2 (attitude towards social skills) was 2.02 (SD = 0.58). The mean score for S3 (attitude towards UoF) was 2.71 (SD = 0.69).

Mean total attitude scores were split between gender and experience group. Those in experience group 1 were those with one year or less experience as a prison officer, those in experience group 2 were those with more than one year. This is shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Descriptive Mean Total Attitude Scores Split by Gender.

Attitude Scale	Gender	N	Mean Total	Standard Deviation
S1	Male	23	16.70	0.86
	Female	21	15.71	0.71
S2	Male	23	10.57	0.63
	Female	21	9.50	0.58
S3	Male	23	17.04	0.53
	Female	21	15.62	0.81

Table 4: Descriptive Mean Total Attitude Scores Split by Experience Group.

Attitude Scale	Experience Group	N	Mean Total	Standard Deviation
S1	A year or less	23	15.39	3.49
	More than 1 year	23	17.04	4.07
S2	A year or less	23	9.74	3.00
	More than 1 year	23	10.48	2.79
S3	A year or less	23	15.78	3.49
	More than 1 year	22	17.05	2.72

Statistical Analysis

Gender and Attitudes

The data was tested for normality by using a Shapiro-Wilk test. This showed responses to S1 ($W = 0.98$, $p = 0.57$) and S3 ($W = 0.96$, $p = 0.13$) were normally distributed, therefore it was possible to conduct a t-test. However, responses to S2 ($W = 0.94$, $p = 0.02$) were not normally distributed therefore a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used to understand its relationship with the predictor variables.

A Mann-Whitney U test was required to understand the difference between male and female prison officers in their responses to S2 because the data was not normally distributed. This test showed gender had no significant effect on responses to S2 ($U = 193.50$, $p = 0.17$). However, the parametric t-test is robust enough to still understand differences between means, despite the data not having a normal distribution.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to understand whether the difference between the mean

total attitude values for S1 and S3 were significant against gender identity. Regarding gender identity against S1, there was no significant effect, $t(43) = 1.10$, $p = 0.57$, CI [-1.03, 3.51], despite the mean total attitude score for men ($M = 16.70$, $SD = 4.11$) being higher than that for women ($M = 15.71$, $SD = 3.24$). Similarly for S2, $t(43) = 1.24$, $p = 0.65$, CI [-0.63, 2.80], men ($M = 10.57$, $SD = 3.01$) scoring higher than women ($M = 9.50$, $SD = 2.72$). However, there was a significant effect for gender identity against S3, $t(42) = 1.50$, $p = 0.02$, CI [-0.49, 3.34] with men ($M = 17.04$, $SD = 2.55$) scoring higher than women ($M = 15.62$, $SD = 3.70$).

These results partly support hypothesis 1, attitudes towards force. Those who identified as male scored significantly higher than those who identified as female, indicating a more negative attitude.

Experience and Attitudes

Responses to S1 and S3 were normally distributed, so it was possible to conduct a t-test to see if there was a significant difference in the responses of prison

officers depending on their experience group. A Mann-Whitney U test was required to understand the difference between experience group 1 and 2 in their responses to S2 as data was not normally distributed. This test showed years of experience as a prison officer had no significant effect on responses to S2 ($U = 214.50, p = 0.27$). However, the parametric t-test is robust enough to still understand differences between means, despite the data not having a normal distribution.

In regard to experience group against S1, there was no significant effect, $t(43) = 1.48, p = 0.40, CI [-3.91, 0.60]$, with those in experience group 1 ($M = 15.39, SD = 3.49$) scoring less than those in experience group 2 ($M = 17.04, SD = 4.07$). There was also no significant effect testing for experience group against S2, $t(44) = -0.86, p = 0.39$, with those in experience group 1 ($M = 9.74, SD = 3.00$) scoring less than those in experience group 2 ($M = 10.48, SD = 2.79$). Testing for experience group against S3, there was a significant effect, $t(43) = -1.35, p = 0.04, CI [-3.15, 0.62]$, with those in experience group 1 ($M =$

$15.78, SD = 3.49$) again scoring less than experience group 2 ($M = 17.05, SD = 2.72$).

