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Paper:

Davies, J. & O'Meara, A. (2017). Routine practice in staffed community accommodation (approved premises) in England and Wales: Quantitative benchmarking from the first year of a longitudinal study. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cbm.2063>

12 month embargo.

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Title: Routine practice in staffed community accommodation (Approved Premises) in England and Wales: quantitative benchmarking from the first year of a longitudinal study

Running head: Approved premises benchmarking

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the staff and residents at the Approved Premises within Wales who contributed information for this research.

Author Accepted Manuscript

To cite this article: Davies, J. & O'Meara, A. (in press).
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(Approved Premises) in England and Wales: quantitative
benchmarking from the first year of a longitudinal study.
Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health

Abstract

Background: In England and Wales, 'approved premises' (AP) offer 24 hour staffed accommodation for high risk offenders most of whom are returning to the community from prison. With a move towards a standardised operating model, it is essential to be able to measure outcomes.

Aims: To collate and evaluate 'benchmarks' for approved premises.

Methods: A cross-sectional, descriptive design was used to establish the impact of existing practice in all four approved premises in Wales. Data on well-being, life satisfaction, attitudes to violence and problem solving abilities were recorded with 114 male residents (of 484), and attitudes to personality disorder and personal wellbeing/burnout with 30 staff (of 86), in both narrative style and according to a number of scales used within criminal justice and healthcare systems. Perceptions of environmental climate were assessed with both groups. Scores were compared with those from reference groups, including prisoners and secure hospital patients. Criminological outcomes (e.g. prison recall) were obtained for all 486 men.

Results: Scores on the scales used were broadly comparable to those in relevant reference groups, but some measures showed floor or ceiling effects. Recall rates, whether directly from the premises or after further onward movement, were about 42% overall; comparable to those reported for similar offenders elsewhere.

Conclusions: This paper provides a short battery of measurements for use as benchmarks of experience and outcomes in staffed community accommodation for high risk men.

Introduction

The pathway from custody to the community can be a stressful and risky time for people coming out of prison (Visher & Travis, 2003). In the UK, high-risk individuals may be accommodated initially in 24-hour staffed 'approved premises' (APs), to support their adjustment and the establishment of community routines. APs share features, such as staff support, with halfway houses (Australia, USA) and community correctional centres (Canada), although detailed criteria differ by jurisdiction. Within Wales (UK), four establishments cater for men who have (generally) committed serious violent or sexual offending and who are categorised as at high or very high risk of serious harm to themselves or others. Each has capacity for 24-26 residents, with residency typically lasting 10-16 weeks.

A number of authors have provided accounts of 'effective practice' in approved premises based on detailed reviews of the literature (Burnett & Eaton, 2004) and reviews coupled with practice initiatives (Cherry, 2006). In addition, two related studies have been published which examined the incidence of mental health difficulties in this population and provided an example of specialist service provision for such a group (Hatfield et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 2005). More recently, work has been published that provides information about 'psychologically informed practice' (PIP) for approved premises staff specifically in relation to personality disorder (Bruce et al., 2016). Whilst these authors suggest that this intervention has an impact, the study has shortcomings, including important differences between the units at the outset (e.g., staff gender ratios; baseline PD knowledge). Further, although the reported changes may reflect improvements in offender outcomes following from regime changes, they might also indicate changes in recording practices over time in the intervention group. With the exception of this study, none has provided details of those living or working in such settings or the service impact on problem behaviour.

As approved premises form a critical element of the rehabilitation pathway for some very high risk offenders, the absence of such research is surprising. This is particularly so given that they are undergoing transformation to standardise the

operating model and to ensure each meets the standards required for the *Enabling Environments Award* (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2016). This transformation is to be achieved through a programme of change entitled “Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Excellence” (National Offender Management Service, 2015). This programme proposes development of a model of working that spans all aspects of probation services, thereby improving coordination of related processes and ensuring unified organisation. This includes having consistency in staffing during daytime hours and supportive residential staff at other times. A robust benchmark for evaluating experience of approved premises is required.

Our aim was to establish a baseline of resident and staff experience, attitudes, wellbeing and formally recorded resident outcomes across all four approved premises within Wales, and, on the basis of preliminary outcome analyses to develop a set of benchmarks for such settings.

