

**Conducting a Randomised Experiment
in Eight English Prisons: A
Participant Observation Study of
Testing the Sycamore Tree
Programme**



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Testing the Sycamore Tree Programme was, indeed, a test; a test of endurance that is not over yet. This is the account of what was necessary to make it happen. The errors and mistakes are entirely mine but the success, for success it surely is, belongs to those people who have helped along the way – it is their story as much as mine.

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

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Introduction

Governments worldwide are spending billions of pounds/dollars incarcerating offenders. How can academia help them spend wisely? This dissertation is *de facto* a case study of implementing a randomised controlled trial (RCT) used to test the effectiveness of a rehabilitative intervention. Its fundamental purpose is to tell us the skills required to implement an experiment, not to tell us about the intervention.¹ It is part one of an evaluation preparing for the future analysis of the effects of the intervention on criminal reconvictions for the first two years after offenders are released from prison. Its key contribution to both knowledge and public policy is to demonstrate how difficult government practices can make it for anyone to assess the effectiveness of the financial investments it makes in reducing reoffending.

The facts and frameworks described in this dissertation may offer a guide to more cost-effective management of evaluation experiments in prisons, and suggest improvements to the structures that limit research in this environment. Conducting experiments in prisons matters to the public interest in how tax-payers' money is spent. Prison experiments are complex, but they need not be so difficult to conduct even with the support of officials and practitioners. Indeed, MacKenzie (2013), in her vision of a new 'corrective paradigm', foresees the need for closer collaboration between policymakers, practitioners, and researchers so that more successful and cost-effective correctional interventions may be achieved.

The author's experience as a participant observer adds to a scarce literature describing the tribulations of conducting RCTs within criminal justice in general (Asscher, Deković, van der Laan, Prins, & van Arum, 2007; Chandler, Dennis, El-Bassel, Schwartz & Field, 2009; Feder, Jolin & Feyerherm, 2000; Gondolf, 2004; Kilburn, 2012; Petersilia, 1989; Strang, 2012) and custodial settings in particular (Cook, O'Brien, Braga & Ludwig, 2012; McDougall, Clabour, Perry & Bowles, 2009a; MacKenzie, 2012; Roman, Fontaine, Fallon, Anderson & Rearer, 2012). Scholars have called for candid reports of the challenges facing experimenters working in operational conditions (Boruch, 2012; Perry, Weisburd & Hewitt, 2010) because they can assist others when planning their own

¹ Final outcomes are not yet available.

experiments (Roman et al., 2012). The following narrative aims to assist future researchers by giving a full account of the difficulties and how they were overcome. There are some interim results and concluding reflections for policymakers who profess that they wish to be guided by ‘evidence’.

Why an RCT?

This is a success story illustrating that RCTs, although difficult to conduct, are feasible in prison environments. An RCT, which provides the best possible internal validity (Farrington, 2003b), was well-suited to the circumstances surrounding the intervention being evaluated. Furthermore, Weisburd (2003) suggests that it is our ‘moral imperative’ to evaluate rehabilitative interventions using RCTs particularly as the study design affects the validity of inferences drawn (Weisburd, Lum & Petrosino (2001). In their assessment of the economic benefits associated with rehabilitative interventions Welsh & Farrington remind us that economic analyses depend upon the evaluation’s strength (2001).

Randomisation, the methodology widely used in medical trials, has been increasingly used in criminological research and other areas such as education and economics (Hutchison & Styles, 2010; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). However, this growth has led to concern that RCTs may not always be the *best* methodology in some circumstances (Barrett & Carter, 2010; Sampson, 2010) and that prioritising *all* RCTs over other methodologies may lead to reduced funding for, or non-publication of, non-experimental research (Grossman & Mackenzie, 2005; Hough, 2010). Furthermore, *well-designed* observational studies are proposed as equally valuable, and sometimes more appropriate, methods in medicine as well as criminology (Concato, Shah & Horwitz, 2000; Grossman & Mackenzie, 2005; Hough, 2010). Equally, whilst well-implemented RCTs provide good internal validity, they may have weak external validity that reduces their value in the wider application of the treatment under evaluation (Cartwright & Munro, 2010; Hough, 2010).

There are other objections to RCTs; their perceived impracticality, potential ethical difficulties in withholding a treatment deemed beneficial, and practitioner resistance are examples (Grossman & Mackenzie, 2005; Pawson & Tilley, 1994; Sampson, 2010). Furthermore, an RCT may tell us that an intervention had an effect but it may not tell us

why or *how* it does, and whether it will maintain the effect in similar, but not identical, contexts (Cartwright & Munro, 2010). Nevertheless, Berk reminds us that all research methodologies have their weaknesses (2005). I would summarise all of these arguments as: choose the most well-suited methodology and implement it as well as possible.

Why the Sycamore Tree Programme?

The Sycamore Tree Programme (STP) is a widely used attitudinal/behavioural intervention within Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS). It is valued by practitioners and, from anecdotal evidence, prisoners. The charity that delivers the STP, Prison Fellowship, England and Wales (PFEW), were keen to have a post-release evaluation to test for any effect on recidivism. Therefore, the academic exhortations mentioned above guided the choice of an RCT for evaluating the STP which was an over-subscribed, not universally available programme delivered to most types of prisoner.

The STP teaches prisoners about restorative justice (RJ) and aims to provide them with hope for a future without offending. The engaging of emotion when they meet a crime victim and discovering that victims are not punitive may be the 'turning point' (Maruna, 2001) they need to support an existing desire to desist from crime (Shapland & Bottoms, 2011). They receive a participation certificate (irrespective of whether they pass or fail the course) that can act as a symbolic reinforcement of their experience in the future (Collins, 2004). The memory of *experiencing* the emotion generated during the course may assist prisoners to reject their previous criminal solutions to the inevitable barriers to desistance that they will meet (Rossner, 2011). Successive 'victories' can then construct the narrative necessary to 'make good' (Maruna, 2001).

From my research into the development of the STP and my observations of it in operation in several prisons, I propose that it can be situated in both rehabilitative and desistance paradigms (Bottoms, in press; Bottoms & Shapland, 2011; Laub & Sampson, 2001; Lösel, 2012; McNeill, 2006; Shapland & Bottoms, 2011; Ward & Maruna, 2007). No extant theory has completely explained why people commit crime. It should not surprise us, therefore, that there is no single theory suggesting how to stop them. However, as Bottoms summarises (in press:2), most offenders eventually desist from crime.

The most successful rehabilitation interventions that we know employ cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and are usually highly structured although less structured programmes should not be ignored (Lösel, 2012). Some lack of empirical support for other forms of intervention may be due to their heterogeneity and individualised content making evaluation more complex (Lösel, 2012). The STP has a considerable experiential element aimed at building empathy that may affect different offenders in different kinds of ways.

Scholars have pointed to several factors that lead/assist offenders to desist (see Bottoms, in press, for a summary). I suggest that the most relevant factors found in the STP are the 'hook for change' (Giordano, Cernovitch & Rudolph, 2002), the recovery of positive self-definition (Maruna, 2001) or individual agency (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009), and the inclusion of victims permitting a lack of condemnation and promoting potential reintegration (Braithwaite, 1989).

Sherman & Strang (2007) and Strang, Sherman, Mayo-Wilson, Woods & Ariel, B. (2013) demonstrated in their meta-analyses of RJ programmes that RJ can be effective in reducing recidivism. Rossner (2011) found evidence of empathy and entrainment (Collins, 2004) in RJ conferences that reduced recidivism up to five years later. The integration of rehabilitative programmes and restorative approaches is recommended by both rehabilitation and desistance advocates (Lösel, 2012:995; McNeill, 2006:57).

An empirical finding from the longitudinal Sheffield desistance study is that those offenders did desire to change and some made efforts to do so (Shapland & Bottoms, 2011). For example, young adult (prolific) offenders in the study reported conventional views of morality even whilst they were offending. Their conformist norms were expressed in their aspirations for a conventional lifestyle such as 'settling down' or having a 'nice house'. The strength of their desire to desist from criminal behaviour was significantly linked to actual desistance (as measured by self-report and official data) and the measures they undertook to achieve this involved gradual changes to their life-style (Shapland & Bottoms, 2011).

Previous (unpublished) studies noted that men who wished to complete a STP were probably already motivated to change (Marsden, 2001; Smith, Lorimer, Hockley &

Hastings, 2006). Feasey, Williams & Clarke, (2005) found that pro-social attitudes improved and antisocial attitudes declined after participation in the STP. Therefore, this RCT, which only compares men that we can infer are already motivated to desist, is an important step towards providing empirical evidence of whether the STP does perform a rehabilitative function *and* assist prisoners in desistance following their release.

Why did the STP suit an RCT?

Theoretically, the circumstances of STP delivery satisfactorily addressed the conditions necessary to undertake an RCT. First, it was a well-established and accredited programme. Its implementation and delivery was monitored and regulated by its developers (Prison Fellowship) and its accrediting body (Open College Network). Therefore, a process of implementation and standardisation prior to evaluation was unnecessary (Rog & Randolph, 2002) and it had the potential to supply a sufficiently large sample (Boruch, 1997; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Second, it was oversubscribed in most prisons where it was offered and prisoners wishing to participate in the course were frequently released without completing one. This ‘lottery’ overcame the ethical objection to withholding an intervention perceived as beneficial (Boruch, 1997; Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002). Third, practitioners believed the course was valuable but they had no knowledge (other than anecdotal) of whether the STP helped prisoners to change their lives after release. Practitioners, therefore, fully supported an evaluation that measured post-release behaviour.