Results partly support hypothesis 2, showing significant negative attitude from those with more than one year's experience towards prisoners and UoF, but not for prisoners or social skills.

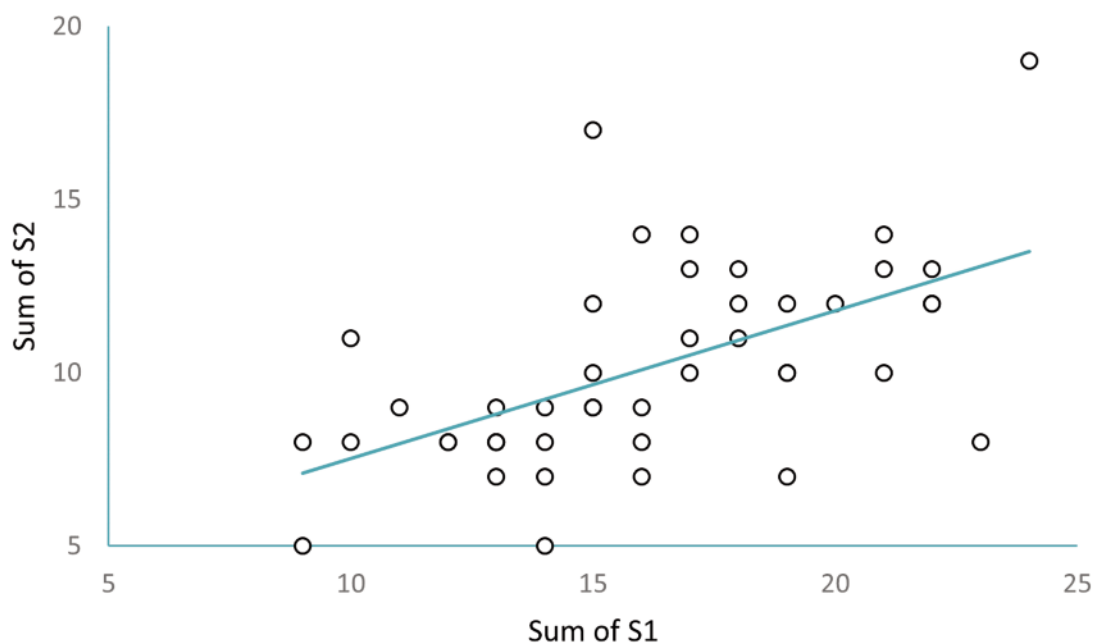
Relationships Between Attitudes

To understand the relationship between S1, S2, and S3, it was necessary to identify correlations between them. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used as each question was compared with one another to observe linear relationships. As a reminder, S1 related to prisoners, S2 to social skills, and S3 to UoF.

Pearson's correlation coefficient showed age was not correlated with S1 $r(46) = -0.04, p = 0.79$, S2 $r(46) = 0.17, p = 0.26$, or S3 $r(45) = 0.06, p = 0.69$.

As shown below in Figure 2, there was a moderate positive correlation between S1 and S2 $r(46) = 0.55, p = 0.01$. This means participants who scored higher on S1 ($M = 2.84, SD = 0.34$) also likely scored higher on S2 ($M = 2.02, SD = 0.58$).