Methods

This study was subject to ethical review (REC reference: 14/WA/0150) and was registered with the NRC (reference: 2014-159).

Study design

This cross-sectional study uses self-report data from staff and residents along with information about offending behaviour and recall for those who have been resident within the AP during the study period. Data were collected from the four approved premises in Wales at 3 monthly intervals for one year.

Procedure

Psychometric data were collected from residents and staff between October 2014 and October 2015. Participants were typically recruited through researcher attendance at the ‘morning meeting’ and by opportunistic recruiting of those present on data collection days. All who took part were provided with participant information and gave informed consent. A small number of participants (27) took

part in a qualitative study run in parallel. Quantitative data from three psychometric measures also used in that study are also reported here. Data were extracted from nDelius, a probation database of offender-specific information (and approved premises) on all who were resident during the study period.

Psychometric data collection from residents took 15-45 minutes to complete. When requested, participants were supported by a researcher to complete the booklet.

Data were collected from staff using a questionnaire booklet which took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Measures

Staff and resident measures

Essen Climate Evaluation Schema (EssenCES; Schalast et al., 2008) is a 17-item scale covering aspects of social climate. Researchers in Australian prisons reported internal consistencies of α 0.78 - 0.86 across the 3 sub-scales (Day et al., 2011).

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire- Short (OHQ-S; Hills & Argyle, 2002) is an 8-item self-reported measure of happiness. It has acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.6$) and stability over time (test-retest correlation $r = 0.69$; Cruise et al., 2006). For residents, this scale was completed only by those in the qualitative study.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) is a 5-item measure of cognitive judgements of satisfaction with one's life. Pavot and Diener (1993) report several studies with α coefficients ranging from 0.79 to 0.89. For residents, this scale was completed only by those in the qualitative study.

Resident only measures

Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP-32; Barkham et al., 1996) is a 32-item measure of interpersonal relationship characteristics, in eight areas. Reliability coefficients for each sub-scale range from 0.71 to 0.89.

Maudsley Violence Questionnaire (MVQ; Walker, 2005) is a 56-item measure of cognitive style relating to violent attitudes; the two sub-scales have internal consistencies of 0.75 and 0.91.

Novaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory (NAS-PI; Novaco, 2003) is a measure of experience of anger (60 items) and the situations that provoke it (25 items). The three NAS sub-scales have reported internal consistency from 0.80 to .91 and the provocation scale 0.94. This was completed only by those in the qualitative study.

Social Problem Solving Inventory-Revised: Short (SPSI-R:S; D’Zurilla et al., 2002) is a 25-item measure of positive and negative problem orientation (PPO/NPO), rational problem solving (RPS), impulsivity/carelessness (ICS) and avoidance style (AS). Reliability estimates for the sub-scales are from 0.78 to 0.89.

Staff only measures

Attitudes Toward Personality Disordered Individuals (ATPDI; Hogue, 2009), short form is a 24-item questionnaire about the respondent’s general knowledge of and attitudes towards personality disorder, using three sub-scales. Internal consistency for the sub-scales has been reported as 0.69 to 0.80.

Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti et al., 2003) is a 16-item measure of workplace exhaustion and disengagement. It has been validated across several occupational fields; the sub-scales have strong internal consistency and reliability (both $\alpha = 0.85$).

Participants

During the data collection period, 97 residents completed the psychometric assessments and a further 27 completed psychometric assessments as part of the qualitative study. A small number of individuals provided data through both studies or at more than one time point; in these cases only the first set of data were used. In addition, 30 staff (35% of the total workforce during the study period) completed

questionnaires. nDelius data were available for all 486 residents who spent time in the approved premises during the study period.

Residents who provided self report data had an average age of 42 years. It was not possible to collect further personal characteristics of those who completed the questionnaires due to the conditions of the research approvals. In the nDelius data set, the average age was 38 years, with an average of 7 historical criminal events (mode = 1); of these, over half had been violent (n=279; 57%), a third sexual (n=142; 30%) and small proportions acquisitive (n=25; 5%) or 'other' (n=39; 8%) offences.