Treating each prison as a separate RCT laid the foundation for a meta-analysis of final results (Sherman: personal communication). Some of the main limitations of meta-analyses are lack of detail about the intervention components, publication bias, missing effect sizes, and coding variables (Shadish et al., 2002). Since each RCT was a part of a large whole, these problems were unlikely to occur as I would be conducting each one and could avoid them. Another criticism is that meta-analyses are merely number-counting but “this is not what a meta-analysis does. A meta-analysis looks at the results within each study, and then calculates a weighted average” (Cochrane Collaboration, 2002:2). The advantage of this approach is that when each result is plotted on a forest graph it provides "a simple visual representation of the amount of variation between the

results of the studies, as well as an estimate of the overall result of all the studies together" (Lewis & Clarke, 2001:1479; Sherman & Strang, 2004a).

Why was it challenging?

Theoretically favourable conditions did not mean that the experiment was trouble-free nor that there were no lessons to learn. It is only the second randomised controlled trial in English prisons for three decades (Farrington, 2003a; Farrington & Jolliffe, 2002; McDougall et al., 2009a; McDougall, C., Perry, A., Clabour, J., Bowles, R. & Worthy, G., 2009b) and the first to use post-release outcomes for forty years (Shaw, 1974). However, it would not have been achieved without the cooperation and collaboration of a diverse range of people and organisations with "temporary common interests" (Strang, 2012:211).

When planning ahead Kahneman (2011) identifies the need to overcome our inherent desire to retain the *status quo*, temper our intuitive hastiness by noting the available evidence, and abandon projects which, had we acted upon evidence, would not have wastefully used so many resources. This dissertation aims to provide some evidence for future researchers (and policymakers) to use when they plan an experiment in custodial settings. Although specific to English prisons there are common custodial features around the world to which this study may apply.

In this introduction I concentrate on issues relating to HMPS. That organisation exists within larger bodies; the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and the U.K. government. Each body is highly structured with power and authority interdependent between them. The enthusiasm for the RCT at front-line level, the prison Chaplaincies, was initially absent at the highest levels of NOMS and the MoJ. Similarly, the NOMS National Research Council, which approved the proposal, had no influence over prison Governors. Thus negotiations were necessary at all hierarchical levels as permissions were required at each one.

The geographic dispersion of the prisons was an important issue. I was able to drive to them but distance must be considered when planning the number of site visits and how

many people will make them. This constraint will influence decisions made about employing site managers at each (or a cluster of) research site.

Planned outcome measures were adjudications and reconvictions. Both types of data are protected and gaining access to them was torturous. Furthermore, within HMPS prisoners are frequently transferred and keeping track of research subjects was difficult, sometimes impossible, due to lack of data access. Additionally, I required demographic data related to criminogenic needs and details of other interventions that prisoners were getting. Justifying this data-sharing was essential as well as securing research participants' own consents.

For any study of re-entry programmes release details are crucial. HMPS release dates are not always straightforward. This affected our eligibility criteria as participants had to be released within times that were feasible for a two-year follow-up. Men were excluded from the experiment if they had no determinate release date.

Agreements with one person were not always continued by their successor. This affected the RCT at all levels; incoming Governors sometimes cancelled the STP (despite the high-level approval of NOMS) and some new Chaplains gave the study low priority. Solutions were usually found but high staff turnover was unhelpful.

For all experiments fixing the point of random assignment is important (Boruch, 1997; 2012; Sherman & Strang: personal communication; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). High prisoner mobility within HMPS can compromise treatment compliance if random assignment is done too far ahead of the programme of interest. Another consideration in prisons is the length of time required to arrange invitations and research presentations to potential participants. Resolving issues is only possible by cooperation between researchers and practitioners.

The temporal dispersion of STP courses meant that the best way to recruit cases was a 'trickle-batch' pipeline.² Therefore flexibility was necessary regarding when participants were recruited whilst balancing potential threats to sample size, treatment compliance,

² This occurs when cases 'trickle' into the pipeline in small numbers over a period of time (see Chapter 1).

and attrition. Participant recruitment generated much work for Chaplaincies. Future researchers might consider whether to provide on-site staff as this should improve recruiting rates because prison staff may lack the resources to prioritise research concerns.

What did we get?

Eight prisons, from thirteen approached, agreed to accommodate the RCT. At Prison 1 the Chaplain and STP coordinator recruited the first batch and efficiently provided 116 cases. Prison 2 initially recruited a large batch but staff changes interrupted the caseflow. Eventually, PFEW employed a STP coordinator who almost trebled the sample to 111 cases. At Prison 3 caseflow was erratic due to several factors; staff and logistical problems caused delays in providing ST courses, prisoners did not respond well to research invitations, and prisoner mobility was high. Nevertheless, Prison 3 produced 44 cases. Prison 4 was the least likely to find eligible men as their inmates generally had longer periods of custody to serve. This proved to be true as they only produced one case.

Prison 5 had unusual arrangements whereby the STP was administered through the Chaplaincy but prisoners were assigned to each course by a uniformed programmes manager. They produced a sample of 117 men. The Chaplain at Prison 6 undertook the RCT protocols himself but consequently seemed overwhelmed by his workload. Nonetheless, 22 cases were recruited. There were major changes at Prison 7 during the RCT coupled with a long interregnum when, despite my visits to the prison, nobody prioritised the research. However, four men consented to participate and comprised their sample. Prison 8 joined the RCT a year into the experiment and so the Chaplain, STP coordinator and I benefitted from the experience gained through working with the other Chaplaincies. They contributed 50 cases bringing the RCT total to 465 randomly assigned men.

The RCT is well implemented having 92% (N=427) compliance with experimental condition. It was anticipated that the treatment group would be least compliant as they were more likely to miss a ST course than controls to complete one. Nevertheless, 201 of 231 men (87%) assigned to treatment started a STP. Five controls did complete a ST course (2.1%). Additionally, the sample is representative of the wider prison estate's STP waiting-lists. Prisoners are placed on waiting-lists following self-referral or through their

sentence manager's recommendation. STP eligibility criteria are broad with only sex and domestic violence offenders excluded.³

The dissertation

Chapter 1 outlines the tasks and skills involved in implementing RCTs and the particulars of this one. The characteristics of prisons as research settings are presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the intervention being tested, the STP, and its theoretical bases, which derive from RJ and education. In Chapter 4 I describe the process of building the coalition necessary to implement the experiment. In Chapter 5 I detail the implementation. Chapters 6, 7, and 8, include the experiment's technical processes: Chapter 6, the pipeline and methods of random assignment; Chapter 7, how treatment integrity was managed; and Chapter 8, the preparations made to measure outcomes and some interim results. Chapter 9 discusses how building relationships with practitioners made the project possible. In Chapter 10 I review the journey and propose some guidance for increasing the number of RCTs in prisons.

³ Prisoners with no determinate release date could not be included but these comprise a small percentage of waiting-lists.

Chapter 1

Validity and Skill: Two Research Questions

It is recommended by the authors that, despite the difficulties of conducting a randomised controlled trial in an operational environment, this design should be implemented wherever possible to provide a sound research evidence base for policy decisions.

(McDougall et al., 2009a:i)

Describing the implementation of this RCT meant that there were essentially two research questions; first, what must be done to implement an RCT in prisons? second, how was this RCT implemented successfully? The first question mainly addresses maintaining validity in the custodial context. A confined target population bound by legal and physical restrictions is hard to reach, potentially vulnerable, and may be dangerous, so manipulating the variable of interest can be harder to defend and control than if done outside custody. The second question relates to the skills required and acquired during the process. The literature describing implementing RCTs in prisons is sparse hence there was little specific guidance. Nevertheless, persuasion, an open mind, building relationships, and magnificent collaboration from front-line practitioners achieved a high-integrity (92%), intention-to-treat RCT.

Kahneman (2011) describes skill as an apparently intuitive response to situations but emphasises that the intuition is, in fact, an accumulation of experience assembled through immediate feedback from past decisions and actions taken in comparable circumstances. This chapter describes the process of implementing and managing an RCT in Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS). What was necessary to be done is elaborated by how things were achieved.

First I describe identifying and approaching interested parties, securing their permission, and thinking ahead to their future cooperation. Accessing and recruiting the target population is then addressed followed by a short synopsis of the randomisation methods used. Next I outline the management of treatment integrity and the means to measure its delivery. The final section concerns the implications of superimposing the requirements

of an RCT on a hierarchical, quasi-military organisation. I conclude that an RCT can be successfully implemented within HMPS, but only by accommodating challenges peculiar to custodial settings.

Tasks to be accomplished

Choosing partners

Sherman (2010) uses a house-building metaphor to illustrate the process of planning and executing an RCT; from idea, to blueprint, to project completion. Any project, including research design, is likely to incorporate other interested parties and many involve practitioners already working in the field. Strang used the phrase ‘build coalitions’ (2012) to describe the cooperation necessary between parties to deliver an RCT yet which need not extend further.