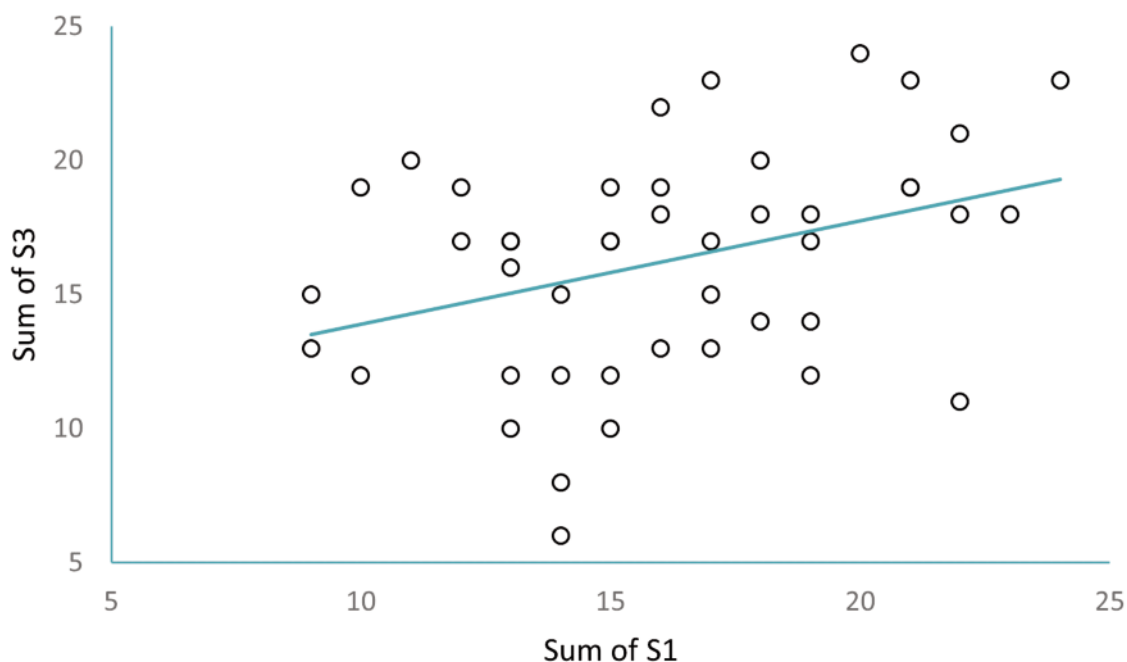
Figure 2: Scatter Graph Showing Correlation of S1 against S2.



Shown below in Figure 3, there was a weak positive correlation between S1 and S3 $r(46) = 0.32, p = 0.030$. This means participants who scored higher on

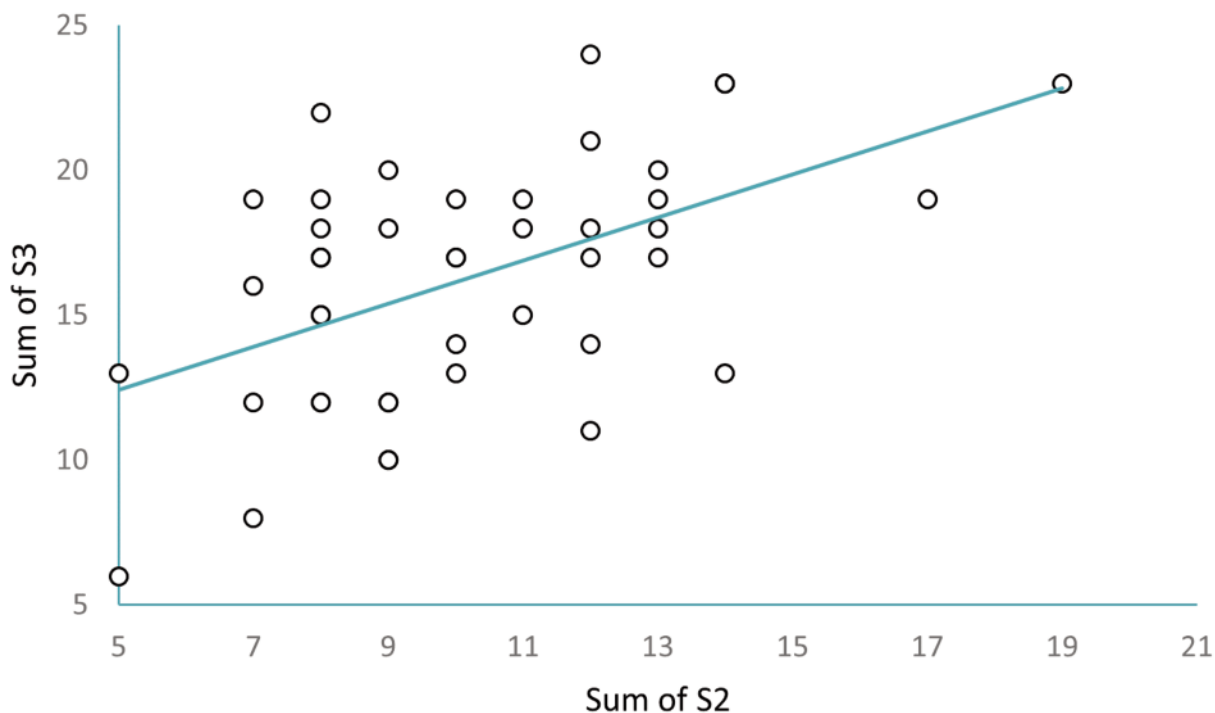
S1 also tended scored higher on S3 ($M = 2.71, SD = 0.69$).