Approach to analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to characterise the sample. Independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were used to compare groups. Measures of effect size were computed using Cohen's *d*. Analyses were carried out in SPSS version 20 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA).

Results

A one-way ANOVA of all self report measures revealed no significant differences in the data from residents or staff across the four premises, although it must be noted that some data cells held only small numbers, so small differences between sites may have been missed.

Comparison of resident and staff responses

Residents had significantly lower scores than staff on both wellbeing measures (Satisfaction With Life Scale $t = -4.92$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = -1.33$; Oxford Happiness Questionnaire $t = -2.89$, $p < 0.01$ Cohen's $d = -.79$) and significantly higher scores on the Experienced Safety scale of the EssenCES ($t = -3.93$, Cohen's $d = -.84$).

Comparison of findings with reference groups from published data

Table 1 shows where there were significant differences between the men living in the approved premises and offenders in other residential settings and, for some personal measures, the general population.

INSERT TABLE 1
ABOUT HERE

Across all sub-scales of the EssenCES, participants rated the climate of the Approved Premises at levels which were significantly higher than ratings made by those in a rehabilitative custodial setting (see Table 1). There were no significant differences between residents and a forensic mental health group on any social problem solving scores, and interpersonal functioning (IIP-32) ratings were similar to those from a general population group (except for Too Caring where AP residents scores were higher). Macho attitudes to violence scores were significantly lower than those reported by a group of incarcerated males and AP residents also reported lower experienced anger scores than a sample of prisoners. Residents' happiness scores were expectedly lower than a group of university students.

Staff findings

As shown in Table 2, staff observations of AP residents' experiences indicated lower levels of social cohesion but higher levels of therapeutic hold and experienced safety than those reported by professionals in relation to prisoners in a rehabilitative prison.

In relation to their own experience, staff reported more positive attitudes towards those with a personality disorder than had been recorded by a group of multi-disciplinary mental health professionals working in a high security personality disorder service. Staff ratings of happiness and life satisfaction were similar to those reported in general population samples and their levels of burnout were not significantly different to those reported by a mixed professional sample.

INSERT TABLE 2
ABOUT HERE

File data from nDelius

Of the 486 residents in the four approved premises in Wales during the study period, just over half (261, 54%) left the premises according to their planned pathway; almost a quarter (117, 24%) departed due to a breach of conditions of being there (some recalled to prison); 30 (6%) came to the end of their licence period; 16 (3%) absconded; 19 (4%) were withdrawn, transferred, arrested or left for some other reason, and the rest (43, 9%) were resident at the time of analysis.

The average length of stay for all residents was 65 days (sd=54.83, range=434); 41 days for those breached or recalled (sd=41.87, range=242), and 77 days for those with a planned move (sd=46.46, range=403). Excluding conflicting or missing data (n=29), 214 of the 392 men who left the premises and stayed in the community for at least two days, remained there with no recall 12 months later. The average time in the community after leaving the premises for the 112 men who were recalled was 157 days (sd=136.05, range=526).

Discussion

A baseline of staff and resident experiences of approved premises has been established and this will provide a useful benchmark against which to monitor such services as they are remodelled. Comparisons of the measures with those reported in published reference groups suggest that the residents of Welsh approved premises consider themselves to be less macho and less angry than other offender samples, more caring than general population participants and are less happy than university samples. Their scores also indicated that they may be more satisfied with their accommodation than the other offender reference groups. Staff ratings, in

turn, differed in some respects from staff in other settings and from the general population. A possible reason for these differences (especially for the residents) is the inappropriateness of many of the comparison groups (e.g. university students) which adds weight to the necessity to be able to describe and characterise those working and living in these settings by producing such data.

Over a quarter of those currently residing within the premises agreed to take part in one or other aspect of the evaluation process (117 unique participants of 468 residents). This is lower than a comparable study (Hatfield et al., 2004), but it is likely that rather than reflecting a disproportionate reluctance to participate this can be explained by residents' other commitments on specific data collection days (e.g. work, education, planned meetings); the many residents who were released on temporary licence (ROTL) not being included and the limited time the researcher was present at the premises (i.e. one 9-5 day for each collection point).