Once identified, key organisations and individuals, have to be approached and their willingness to participate in the proposed RCT assessed. There are many things to consider; securing funding, accessing the target population, or sharing data. Sometimes these considerations are encompassed by a single entity, sometimes several are involved; the latter was the case for this RCT. Furthermore, permission from high-level managers or authorities may not lead to front-line practitioners’ support who can inhibit or enhance an experiment by resisting random assignment or failing to identify eligible cases (Feder, Jolin & Feyerherm, 2000; Kilburn, 2012; MacKenzie, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012). Contrary to the literature, the opposite was true in this experiment as random assignment relieved practitioners from selecting prisoners for the STP.

The RCT has an astonishing simplicity of design (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Using this methodology to test a practice involves randomly dividing a given population into two or more groups and exposing one of them to the treatment of interest; however, achieving such simplicity may be anything but simple. For this RCT I had to secure funding, gain approval to implement the experiment within HMPS, obtain each prison governor’s permission, have ethical approval from the University ethics committee, establish a relationship with the owners of the STP, and convince practitioners that the methodology was sound. Further, accessing outcome data involved lengthy negotiations

on how this would be achieved and providing sufficient security measures to ensure that research participants would not be compromised.

Negotiating agreements and building the necessary coalition involved setting out on an untrodden path with dead-ends along the way. I met leaders, trustees, employees, and volunteers from Prison Fellowship England and Wales (PFEW); fellow academics; leaders, senior managers, and practitioners from HMPS; civil servants from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS); serving police officers; and many others who were important to the coalition which established the experiment. Some blocked the project, others opened doors; the stories of both are below.

Implementing agreements

Constructing the coalition is the first step for an experiment. Next are securing support for the methodology, designing strategies to recruit the sample, and arranging for data collection. As others have found, initial enthusiasm can quickly wane under the pressure of additional administration or everyday life and they recommend building social and informal relationships into the experiment (Cook, Carey, Razzano, Burke & Blyler, 2002; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). I followed that advice. A dinner for prison Governors, and one for Chaplains and STP administrators provided an informal backdrop to briefings by Professor Sherman and myself. I regularly met the practitioners who delivered the STP and maintained Email or telephone contact with them in the interim. Noticeably, I made more progress when I spoke face-to-face or on the telephone to a named or recommended individual such as the HMPS Lead Psychologist (Cook et al., 2002; MacKenzie, 2012; Rog & Randolph, 2002; Strang, 2012). Personal contact helped when dealing with overarching organisations like the Ministry of Justice because advice from one autonomous department within the organisation could be applicable to one branch but not another.

Sometimes advice from one body could conflict with what was possible according to another. For example, I was advised that some kind of incentive for prisoners would be helpful. Initially this was to be chocolate bars but organising storage and delivery within prisons was incompatible with the custodial context. Nevertheless, during my initial visits

and in the interest of the coalition and building good relationships, I left a token of appreciation (see Chapter 4).

Asking the right questions and convincing others at a personal level of the RCT's importance and relevance were necessary. For instance, when I encountered Governors' resistance to withholding the STP from the control group I identified the head of NOMS as the person to help and contacted him. Additionally, acquiring the demographic data I thought most likely to be helpful from prisoners' records required a persuasive argument when I met opposition to their supply.

Pipelines

The pipeline for an RCT describes the flow of eligible cases through an experiment beginning when a potential research participant is identified (Boruch, 1997; Roman et al., 2012). Each research participant is a case and each case must fulfil the experimental eligibility criteria. Therefore these criteria must be established in advance. This RCT's cases were adult male prisoners who were on the STP waiting-list. In collaboration with PFEW and prison Chaplains (the administrators of the STP within HMPS) I prepared a protocol for identifying potentially eligible cases. Discussion was necessary because, in principle, any prisoner on the waiting-list for the STP was a potential case. However, there were practical and ethical considerations that restricted the population. For instance, using post-release outcome measures dictated that prisoners had to have a release date compatible with feasible follow-up. Ethically, prisoners with no determinate release date, and whose release might depend on a parole board decision, could not be included as those in the control group (who had not completed a STP) may suffer a negative decision concerning their release.

To prevent problems associated with participant preference (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) prisoners expressing strong desire to complete a STP were excluded. Anticipating *refusal* to comply with treatment was more difficult as men on the waiting-list were expected to want to complete a STP. Nevertheless, several men refused to start a STP when randomly assigned to do so. To my knowledge all non-compliant cases did not withdraw from the RCT and will be analysed by intention-to-treat (Sherman & Strang, 2004a). As outcome measures will be obtained from official sources, this experiment

should encounter minimal attrition (Sherman, 2010) (see Chapter 8). Cases will only be lost to follow-up if incorrect data have been supplied or participants wish to withdraw.

Once eligibility is determined and cases are identified, they have to be recruited into the experiment. I always planned to have recruiting carried out by non-research staff. Initially, it was to be PFEW employees but, in practice, HMPS Chaplaincy staff recruited cases. To standardise the recruiting process, reach as many men as practicable, and ensure that I had as much control as possible over the information provided I commissioned a DVD. Thus I was certain that prisoners were given sufficient, accurate details of the RCT and that those with low literacy levels would be able to understand the rationale. Furthermore, the DVD script had been scrutinised and approved by senior academics. I consulted widely for advice on the wording of the consent form that prisoners signed. To assist Chaplains with the recruiting process I provided a frequently asked questions form and a printed copy of the DVD script.

No other interventions were prohibited to RCT participants except those where they would meet a crime victim. Other programmes completed by RCT participants should be recorded within HMPS records. These data will be collected and included in final analyses to ascertain whether any interactions may have occurred. However, these data depend on the accuracy of prison staff record-keeping.

Trickle flow

Many experiments are able to recruit their sample in a single batch (Sherman, 2010). Others depend on a 'trickle flow' where subjects are recruited in small numbers over an extended period. I adopted this design because the number of Sycamore Tree (ST) courses delivered in any one year varied. Therefore the availability of treatment places was inconsistent. Following the literature I estimated potential caseflow from known numbers of ST courses booked (Boruch, 1997; 2012). Nevertheless, knowing the probable availability of potential cases does not mean that expected numbers will be contacted, nor that they will agree to participate. This phenomenon is so common that Boruch notes "as soon as the contract is signed or the grant is awarded, the size of the target group available for the experiment drops in half" (anonymous, 1997:71).

Various circumstances can affect caseflow such as over ambitious estimates based on atypical experience, staff problems at the point of recruiting, practitioners who are unsympathetic to the methodology, or policy changes within the organisation supplying cases (Fletcher & Tims, 1992; Gondolf, 2004; MacKenzie, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). This experiment encountered some of these conditions. For example, the STP could only be delivered when volunteers were available and the effect was that courses tended to cluster outside of holiday periods. Consequently there were no treatment slots available during large parts of the year and several prisons only offered four courses placing a finite limit on numbers.

In this study we increased the recruiting timeline but also explored other means of boosting caseflow. I consulted productive Chaplains and ST coordinators and, acting on their feedback, disseminated good practice to all the prisons. Next I successfully approached PFEW and brought another prison into the RCT. Making further use of feedback I produced a newsletter to provide Governors and Chaplains with an indication of how their sample size compared with others’.

Although peaks and troughs might be expected, slow recruiting can lead to practitioners’ enthusiasm waning (Cook et al., 2002; Kilburn, 2012; Strang, 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Fluctuations caused by operational conditions had two effects: first, slow implementation of recruiting seemed to transition into a form of resistance; second, practitioners’ enthusiasm slackened but it seemed attributable to their everyday work pressures and was difficult to counter. Practitioners’ lack of confidence when working with unfamiliar conditions may also have influenced their recruiting rates (Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee; 2002). Throughout, it was necessary not to be overbearing or allow frustration to impede progress.

I was dependent on practitioners arranging recruiting presentations and then guaranteeing that they had a signed consent form before I performed the random assignment (Boruch, 1997). Details contained in the consent form were sensitive and establishing their secure collection and storage merited much discussion. I only once had sight of the forms before carrying out random assignment therefore I had to trust practitioners’ guarantee and rely on their accuracy. Nonetheless, few irretrievable mistakes were made and using password protected Email attachments for data exchange was fast and efficient.

Random assignment methods

RCTs are justified because they provide unbiased estimates of the effectiveness of interventions and a statistical indication of how reliable their results are (Boruch, 1997). One of the commonest methods of random allocation is using a random number sequence. This is usually prepared in advance with the sequence concealed until required. Many medical experiments involve 'blinding' where the experimental condition is concealed from participants and may include 'double blinding' where practitioners do not know either (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). However, this is not feasible for most criminological experiments as participants usually know whether they have received a particular intervention. Nevertheless, experimenters can design measures where the practitioners, participants, researchers, and analysts have restricted information concerning the random assignment and outcome of cases (McDougall et al., 2009a).

Apart from the first three batches, when I used the sealed envelope method whereby the concealed experimental condition was revealed as random assignment was required, all cases were randomly assigned using an instant randomising programme, the Cambridge Randomiser (Ariel, Vila & Sherman; 2012).⁴ The Cambridge Randomiser ensured that each batch was assigned equally between experimental conditions avoiding the imbalance which can occur when small batches are randomly assigned from a larger sequence (Ariel & Farrington, 2010).