Figure 3: Scatter Graph Showing Correlation of S1 against S3.



There was a moderate positive correlation between S2 and S3 $r(45) = 0.56, p = 0.01$. Participants who scored higher on S2 also scored higher on S3. This is shown below in Figure 4.

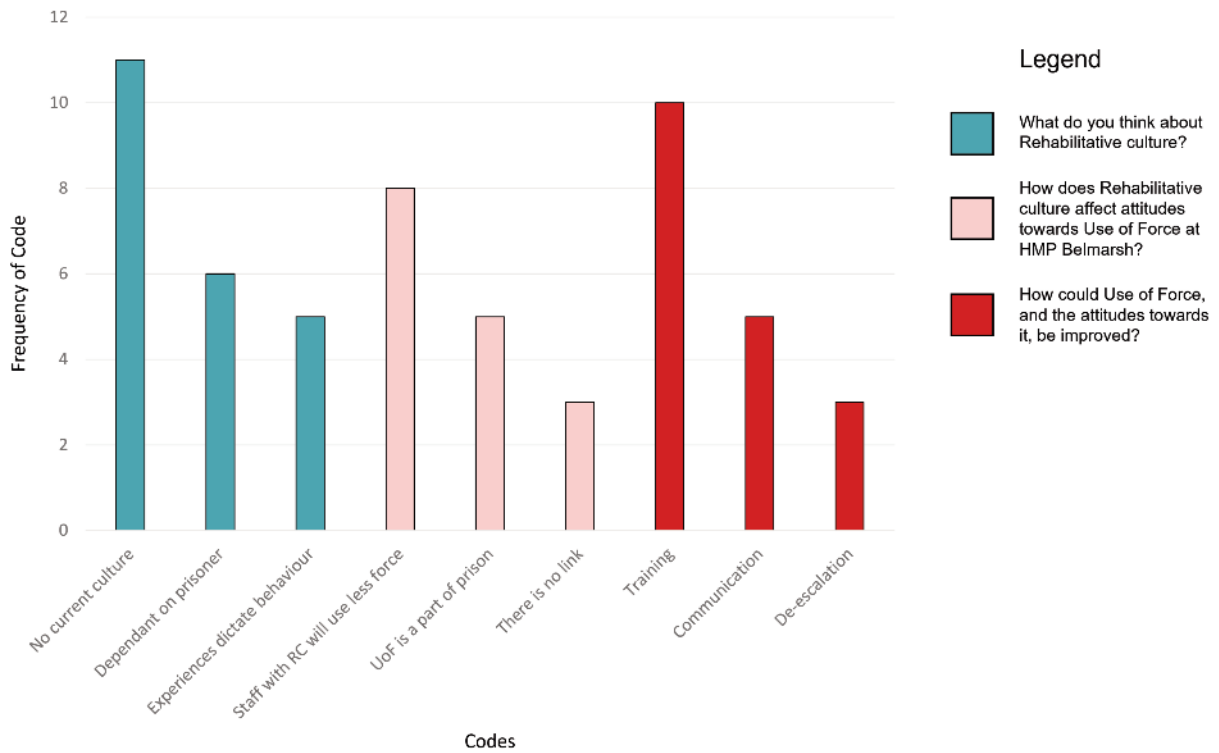
Figure 4: Scatter Graph Showing Correlation of S2 against S3.



These results support hypothesis 3, showing there are correlations between the attitudes of prison officers towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF. The strongest correlation was between attitudes towards social skills and UoF.