On some of the self-report measures, staff and residents reports suggest that approved premises may provide a better environment than alternatives, including prisons and secure hospitals, however, the ratings may reflect not only the immediate environment, but also the sense that the men have of where they are in their pathway to freedom. Likewise, resident wellbeing and happiness appeared to be lower than the only available (general population) comparison group. These figures mainly highlight the absence of wholly suitable comparison data and the need for appropriate reference figures, as provided here.

Staff ratings of social cohesion were lower than those from the reference group of staff in a rehabilitative prison setting. Social cohesion relates to residents' tendency to care for and support each other. This may reflect the dissatisfaction some residents voiced to researchers about having to share space with different types of offenders; it may reflect healthy movement towards increased independence and regular contact with people outside the premises, but again it reinforces the need for directly relevant standards or bench marks. In addition, whilst lower self-reported factors such as anger and macho attitudes might reflect

actual experience, and the position one might hope for along a rehabilitation pathway, it may indicate other factors such as socially desirable responding, minimisation of difficulties or a lack of awareness of problems in some areas.

Staff were found to have more positive attitudes towards individuals with a personality disorder than the comparison mixed group of mental health professionals working specifically with PD whilst simultaneously showing similar levels of occupational health and life satisfaction to those in the published groups. The former comparison is surprising and the latter does not fit with previous research which found that positive attitudes to PD were associated with better well-being, less burnout and improved work performance (Bowers et al., 2003). It is possible therefore that the positive attitudes amongst this group were artificially elevated through a lack of self awareness in this area; reflect different interpretations of the questions by different professional groups or, if an accurate reflection of attitude, were counteracted by other factors.

The rates of recall appear to be consistent with the high risk level of those who enter approved premises. Of those who return to the community as part of a planned process, 30% return to prison within one year; when added to those being returned to prison directly from the premises, over 42% of those entering approved premises will return to prison in a relatively short time. Recent research suggests that changes to the approach within APs might lead to lower recall rates and better overall compliance (Turley et al., 2013). The data reported here will allow international comparisons and the impact of changes to the delivery model within such settings to be examined.

Limitations

The self-report elements of this study may be subject to optimism bias, minimisation of problems or intentional “faking good”. Offender respondents, for example, reported fewer problems in some key areas, such as aggression, than might be expected. Further, in some areas the ‘lack of self-reported problems’ leaves little room for ‘improvement’ to be demonstrated through the introduction of E3. It is

therefore vital that self report data is used alongside other information including detailed qualitative research and the data drawn from the central recording system which provides an additional view and presents scope for improved outcomes.

Minimum data set revisions

As has been shown, some measures for residents conceptually overlap, some contain ceiling or possible insensitivity effects and others may be susceptible to socially desirable responding. As a result, a number of revisions to the minimum data set being collected within the longitudinal study have been made (scale removal or substitution) namely: removal of the IIP-32 (due to substantial overlap with the SPSI:R-S); removal of the MVQ and NAS (due to apparent socially desirable responding - some residents noted that answering honestly could get them into trouble), and replacing the OHQ with the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale due to its widespread use and broader concept. All other measures were retained and a new measure which specifically assesses items associated with Enabling Environments has been added (Taylor, 2016).

Conclusions

The staffed accommodation for high risk offenders leaving prison, (Approved Premises,) are undergoing change, so it is vital to be able to measure relevant outcomes accurately. Offenders and staff provided enough psychometric data about themselves and the premises to produce a useful benchmark against which to measure future change. Overall progress and recall data on the offenders confirmed they were typical of their group and provided a complementary means of evaluating outcomes. A revised, shorter battery of measures is recommended, in addition to environmental climate measures and centrally recorded behavioural outcomes.