The point of random assignment needs consideration (Asscher et al, 2007; Boruch, 1997) with 'as late as possible' being the most recommended as it reduces the potential for deviation from treatment as assigned (Boruch, 1997; Sherman & Strang: personal communication). This is particularly important because outcomes should be analysed on an intention-to-treat basis (Hollis & Campbell, 1999; Sherman & Strang, 2004a) where all cases are included in final analyses regardless of whether they were compliant or not. Therefore, I consulted all the practitioners and we agreed on random assignment two weeks before treatment began although this did not prevent it being done later when possible.

⁴ The Cambridge Randomiser is a computer programme designed to randomly assign cases as they are recruited (see Chapter 6).

The number of cases in the experimental groups was evenly-balanced. On the two variables available, 1) age at random assignment and 2) days from random assignment to release, there was no systematic difference. Treatment compliance was good for both groups although non-compliance was higher for the treatment group due to operational conditions whereby men were more likely to lose a treatment place than controls were to gain one.⁵

Random assignment is the best way to achieve internal validity but homogeneity may lead to more limited external validity than other research designs (Shadish et al., 2002; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). This experiment was based in mainly category C prisons that were representative in size and location to the wider prison estate. No large, urban prisons where there are high populations of very short sentenced individuals were included but PFEW exclude prisoners with less than twelve weeks' sentence from the STP. High security prisons could not be included either as those prison populations usually have long sentences (although long-term prisoners usually transition through lower category prisons en-route to release). However, the STP is open to prisoners of any offence-type (except sex or domestic violence) and so results should be generalisable to most prisoners with determinate sentences on STP waiting-lists.

I learned that recruiting large batches for random assignment to several ST courses was not feasible and changed the recruiting protocol. One Chaplain resisted recruiting smaller batches for immediate dispersal but persuasion followed by necessity overcame the reluctance. Missing the opportunity to randomly assign a complete batch due to miscommunication led me to organise prior agreement on when to hold research presentations; this prevented further, similar losses.

Treatment integrity

Compliance

Once the treatment allocation is known it should be preserved as faithfully as possible to minimise any 'crossover' from random assignment which can bias outcomes (Boruch, 1997; Weisburd, 2000). Failure to deliver treatment as assigned can come from various sources; drop-outs, practitioners' subversion, or unpredictable circumstances (MacKenzie,

⁵ Drop-outs from treatment are counted as compliant.

2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Little can be done to prevent participants withdrawing from the experiment or refusing to accept the assigned condition as they have usually signed a consent form which states that they can drop out at any time without giving reasons. The best way to avoid practitioner resistance or subversion is to ensure that they fully understand the rationale of random allocation and build trust between researchers and frontline staff (Boruch, 2012; Rawson, Marinelli-Casey & Huber, 2002; Strang, 2012). Unpredictable circumstances frequently occur therefore anticipating problems and taking appropriate measures to minimise them is advisable (Boruch, 1997).

To my knowledge, this experiment did not suffer from practitioner subversion although there may have been resistance to holding research presentations. Chaplains developed their own method of inviting men and presenting the RCT to them. I provided an itemised protocol, a DVD that detailed the experiment's aims and what prisoners could expect, a hardcopy of the DVD script, and a frequently asked questions (FAQ) form. I told Chaplains that I did not expect them to deviate from the protocol. Feedback indicated that the men understood what the research entailed and were aware of what they agreed to when they signed the consent form. Additionally, I had already amended the FAQ in response to Chaplains' comments and suggestions.

The most unpredictable events were transfers and early releases. To minimise the effect of transfers I prepared forms intended to ensure treatment compliance by being placed in prisoners' records. Additionally, if the destination prison was known, I contacted the Chaplain to explain the RCT and request that the experimental condition was maintained.

The combination of higher non-compliance in the treatment group and the exclusion of men with a strong preference for completing a STP risks underestimating any effect of the treatment and possibly biasing the RCT's internal validity (Sherman: personal communication). However, attending to participant preference reduces the likelihood of non-compliance or attrition caused by resentment about not being assigned to the preferred experimental condition (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Besides, most non-compliance was due to operational conditions and thus final outcomes should produce a better measure of the STP's effectiveness (Piantadosi, 2005).

Measuring treatment delivery

The treatment being tested may comprise a one-off allocation such as arrest or no arrest (Sherman & Berk, 1984) or a programme or series of measures delivered over a period of time or in different locations (Sherman, Strang & Woods, 2000). Furthermore, there may be more than one research site delivering the same treatment. In all cases ensuring that the allocated treatment is delivered as intended and in the correct dose is vital (Boruch, 1997; Fletcher & Tims, 1992; Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 2004; Shadish et al., 2002). Where the experiment involves many sites they should be compared so that we can have confidence that each site delivered the treatment as intended (Lipsey, Petrie, Weisburd & Gottfredson, 2006; Straw & Herrell, 2002).

The measurement of dose (STP comprises six sessions) was retrospective. When men were assigned to treatment they attended the forthcoming ST course but, as participation is voluntary, they could drop out or miss sessions. Although Chaplains might be informed of drop-outs they rarely intervened if these occurred later than two sessions into the course. Tutors' attendance records were sent to PFEW for storage after each course. I checked records of all ST courses in all HMPS prisons between February 2011 and January 2015 to verify treatment compliance (see below and Chapter 7).

Table 1.1 details overall and prison-by-prison treatment compliance. Although PFEW records are reliable for men completing the STP, attendance at each session (measure of dose) was not always recorded.

	T assigned	T complied	C assigned	C complied	% complied
Prison 1	59	48	57	57	91%
Prison 2	54	50	57	55	96%
Prison 3	22	17	22	22	89%
Prison 4	1	0			0%
Prison 5	57	52	60	60	96%
Prison 6	10	9	12	11	91%
Prison 7	2	2	2	2	100%
Prison 8	26	23	24	22	90%
Total	231	198	234	229	92%

Table 1.1 Treatment completed as assigned

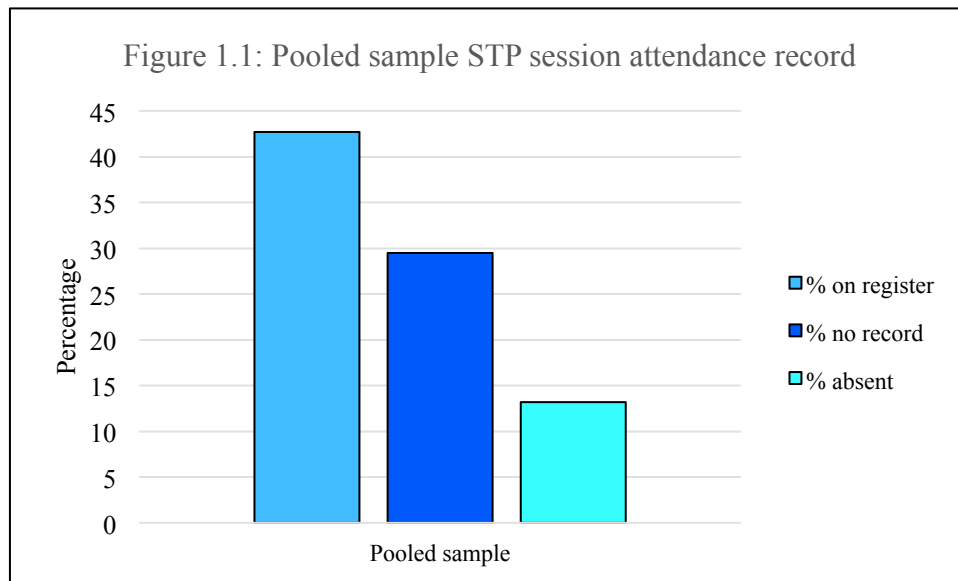


Figure 1.1 presents the known attendance record for the pooled sample. The middle column indicates compliant treatment group men with no record of which sessions they attended. The smallest column represents the percentage of non-compliant treatment group men. All other men are known to have attended between one and six sessions.

The STP is an accredited programme delivered by PFEW. A condition of the accreditation is that PFEW employs a full-time staff member to monitor and moderate the STP. PFEW provides feedback questionnaires for all STP participants to complete which are intended to contribute towards quality control. There is a comprehensive teaching manual (Babor, Steinberg, McRee, Vendetti & Carroll, 2002) and all tutors are required to have a teaching qualification. Additionally, I completed observations in each prison observing three sessions of the STP at almost every one. I noted good compliance with the teaching manual and consistent delivery across sites.

Measuring outcomes

Outcome measures, which can be reliably measured (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008), are stated at the outset of an experiment and are based on the hypothesised outcome (Sherman, 2010). Sherman (2010) recommends universal measures where all participants are subjected to the same level of record-keeping (Boruch, 1997). Some experiments use

subjective outcomes like ‘perception of treatment as fair’ for instance in restorative justice evaluations (Morris, 2000), or objective ones such as reconviction. However, reconvictions as outcomes may not capture all criminal activity as some offenders are not caught or, if arrested, are not convicted (Merrington & Stanley, 2007). Furthermore, official records may not be completely accurate (Friendship, Thornton, Erikson & Beech, 2001; Merrington & Stanley, 2007). Nevertheless, they are the best means we have of measuring criminal activity (Lloyd, Mair & Hough, 1994).