**Responses to Open Questions —
Rehabilitative Culture**

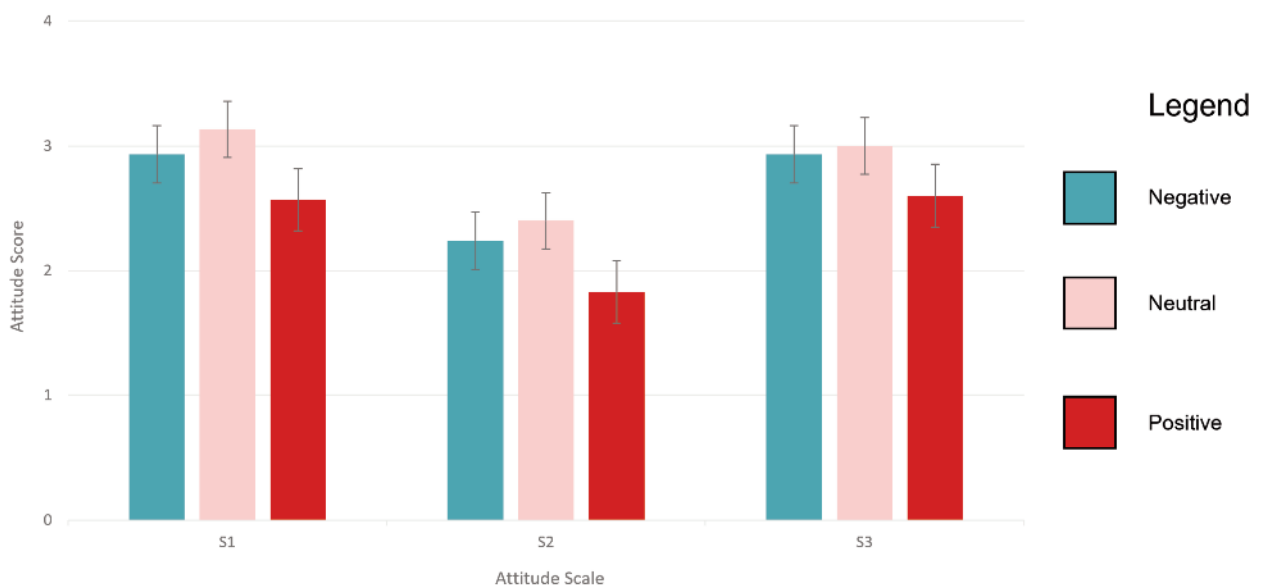
Figure 5: Bar chart showing the most frequently observed semantic codes for three open questions and their frequency.



Responses to open questions were also tagged as having either a positive, negative, or neutral theme. In total, 53 (60.23 per cent) of the responses were positive, 20 (22.73 per cent) were neutral, and 15

(17.05 per cent) were negative. Mean total attitude scores were also split by their negative, neutral, and positive tags, and shown in Figures 6, 7, and 8 below for each open question.

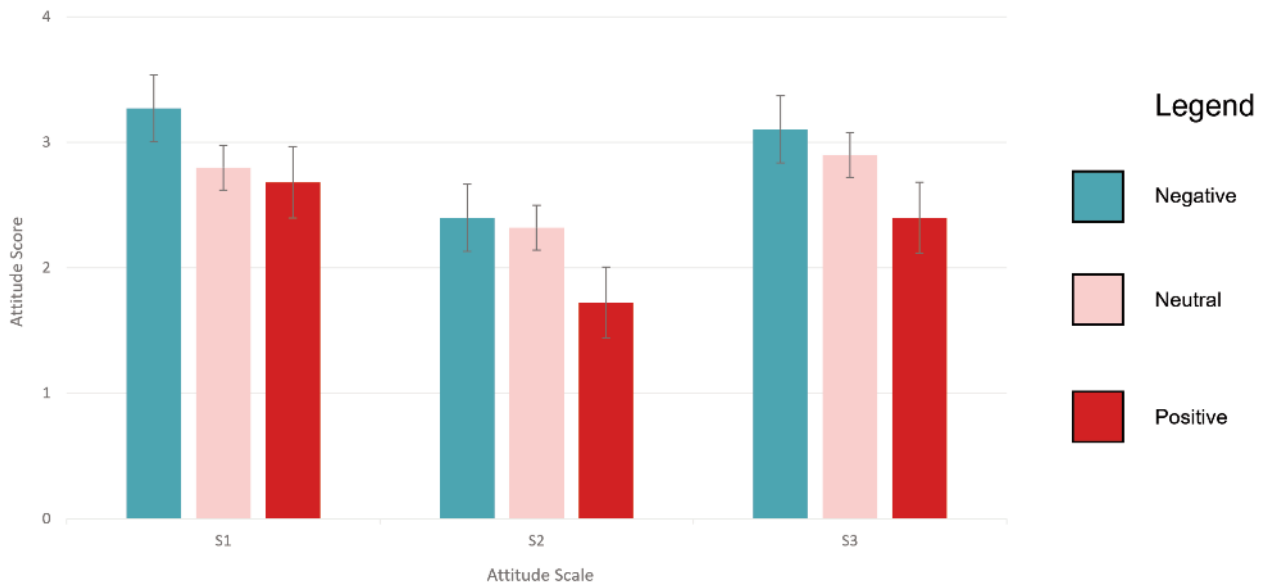
Figure 6: Bar chart showing the mean score for each attitude scale split by the negative, neutral, and positive themed responses.