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	AP Residents			Published comparisons			Comparison statistics	
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Source	t-test statistic	Sig. difference
EssenCES								
*Social Cohesion	96	14.45	3.54	13.35	4.55	Prison	-1.98	0.05
*Therapeutic Hold	96	19.04	4.42	12.8	4.24		-10.81	0.00
*Experienced Safety	96	19.89	4.37	16.34	3.91		-6.46	0.00
SPSI-R:S								
Positive Problem Orientation	96	12.76	4.64	11.2	5.09	Forensic MH	-1.57	0.12
Negative Problem Orientation	96	5.78	4.64	6.43	4.98		0.66	0.51
Rational Problem Solving	96	10.42	5.13	10.5	4.82		0.08	0.94
Impulsivity/Careless	96	6.44	5	7.13	4.88		0.66	0.51
Avoidance Style	96	5.92	5.77	6.17	4.32		0.22	0.83
SPSI total	96	13.01	3.86	12.39	3.36		-0.79	0.43
MVQ								
MVQ Machismo	95	6.15	8.7	10.4	8.7	Forensic MH	2.47	0.01
MVQ Acceptance	95	7.2	5.96	7.2	3.3		1.66	0.10
IIP-32^								
Hard to be Assertive	96	1.24	0.97	1	0.82	General	-1.65	0.10
Hard to be Sociable	96	1.28	1.14	1.18	0.88		-0.62	0.54
Hard to be Supportive	96	0.94	0.81	0.9	0.71		-0.35	0.72
Hard to be Involved	96	1.22	1.02	1.09	0.89		-0.88	0.38
Too Dependent	96	0.84	0.78	0.98	0.73		1.15	0.25
Too Caring	96	1.39	0.9	1	0.8		-2.88	0.00
Too Aggressive	96	0.9	0.98	0.92	0.82		0.14	0.89
Too Open	96	1.67	0.91	1.6	0.82		-0.54	0.59
IIP-32 Total	96	1.16	0.66	1.02	0.54		-1.45	0.15

	AP Residents			Published comparisons			t-test statistic	Sig difference
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Source		

SWSL								
SWLS Total	27	16.78	7.65	16.7	6.7	Forensic	-0.06	0.95
OHQ Total	26	30.54	7.95	34.55	5.3	University	2.69	0.01
NAS-PI								
NAS Cognitive	27	25.15	5.668	28.3	5.5	Forensic	2.26	0.03
NAS Arousal	27	23.7	7.119	27.9	5.4		2.72	0.01
NAS Behaviour	27	21.59	6.547	26.7	6.2		3.22	0.00
NAS Anger Regulation	27	27.56	4.995	26.3	3.1		-1.26	0.21
NAS Total	27	70.44	18.179	82.9	15.8		2.96	0.00
PI Total	27	48.65	13.899	66.2	13.6		5.05	0.00

* The most appropriate comparison data came from a prison-based study where the EssenCES was scored from 1-5, rather than the standard 0-4. Means presented here have been recoded to match this range in order to ensure accurate representation of statistical comparison.

^ The comparison sample for the IIP-32 was a male 'general public' sample.

Table 1: Comparison of residents' responses with available published norms.

	AP Staff			Published comparisons			t-test statistic	Sig. difference
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Source		
EssenCES								
*Social Cohesion	30	13.3	2.8	18.02	3.46	Prison	6.44	0.00
*Therapeutic Hold	29	20.07	3.76	14.33	2.66		-8.20	0.00
*Experienced Safety	29	16.69	3.12	14.71	4.13		-2.27	0.03
ATPDI								
Not Harsh	22	24.95	3.17	21.83	3.75	Mixed profession – nurses and others	-3.68	0.00
Trusting	23	20.09	3.98	14.65	3.24		-7.16	0.00
Likeable	23	20.48	3.95	17.17	3.28		-4.32	0.00
ATPDI 24 Total	23	65.48	9.27	53.65	8.03		-6.36	0.00
SWLS Total	30	24.8	4.38	23.5	6.43	General	-1.06	0.29
OLBI								
Disengagement	30	2.23	0.49	2.23	0.68	Mixed professions	0.00	1.00
Exhaustion	30	2.35	0.49	2.32	0.58		-0.27	0.79
OHQ	30	35.73	5.14	34.55	5.3	University	-0.97	0.33

* The most appropriate comparison data came from a prison-based study where the EssenCES was scored from 1-5, rather than the standard 0-4. Means presented here have been recoded to match this range in order to ensure accurate representation of statistical comparison.

Table 2: Comparison of staff responses with available published data.