Reconviction was always intended as the primary outcome measure for this experiment. In addition to reconviction, yes/no/how many? (prevalence and frequency), outcomes included a comparison of seriousness as well as ‘time to failure’ measured in terms of days ‘at risk’ of offending (Sherman, 2010). All data in relation to criminal history and reconvictions were to be obtained from the Police National Computer (PNC) a live database maintained by police forces across the country. As behaviour in prison is important to HMPS, I intended to collect details of any adjudications before release. These data, together with demographic information such as marital or security status, were stored in Prison National Offender Management Information System (PNOMIS) a live database operated by HMPS.

Originally I planned to access these data myself. However, security and Data Protection Act (1998; 2003) concerns prevented this. Instead, through convincing others and compromise, I arranged for bulk searches to be carried out on my behalf by the Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACPO, CRO) and the NOMS Information Assurance department (see Chapter 8). Thus, individuals unconnected to the experiment would collect outcome data and were ‘blind’ to the treatment condition of research participants.

Managing relationships

Relationships within experimental coalitions may not always remain cordial (Strang, 2012). Furthermore, there may be tensions between researchers, practitioners, and research subjects (Feder et al., 2000; Fletcher & Tims, 1992; Gondolf, 2004; Rawson et al., 2002; Strang, 2012). There is a wealth of literature that emphasises the importance of maintaining good relationships for the duration of an experiment (Boruch, 1997, 2012;

Cook et al., 2002; Cook et al., 2012; Feder et al., 2000; Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012). It makes sense that people upon whom researchers are relying feel valued and that they are an important part of the experiment. As scholars have documented, practitioners are often required to add experimental requirements to their daily tasks (Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012). This experiment was no different.

One must accept that working within prisons brings many restrictions. Civilian visitors require escorts, certain items are prohibited, and searching might be necessary. Furthermore, admission can be refused if visitors' names are not in the daily list. I tried to be flexible and cooperative. I emphasised that I would interfere with working practices as little as possible, maintained frequent contact with practitioners, and offered to meet Governors whenever I visited their prisons. I telephoned instead of relying on Email and, where feasible, visited instead of telephoning. A positive and respectful attitude was helpful in maintaining collaboration. When things did not go as I hoped, I compromised where practicable to achieve the main object of implementing the RCT. I did not encounter difficult people rather the people I encountered were dealing with difficult requests in difficult circumstances.

Throughout process I sought to ensure validity, good caseflow, compliance, and transparency through working with practitioners at all levels. This required existing and new skills as I learned along the way. In table 1.2 I present a summary of the skills involved in completing the necessary tasks.

Tasks	Skills	Ask the right questions	Inventing alternative ways to achieve the goal	Assess decision processes correctly before making decisions	Build coalitions/relationships	Compromise on minor issues to achieve major ones	Find the best arguments to persuade others	learn from feedback	Be persuasive without being overbearing	Overcome frustration at setbacks
Identify	prisons cases	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓
	individuals who can help	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	questions to be answered	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
	open/closed doors	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Plan ahead	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Establish criteria	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	
Test possibilities	✓	✓	✓				✓			
Abandon bad ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Keep records	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Approach prisons	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Gain permission	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Access target population	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Recruit cases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Follow up leads/information	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	
Check	potential confounders	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
	implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Prepare for R/A	✓	✓				✓		✓		
Test methods	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	
Formal/informal meetings	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	

Table 1.2 tasks and skills required/acquired

Conclusion

RCTs are considered the best research method for inferring causation (Farrington, 1983; Sherman, Gottfredson, MacKenzie, Eck, Reuter & Bushway, 1998; Weisburd, 2000) although sometimes they may yield unreliable results (Berk, 2005; Cartwright & Munro, 2010; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Implementing an RCT in HMPS presents challenges but, as McDougall and colleagues advise, it "should be implemented wherever possible" (epigraph).

My learning curve was steep. I learned prison argot, developed new skills in observation and presenting ideas, improved my computer proficiency, and overcame frustrations. I questioned people and systems, sought and acted upon feedback, and prepared to defend my position by persuading key people of the argument. Where necessary I compromised so that the RCT would succeed.

This RCT will measure the *effectiveness* of the STP as it is delivered within HMPS. That is, whether, in operational conditions, the STP affects prison behaviour (measured by adjudications) and reoffending after release. As prisoners often do not receive the whole dose because they voluntarily drop out or they are transferred or released, we cannot measure its *efficacy* which is a measure of a treatment's effect when delivered as intended in well-controlled conditions (Piantadosi, 2005).

Four main partners, PFEW, HMPS, NOMS, and the police, each with their own organisational structures and responses to research requirements were asked to contribute (see Chapter 4). A balance between encouragement and persuasion lubricated by plenty of patience was required to maintain the pipeline and entailed the investment of time, determination, and flexibility.

This dissertation presents the challenges I encountered and the skills I used to deal with them. Its purpose is to encourage others that conducting experiments in prisons is possible and achievable despite what might look like insurmountable problems. Funding was secured where none was available at the outset, research sites were engaged despite risk-averse resistance to RCT methodology, access to secure data was negotiated through compromise and a change of plan, and (although lower than hoped) a substantial sample (N=465) was randomly assigned. As will be seen, the RCT has internal validity in terms of the available variables and sample sizes over 100 in three prisons. Two further prisons had sample sizes large enough to be included in a meta-analysis (N>40). These will be combined in a forest graph from which we can estimate any overall effect. Furthermore, interim results indicate that participating in the STP is beneficial (see Chapter 8).

Diagram 1.1 presents an overview of the experiment.

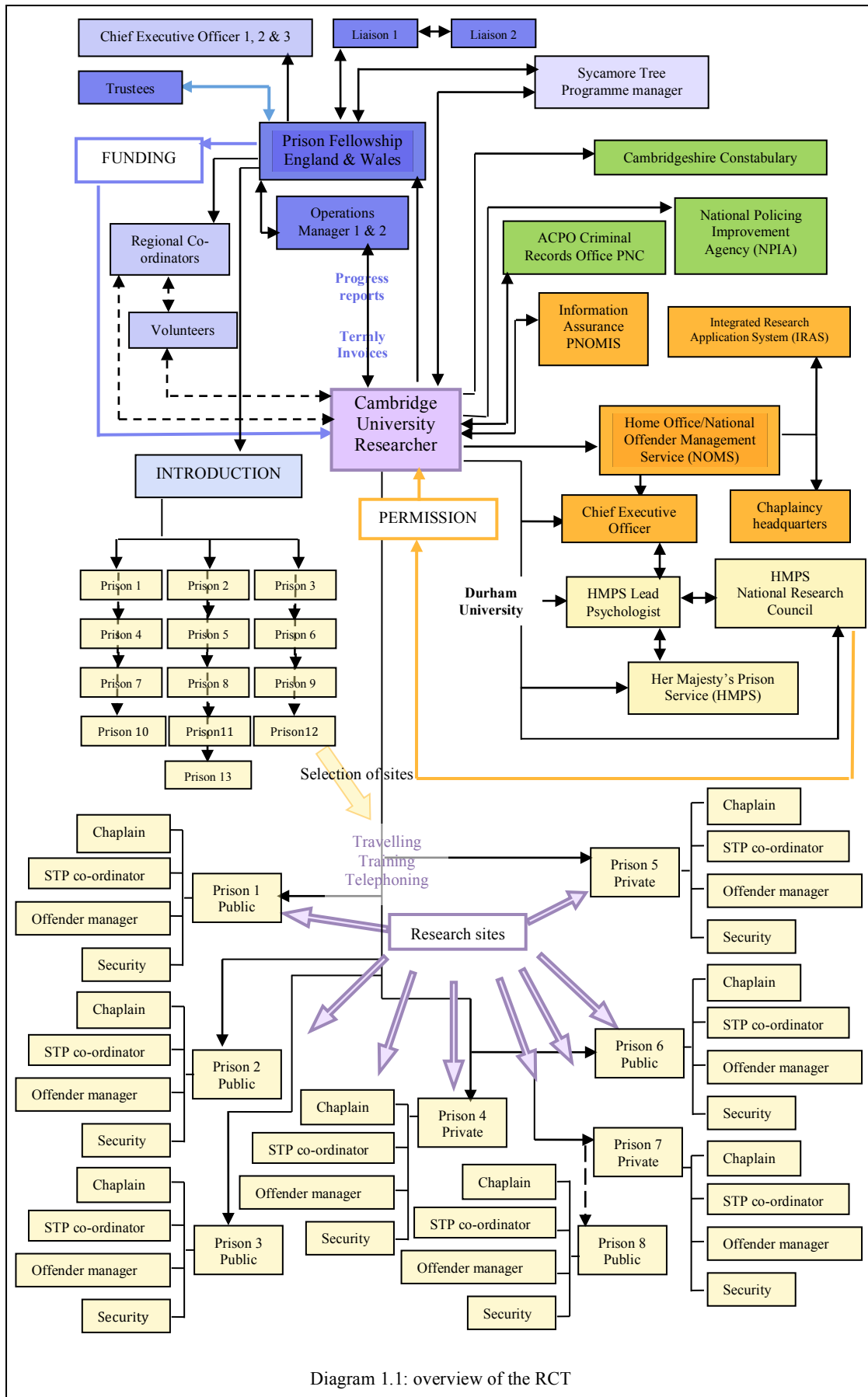


Diagram 1.1: overview of the RCT

Chapter 2

Managing Prison Experiments

Institutional climate is important for the well-being and behaviour of clients. [...] We need more research on the moderating or mediating effects of institutional contexts on treatment programmes.