From the bar chart above it can be observed those with positive themed responses for the first open question scored lower (more positive) on S1 (attitude towards prisoners), S2 (attitudes towards

social skills), and S3 (attitudes towards UoF) than participants whose responses were given neutral or negative themes. However, overlapping error bars show this was not significant.

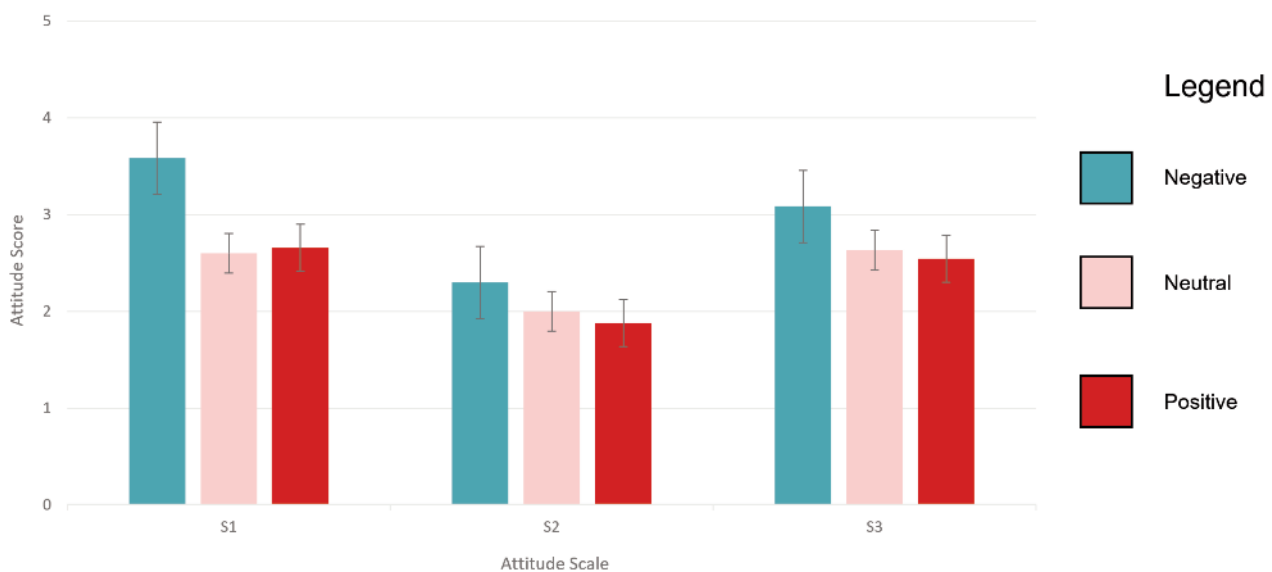
Figure 7. Bar chart showing the mean score for each attitude scale split by the negative, neutral, and positive themed responses.



As seen above, participants with positive themed responses for the second open question scored significantly lower (more positive) on S1, S2, and S3

than participants whose responses were given negative themes.