(Lösel, 2012:1008)

Prisons are challenging places in which to conduct research. There is an inherent imbalance of power between detainees and those who maintain order and security (Crewe, 2011; Fletcher & Tims, 1992). Additionally, the staff who sustain security and order are encompassed in their own hierarchical distribution of power. The inmates, it can be assumed, would rather not be there at all. Furthermore, there may be tensions and conflicts between the aims of researchers and practitioners especially if random assignment is proposed (Erez, 1986; Fletcher & Tims, 1992; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008).

A review of the literature on implementing randomised controlled trials (RCT) in prisons revealed that it is scarce (Farrington & Jolliffe, 2002). Moreover, there is a noticeable gap between the 1950s, 60s, and 70s and recently.

The literature I reviewed falls into two, broad categories; 1) literature over 30 years old and 2) more recent work. Much experimentation was done in the 1960s and 70s, mainly in California, yet the implementation and skills required to manage this work were sparsely reported. More recently several criminologists have responded to the need for reporting problems and pitfalls encountered when conducting experiments in prison. Nevertheless, even recent literature focuses on the tasks required rather than the skills necessary to fulfil them. Given Lösel's message on the effect of climate on clients and treatments (epigraph), experimenters also need to recognise what skills are necessary in implementing RCTs in prisons.

This chapter reviews the history and context of RCTs, summarising the characteristics of conducting them in custodial settings beginning with early experiments. I then

describe ethical concerns raised by random assignment, withholding treatments from controls, restrictions involved when research subjects are incarcerated and vulnerable, and finally discuss the implementation difficulties that have been encountered and the skills involved in dealing with them.

History

RCTs have a long history (Chalmers, 2001; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) and, from the beginning, appear to have encountered scepticism and resistance (Silverman, 2004). Although now widely accepted in medical research, it took disasters to bring this about. For example, new-born premature babies were routinely given oxygen supplements which, after 35 years' uninterrupted practice, was shown to cause blindness (Silverman, 2004). Silverman (2004) also reports an unexpected finding when the prevailing wisdom of keeping neonatal babies cool was proved by an RCT to increase mortality. Gradually, through the 1970s and 80s medical RCTs became an accepted method of evaluating therapies although their ascendancy is viewed sceptically by some (Chalmers, 2001; Concato et al., 2000; Grossman & Mackenzie, 2005).

In other fields, such as education, political or social science, or economics, RCTs are still widely underused in comparison with medicine (Petrosino, 2003). Policymakers, researchers, and practitioners reject RCTs largely because they are perceived as unethical, difficult, or unnecessary when other research methodologies are available (see, for example, Chalmers, 2003; Cook, 2003; Green & Gerber, 2003; Oakley, 2000; Oakley, Strange, Toroyan, Wiggins, Roberts & Stephenson, 2003; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). However, Chalmers citing Kleijnen, Gøtzsche, Kunz, Oxman & Chalmers, (1997) comments that scholars “sometimes reveal a failure to understand that the *one and only* defining feature of randomized [*sic*] trials is random allocation to comparison groups to abolish selection bias and, thus, to ensure that unmeasured as well as measured factors of prognostic importance in the comparison groups differ only by chance” (Chalmers, 2003:29) (original emphasis). In other words, random assignment removes selection bias but may be vulnerable to other biases.

According to Green & Gerber (2003), research in political science rarely uses RCTs for the reasons mentioned above but they attribute the scepticism and resistance mainly to lack of familiarity with the methodology and preference for the *status quo*. A common problem is ethical, particularly if testing an established practice (such as above) or when a new treatment that is believed to be better than an alternative (Oakley et al., 2003; Chalmers, 2003).

Resolving these difficulties may not be possible and the proposed RCT will not happen (Silverman, 2004). However, researchers have overcome barriers by discussing protocols with stakeholders, clearly explaining random assignment, considering the position of control groups (sometimes offering financial incentives Oakley et al., 2003), affecting normal, operational conditions as little as possible, and persuading practitioners that consensus should not be a barrier to exploring new practices (Cook, 2003).

Criminology is not exempt from examples of supposed beneficial programmes shown by RCTs to be harmful. For instance, when McCord (1981) traced and re-interviewed participants from the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study 30 years after the programme ended she found that the treated men fared worse than the controls. She says, “Had there been no control group, evaluation of the program might have led to radically different conclusions. [...] Two thirds of the men responded that the program [*sic*] had been helpful” (1981:403). The Scared Straight programme, whereby young men feared to be at risk of offending were taken into prisons to meet life-sentenced prisoners, was thought to help them avoid future criminality. However, Petrosino and colleagues’ systematic review of nine evaluations (2000) found that the treatment group did worse. They conclude, “The findings reported here are sobering. They do indicate that despite our best intentions, programs [*sic*] can not only fail to reach objectives but can backfire, leading to more harm than good” (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Finckenauer, 2000:371).

Researchers in medicine have succeeded in reducing resistance to RCTs. However, researchers in other fields still need to persuade policymakers, educators, and (sometimes) other researchers that RCTs are a valuable tool because randomisation is the best method we have to provide a counterfactual. Medical resistance was

frequently overcome when an RCT demonstrated that an existing treatment was harmful. Researchers in other areas have required support from practitioners and mounted persuasive arguments in favour of rigorous testing. The perception that RCTs are difficult to conduct within prisons and the wider judicial system in England is not wrong but difficulties can be overcome by compromise, discussion, and responding to the need for evidence in support of policy and practice. Such was the experience of implementing this RCT to evaluate the STP (see also Chapter 10).

The context of rehabilitation

Emphases and attitudes

In 1979 Sechrest et al. reviewed the evaluations of interventions aiming to rehabilitate offenders for the National Academy of Sciences at the behest of the U.S. Department of Justice. Their review was conducted in light of Martinson's then-recent paper (1974) criticising the prevalent concept of crime as a 'disease' that could be 'cured'. His view was widely summarised as 'nothing works'. He wrote from the point-of-view that researchers (and policymakers) had been seeking a 'treatment' that would work for everybody. According to Nuttall (2003) and from my own (reasonably sympathetic) reading of his paper, Martinson was generally against the Californian incarceration model which aimed to provide unlimited periods of custody in which to correct delinquent behaviour:

These treatments have on occasion become, and have the potential for becoming, so draconian as to offend the moral order of a democratic society; and the theory of crime as a social phenomenon suggests that such treatments may not only be offensive but ineffective as well. This theory points, instead, to decarceration for low-risk offenders – and, presumably, to keeping high-risk offenders in prisons which are nothing more [...] than custodial institutions.

Martinson (1974:49-50)

Less (in)famously Martinson later retracted his conclusion that 'nothing worked' acknowledging that some treatments 'worked' for some people. He was aware of the need to discover which worked for whom and to be careful of the methods employed, "Tinkering with the system runs a major risk of serious, detrimental ramifications. [...] Some programs are indeed beneficial; of equal or greater significance, some programs [*sic*] are harmful" (Martinson, 1979:244). He acknowledged that some

experiments indicated that some incarcerated offenders seemed to respond to treatment and offend less after release (Palmer, 1975; Nuttall, 2003; Weisburd, Sherman & Petrosino, 1990). These findings had always been there but their lack of universality had been interpreted pessimistically (Palmer, 1975).

Despite Martinson's negative influence on rehabilitation, randomised prison experiments were still recommended:

[W]e recommend randomized [*sic*] experiments in order to ensure that the resulting inferences are valid and not artefacts of any unmeasured factors in the prison environment. [...] Experimentation is an indispensable part of the complete research strategy.

(Sechrest et al., 1979:16-17)

Whilst encouraging experiments, the same report recognised implementation difficulties such as institutional concerns constraining or overriding programme intensity, disruption of the research design caused by establishment needs, or the use of programmes without assessing individual's needs or their amenability to particular treatments (Sechrest et al., 1979). In England similar implementation difficulty occurred when two different interventions at the Kingswood Training School in Bristol were compared. Practitioners, wary of random assignment, which may allocate subjects to a treatment that they considered inappropriate, reduced the number of cases they allocated to the school causing random allocation to be abandoned (Cornish & Clarke, 1975).

Latterly, the rising influence of the risk-needs-responsivity model (Andrews & Bonta, 1995) has led to an increased focus on *management* of risk (Ward & Maruna, 2007) when evaluating interventions both inside and outside prisons. The notion that interventions address risk consequently means that practitioners can be reluctant to embrace experiments involving 'untreated' controls.

To randomise or not

Power and its imbalance in prisons is at the heart of the ethical issues surrounding research in prisons. In common with practitioners, researchers should consider the power relationships that exist in prisons particularly as prisoners often have limited

‘choice’ about anything which, consequently, further skews existing power deficits (Towl, 2010). Therefore, ethical concerns and how things ‘appear’ to others are important (Towl, 2010). Thus, withholding an intervention deemed beneficial might seem alarming to practitioners responsible for safety and security whilst, conversely, implementing and testing a novel treatment may encounter resistance.

The ethical issues revolving around the experiments of the 1950s and 60s were informed by the horrific mistreatment of prisoners during World War II (Sechrest et al., 1979). Associated with perceptions of mistreatment or ‘fairness’, research into the concept of random assignment (RA) revealed that *prisoners* perceived RA as the least fair method of assignment to interventions (Erez, 1985). Erez found that the perception of RA as the least fair of four options was correlated with poor educational attainment; poorly educated prisoners preferred allocation guided by assessed or perceived need. Perversely, ‘need’ was entangled with perceptions of favouritism and discrimination (Erez, 1985). Additionally, social workers shared the notion that need should dictate allocation to interventions as they thought their own competence was illustrated by their ability to differentiate between eligible prisoners (Erez, 1985). Thus, Erez reported that self-interest promoted perceptions of ‘need’. Furthermore, prisoners preferred 'need' and 'merit' to be assessed by people outside the prison system.

Prisoners perceived RA as ‘luck’, something that they already viewed negatively since ‘bad luck’ had led to their incarceration. “To most inmates it means randomness, or being subjected to arbitrary and capricious forces, a situation most prisoners strongly resent. From the viewpoint of inmates, randomness and capriciousness are the dominant features of prison reality” (Erez, 1985:375). However, although Erez’s study used interviews and open questions, its focus was a self-administered questionnaire given to young men and women in a young adult prison and adult men and women in a minimum and a medium security institution. Although respondents consistently rejected RA and favoured ‘need’, the questionnaire introduced a value assessment by implying that something beneficial was available:

If you were one of five hundred inmates eligible for some *beneficial* course and only one hundred inmates could be

selected, what do you think would be the fairest way of selecting those hundred for the course? (answered by young offenders)

If you were one of five hundred inmates who are eligible for some *beneficial* course and who are equally interested in participating and equally need such a course, but there are only one hundred slots available [...] (answered by adult prisoners) (my emphasis)

(Erez, 1985:369)

I respectfully suggest that, had the question omitted any suggestion of advantage and been quite neutral, it is possible that respondents may have viewed RA more positively since they clearly mistrusted assessment decisions made by prison authorities (Erez, 1985).

Moreover, there is strong implication in the questions that RA will *deprive* prisoners of something *beneficial*. Prisoners' responses illustrate the *absolute* ethical requirement to use RCTs for testing only interventions with *unknown* consequences. This equipoise means that RCT participants will not be subjected to something known to harm or deprived of something with known benefit (see Chapter 6).

During the 1970s there was an *institutional* aversion to RA in the United Kingdom as the Home Office feared negative public reaction to decisions based on 'chance' or being criticised for allocating resources according to 'machine-made choices' (Nuttall, 2003).

Kilburn (2012) found similar mistrust in her evaluation of a community programme when *practitioners* viewed RA as unfair. In that case the intervention in question was substantially oversubscribed and allocation of places was always intended to be by 'lottery'. However, the original providers' intentions became overridden by the RA required for the experiment in the minds of the practitioners who allocated the service. They conflated the two, attributed the RA solely to experimental requirements, and decided that they would not recommend the intervention to clients because they perceived the 50% chance of receiving the service offered by RA as unfair compared to the zero chance of receiving it if they were not offered it at all (Kilburn, 2012).

When research subjects in the control group will receive no treatment, or treatment 'as usual', it is rationalised because the treatment being tested is not known to be beneficial (Weisburd, 2003). Contrasting with the views mentioned above, the main ethical justification for RA is that it provides the fairest allocation of limited resources (Fletcher & Tims, 1992; Shadish et al., 2002) and ensures that a control group is no worse off (Sechrest et al., 1979). Therefore, RA should be carefully explained to potential research participants and practitioners (Erez, 1985; Kilburn, 2012).

Other ethical matters may limit the scope of an experiment in prisons. For example, many apparently eligible prisoners may be deemed ineligible because of institutional concerns such as safety or security (Goldkamp, 2008). Imminent release or participation in other interventions can reduce the available population because those prisoners cannot be considered for the RCT in question (McDougall et al., 2009a; 2009b). Sometimes an experiment may cause inappropriate custodial conditions. This happened in California when overcrowding led to unacceptable compromises to the experimental design and it was abandoned (Sechrest et al., 1979).

Researchers therefore adjust the experimental design to accommodate these considerations. McDougall and colleagues planned a waiting-list system whereby all research participants eventually received the treatment under evaluation (2009a). Whilst this procedure addresses the ethical concerns about withholding a supposed beneficial programme, it means that the outcome measures will be based on pre-release results or measures of changed attitudes and the primary outcome will be a proxy for expected recidivism (Farrington & Joliffe, 2002; McDougall et al. 2009a).

Although proxy outcomes or 'predictors' for recidivism such as impulsiveness or low self-control (Lipsey & Derzon, 1998 cited by Farrington, 2010:117), measured using psychometric instruments, are widely used within criminology, they cannot substitute for measuring an individual's actual behaviour following treatment.⁶ Other designs may incorporate the offer of alternative interventions (Shadish et al., 2002; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) or form an unrandomised cohort whose outcomes can be analysed separately (McDougall et al. 2009a).

⁶ For a conceptual discussion of assessment and its use within forensic psychology see, for example, Crighton, 2010.

Timeframes

Although any context affects research design, time exerts immutable conditions on RCTs. Prisoners cannot be detained beyond their release date and their sentence is invariably fixed (or recommended) by a court. The closer prisoners are to release, the trickier it can be to recruit them. They cannot be eligible for the experiment if they cannot be detained until the treatment in question is available (McDougall et al., 2009a). In contrast, should the experiment be testing post-release treatment, such as a re-entry programme, a long period of incarceration between RA and treatment delivery can lead to higher crossover (Boruch, 1997; Gueron, 2002; Roman et al., 2012). For Roman and colleagues (2012) the complexities of arranging RA close to release were too disruptive to the prison routine.

A common feature of in-prison treatment programmes is lengthy duration (Campbell, 2003; Farrington & Jolliffe, 2002; Messina, Grella, Cartier & Torres, 2010) that can pose problems for experiments where recidivism is the outcome measure. For example, prisoners can remain on the therapeutic wing at HMP Grendon for years (Campbell, 2003).

Completing tasks can take a long time in prisons (MacKenzie, 2012) because simply moving around is time-consuming owing to the constant unlocking and re-locking of doors. These features can extend the time necessary to implement an RCT and recruit the sample. For instance, interviewing prisoners or visiting them to gain consents may be very slow compared with outside.

Timeframes must be taken into account when planning experiments in prisons as very little can be done, or adjusted, quickly or spontaneously. Asking the correct questions and assessing the environment before deciding when to carry out RA or recruit subjects will allow researchers to negotiate if necessary so that the final decision fits operational and research needs. Persuasion and listening to feedback should accomplish agreement and lead to good fidelity and sample sizes.

Dangerousness and vulnerability

Prisoners are a vulnerable population (Erez, 1986; Sechrest et al., 1979; Ortmann, 2000) but they can be manipulative (HMPS security training officer) and may be dangerous (MacKenzie, 2012). Whilst ethics committees and prison staff are concerned with protecting prisoners' interests, researchers should be alert to potential dangers (MacKenzie, 2012). Therefore, although prisoners have lost much of their own agency by virtue of incarceration, researchers should avoid putting anyone at risk of harm. Working with offenders may be seen as risky whether inside or out of prisons, but those inside are there for a reason.

Prisoners can be violent towards other prisoners. Many programmes involve group sessions and prison staff may wish to restrict which prisoners are allowed to mix with others. Such considerations could confound random allocations so potentially problematic prisoners are usually excluded from experiments (McDougall et al., 2009a).

Consequently, the population available to experiments may be restricted by the personality or vulnerability of individuals. This could change baseline characteristics of the experimental groups and, if there was widespread restriction or attrition, may affect a RTC's external validity.

Practical issues

RESTRICTED POPULATIONS

To maintain external validity, researchers must ensure that their results accurately represent the intervention's target population (Goldkamp, 2008). Within prisons this may not be straightforward as prisons generally house different types of offender based on security classifications. The target population might be confined to a single classification or to several. For example, McDougall et al. based their RCT in ten prisons to ensure their sample was representative (2009a).

Prisoner 'types' which could render some unsuitable for RA may further reduce the population pool; for instance, sentencing courts set categories such as 'prolific and persistent' (PPO) (see Chapter 4). Prolific offenders were excluded from McDougall

and colleagues' experiment as they were prioritised to complete the intervention being tested and could not be controls who had to wait (2009a). Experiments with post-release outcomes may have to exclude prioritised groups altogether because they will not receive the intervention before release.⁷

Another consideration when conducting RCTs in a confined population is the possibility of violating the stable unit treatment value assumption (SUTVA) (Sampson, 2010; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). SUTVA refers to the assumption that experimental subjects are not influenced by social interactions between randomly assigned groups, perhaps beyond the control or knowledge of researchers. Berk (2005) uses an example of rival gang members exerting unusual influence within an institution. SUTVA can occur when experimental subjects from the treatment group(s) interact with controls and treatment effects could 'crossover' and affect control group subjects. With prisoners in the same establishment there may be a high possibility of crossover effects between peer groups (Cook et al., 2012). Similar 'diffusion' has contaminated experiments conducted within schools (Gunderson & Svartdal, 2010). Measures will be necessary to prevent contamination as staff may not know which individuals are involved in an experiment or, if they do, may not alert researchers. I was not aware of SUTVA violation in this RCT (see Chapter 3).