Figure 8. Bar chart showing the mean score for each attitude scale split by the negative, neutral, and positive themed responses.



From the figure above, participants with positive themed responses for the third open question scored significantly lower (more positive) on S1, S2, and S3 than participants whose responses were given a negative theme. However, this was only significant for S1, as can be seen from the overlapping error bars for S2 and S3.

To summarise the results, hypothesis 4 was confirmed as those with positive opinions of RC scored lower (more positive) for S1, S2, and S3 on each open question.

Discussion

Results confirmed attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF were linked, and showed how negative attitudes towards these was also mirrored in participants' responses to open questions on RC.

Gender and Attitudes

Results showed male Prison Officers had more negative attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF, as shown in Table 3. However, this was only significant for attitudes towards UoF, as shown by conducting t-tests. Male Prison Officers agreed more to the statement physical force was an adequate response to an annoying prisoner, and some prisoners can only be brought to reason with force. This was in line with previous studies arguing male officers tend to use more force and 'macho' attitudes are commonplace amongst staff.^{14 15} The data may imply those who identify as male are more willing to use force based on their negative attitudes, although more research would be required to prove this. Attitudes towards prisoners and social skills based on gender showed no significant difference between males and females. This may also have been present as research was only carried out on houseblocks, as previous studies have

shown that female police staff are overrepresented in settings where force is unlikely.¹⁶ More research is required to further understand the complex relationship between male and female prison staff and UoF and what implications this has for RC.

Experience and Attitudes

Results showed those with one year or less experience as a Prison Officer were more positive in their attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF, as shown in Table 4. However, this was only significant for attitudes towards UoF, as shown through conducting t-tests. Based on the responses to the attitude scale, more experienced officers were more likely to agree that UoF is educational for prisoners and force should be used more often. This would imply working in prisons for an extended amount of time brings a worsening effect in prison officers' attitudes. It is positive to see that less experienced officers were optimistic and valued the social and respectful attributes that the prison service requires to improve RC. Results for experience were similar to that for gender, with both measures significantly affecting only attitudes towards UoF. This may show a particular problem with attitudes towards UoF, as results highlight significantly more negative attitudes compared to those towards prisoners and social skills when split by gender or

experience. The implications for these findings are Prison Officers with less experience are more likely to be rehabilitative officers because they had more positive attitudes towards UoF. This link is further explored using qualitative data in the following sections. Regarding both experience groups valuing social skills, this may be an important base to build on with RC.

It is positive to see that less experienced officers were optimistic and valued the social and respectful attributes that the prison service requires to improve RC. Results for experience were similar to that for gender, with both measures significantly affecting only attitudes towards UoF.

14. Porter, L. E., & Prenzler, T. (2017). Police officer gender and excessive force complaints: An Australian study. *Policing and society*, 27(8), 865-883.
15. Gariglio, L. (2016). Photo-elicitation in prison ethnography: Breaking the ice in the field and unpacking prison officers' use of force. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 12(3), 367-379.

Relationships Between Attitudes

Attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF were all correlated (See Figures 2, 3 and 4). For example, those who valued social skills also respected prisoners and those who did not value social skills did not respect prisoners. Research shows effective social skills reduce force.^{17 18} This aligns with responses to the third open question, where the most frequent latent code for responses was social skills reduce UoF. It is accepted the use of social skills is an essential aspect of prison culture.¹⁹ This was reflected in the study as participants reported more positive scores for social skills than any other part of the questionnaire, despite those attitudes becoming more negative if participants were negative towards prisoners or UoF.

Rehabilitative Culture

As seen in figures 6, 7 and 8, Prison Officers with negative attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF recorded more negative opinions towards RC than those who had positive attitudes towards prisoners, social skills, and UoF. This was a significant finding of the research as it demonstrates a definite link between attitudes towards using force and rehabilitative culture.

This study shows there are some officers whose attitudes towards prisoners undermine rehabilitative processes. One participant stated Prison Officers who do not buy into RC are more likely to use force, and it was 'easy to identify these officers'. Responses to open questions also highlighted a lack of knowledge regarding RC. This was evident in responses with

codes 'there is no link [between RC and UoF], 'there is no RC', and 'UoF is just a part of prison'. There was only one mention of rehabilitative practices currently in place at the establishment. There was no reference to procedural justice, keyworking, or any other core concept related to rehabilitation at the establishment.²⁰ If Prison Officers were trained in RC, it may be easier to implement rehabilitative practices at the establishment, leading to better outcomes for prisoners and better relationships between prisoners and staff.²¹

If prison officers were trained in RC, it may be easier to implement rehabilitative practices at the establishment, leading to better outcomes for prisoners and better relationships between prisoners and staff.

Despite a lack of knowledge, the majority of responses to the open questions were positive, showing many Prison Officers either already had positive attitudes to RC or possessed a willingness to change. A major theme was that improved processes in the establishment would remove barriers to RC, regime time constraints, provision for employment and housing, and provision for upskilling. Sixteen responses were designated the code: processes/systems will encourage RC. These barriers have been previously identified²². Individuals who responded in this way were eager to promote rehabilitation but felt limitations in prison processes restricted them.

It is unrealistic to overhaul hiring practices within HMPPS to only recruit staff who are able to pass a complex attitude test. However, RC training may be beneficial in Prison Officer training. There are limited options in regard to RC training for prison staff. Much of the training that exists is on a micro level, focussing on procedural justice or rehabilitation theory, or is designed for police.^{23 24} More research should be done into RC

16. Porter, L. E., Prenzler, T., & Hine, K. (2015). *Police integrity in Australia*. Measuring police integrity across the world: Studies from established democracies and countries in transition, 67-96.
17. Arnold, H., Liebling, A., & Tait, S. (2012). Prison officers and prison culture. In *Handbook on prisons* (pp. 501-525). Routledge.
18. Crawley, E., & Crawley, P. (2008). Understanding prison officers: Culture, cohesion and conflict. *Understanding prison staff*, 134-152.
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training in general, research is also required on how RC training may affect Prison Officers' attitudes, and specifically whether it is possible for officers from the negative side of the scale to cross over to the positive as a result.

Conclusion

The results of this study shows a link between UoF and RC at HMP/YOI Belmarsh. A Prison Officer with a negative attitude towards prisoners is both likely to have negative attitudes towards social skills and UoF, whilst having more negative opinions of RC. Additionally, results show there may be room for improvement regarding UoF attitudes, this was highlighted as the value which split genders and experience groups. There was particular concern male Prison Officers had significantly more negative opinions compared to female officers, especially for those with more than a year experience, as this was also significantly more negative compared to those with one year or less experience.

This study has also built on previous research by further consolidating the value prison officers place in the use of social skills. This was highlighted throughout in low attitude scores towards social skills across the board, with no significant difference when split by gender or experience group.

A key benefit of this study was its local aspect. Results reflected the culture at HMP/YOI Belmarsh and therefore recommendations focus on improvements that can be made to RC at this particular establishment.

Recommendations

1. Research into RC training needs to be conducted on its effectiveness in improving the attitudes of Prison Officers towards UoF. It is essential to collaborate with those who possess lived experience for this work. RC

training is required due to a lack of knowledge and poor attitudes towards RC from Prison Officers. From the RC-UoF relationship observed in this study, an improvement in RC may improve UoF attitudes.

2. The establishment should promote RC and celebrate good practice where it already exists. Results showed that some prison officers cared deeply about fostering RC, but their practice was undermined by a lack of support from some of their colleagues. This means:
 - Rewarding staff who show great examples of RC.
 - Seeking feedback from staff and prisoners on what RC should look like in the prison.
3. Processes should be reformed to enable rehabilitation. A review is required to show which processes would most impact RC, but this effectively means:
 - Consistently providing protected time for keyworker sessions.
 - Providing more courses for prisoners to gain skills. This provides officers an avenue to direct and support prisoners who want to rehabilitate.
 - Embedding RC into processes from the ground up, for example, ensuring that adjudications use a procedural justice approach. By starting from a position of RC, processes can be designed to enable rehabilitation wherever possible. This will support and empower staff who are already motivated to break cycles of reoffending but are presented with procedural barriers.

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