Experiments within prisons must be precise about the sample population and the generalisability of the findings. Additionally, careful checks on the control group should be maintained and it will be helpful to collect qualitative data (MacKenzie, 2012).

SECURITY

Security is the primary concern of prison staff (Sparks & Bottoms, 1995; MacKenzie, 2012). Research based in prisons is of secondary importance to staff and research demands must fit within this culture (Fletcher & Tims, 1992; McDougall et al., 2009a; MacKenzie, 2012). Therefore, finding alternative means to achieve objectives may be required. For example, by using a group research presentation rather than individual meetings, this RCT attempted to reach many prisoners simultaneously so

⁷ This is true regardless of unproven programme benefits as independent decision-makers, such as parole boards or judges, may reject the validity of the research design (Feder et al., 2000).

that movements out of their cells were more easily monitored and managed. Alternatively, researchers may need escorts or safe places where interviews can be conducted privately. These present a potential drain on prison resources and may lead to delays if staff are not available. There may be sudden emergencies when all prisoners must be counted and returned to their cells regardless of any research requirement (MacKenzie, 2012; Messina et al., 2010).

Researchers may have built relationships with prison staff that enable them to draw keys. However, strict rules and training apply to their use. For example, keys must never be carried visibly as prisoners are able to memorise key shapes and reproduce them. Keys cannot, under any circumstances, leave the premises as the entire prison would require refitting with locks if security was thus compromised. Therefore, key security must become second nature (fulfilling Kahneman's (2011) requirement for a regular environment and repetition).

Using computers or recording devices of any description within prisons is severely restricted (MacKenzie, 2012) and access to the Internet is limited. Such factors can combine to make conducting prison experiments different from those on the outside. For instance, interviews or observations will likely take longer than outside prisons because responses must be written by hand or observations conducted using handwritten logs. Furthermore, there is no second chance to hear or see an event so inventing memory aids, such as coding identifying features, can be helpful.

Treatment integrity and fidelity

Ensuring that the treatment being tested is delivered as intended is necessary in any setting. When the intervention is delivered by practitioners fidelity to the curriculum is vital (Messina et al., 2010). Equally, control groups should be monitored as they are vulnerable to crossover. MacKenzie (2012) included a detailed study of one control group and discovered that they had not received the expected level of programmes. Nevertheless, where practitioners deliver interventions routinely the experiment will measure the treatment's effectiveness in real-life conditions (Sherman & Strang, 2004a).

Within the prison environment, prisoners have little agency and are acclimatised to being directed. Therefore, despite knowing their experimental condition they may not resist confounding it. As prisons are expected to ‘manage’ prisoners they may well manage them by providing interventions excluded by the RCT, implementing experimental treatments for controls, or not having the required treatment available (California Youth Authority, 1997 cited by MacKenzie, 2012:300; Cook et al., 2012). Access to prisoners within the regime is usually limited so RA may be influenced before researchers are aware of it. For example, MacKenzie (2012) had six treatment group cases assigned to the control condition due to a clerical mistake. Furthermore, when practitioners identify eligible cases and collect data as well, inconsistency may be difficult to control (Fletcher & Tims, 1992; MacKenzie, 2012).

On-site versus off-site management

Researchers being present within the prison to control the recruiting and management of cases might prevent or mitigate some of the problems and peculiarities mentioned above. For example, ensuring that the correct prisoner receives the right amount of the correct intervention (and, equally, controls do *not* receive the treatment under test) is the prime concern of the researcher. It may not be such a high priority for a busy offender manager. Furthermore, staff can be reluctant to relinquish control of selection procedures for interventions (Erez, 1985; McDougall et al., 2009a). With researchers present to discuss issues that arise, experimental priorities can be promoted (McDougall et al., 2009a; Cook et al., 2012) although frequent telephone contact with, and regularly visiting, staff might achieve this.

The main drawback for managing experiments within prisons can be increased cost (Cook et al., 2012). When prison staff are gathering data, identifying and supplying cases, delivering treatment, and monitoring progress, it relieves the RCT funders of providing these personnel. It also means that researchers do not have to undergo training to do such things as deliver the programme being tested, administer assessment instruments (Shivrattan, 1988), or conduct eligibility checks. Moreover, training new personnel adds time to the length of an experiment as finding and employing the necessary staff can take several months before a single case is identified.

Nevertheless, additional research costs may be justified if the intervention being evaluated (or the eligibility criteria) is complex and anticipated to generate increased workload. For example, Roman and colleagues (2012) realised that eligibility screening and baseline data-collection was required every day during their RCT implementation and that the prison was unlikely to bear the cost. However, if the experiment is based in several sites and a research assistant is required at each one expense may be considerable.

Conclusion

Generally RCTs in prisons test how prisoners respond to interventions intended to change their offending behaviour (although, see Berk, Ladd & Graziano, 2002 for inmate classification system testing). The literature on experiments conducted within prisons is sparse (Farrington & Jolliffe, 2002; Farrington & Welsh, 2005) with few RCTs implemented after the mid-1970s. Most extant literature, particularly reporting early experiments, did not describe implementation problems except occasionally to mention small sample sizes or problems with treatment integrity (see Weisburd et al. 1990; Armstrong, 2002; Cornish & Clark, 1975; Taylor & Maxwell, 2009).

A recent sea-change has seen several papers published that solely describe the implementation of RCTs inside prisons (Cook et al., 2012; McDougall et al., 2009a; MacKenzie, 2012; Roman et al., 2012). Additionally, Messina et al. (2010) reported an experiment which briefly included implementation issues and Farrington & Jolliffe (2002) and Campbell (2003) published feasibility studies of conducting RCTs in two prisons that detailed the conditions necessary for implementing experiments.

Acknowledged concerns include finding potential cases, attitudes towards RA from prisoners and practitioners, negotiating when RA should occur (which may not be ideal in experimental terms), ensuring the availability of interventions, and preventing crossover between the treatment and control groups.

An important consideration is whether to have managers on site. Generally this would be a trade-off between the cost of additional personnel versus the potential to undermine the RA, slow down caseflow, or dilute the treatment when they are not.

To minimise threats to validity, researchers should remember that issues of security and safety will always trump research requirements. By understanding the custodial regimes and practitioners' fears and prejudices researchers should be able to build trust, persuade, and negotiate the best possible conditions to implement their experiment. Flexibility is necessary but, with small compromises to achieve larger objectives, should produce a successful outcome.

Chapter 3

The Sycamore Tree Programme

And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him...

Luke chapter 19:3-4, English Standard Version.

In this chapter I describe the programme at the centre of the randomised controlled trial (RCT), the Sycamore Tree Programme (STP), an accredited educational course that teaches restorative justice (RJ) to prisoners. Owing to the empathetic and emotional elements engendered by the meeting between victims of crime and offenders (central to the STP), the programme is widely thought to address offending behaviour and attitudes. Prisoners are referred to the STP through prison Chaplaincies. At the outset of this study the STP was unique but similar interventions, largely derived from the STP (STP manager), are now offered.⁸

To research the STP, in February 2012, I interviewed Peter Walker, a designer of the STP, lately Executive Director of Prison Fellowship England and Wales (PFEW); Thelma Ambler, the educational specialist who oversaw the accreditation process; and Anne Mason, Sycamore Tree manager, who was responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of the programme. Dan Van Ness, a programme originator, corresponded via Email. Additionally, I reviewed tutor and group facilitator training documents and the STP delivery manuals.

I begin with an outline of the context within which voluntary sector organisations work with offenders.⁹ This includes the origins of Prison Fellowship International (PFI) and PFEW, the organisation that delivers the STP within Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS). An overview of the STP follows leading to its theoretical and ideological bases and relationship with RJ and desistance.

⁸ The STP manager was an employee of PFEW who oversaw the deployment of the STP in prisons.

⁹ 'Voluntary sector' is a generic term used to encompass non-governmental, not-for-profit, voluntary, and charitable bodies.

Research methods and a full description of the programme follow, derived from interviews, PFEW guidance for programme tutors, and direct observation. I conclude with the challenges presented by evaluating the STP using experimental methodology.

Voluntary sector

Other organisations working inside prisons

A kaleidoscope of non-statutory bodies, which vary in size, success, and where they target their efforts, works to help offenders desist from crime. They provide a wide range of services in prisons, the community, and assist with the transition between them (Mills, Meek & Gojkovic, 2010). For example, 820 voluntary sector organisations are listed in the Clinks directory as providing services to offenders.¹⁰ According to the directory 433 of them work in custodial settings.

Since the late 1990s the state has made an increasing effort to use these bodies (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Government policy presented this involvement as “a shift towards local decision-making, focussed [*sic*] on achieving more effective results and finding ways to reward that success, by creating the right conditions for all those with expertise in this area to collaborate. That [has] wide implications for the way people work together” (MoJ, 2011:4). This drive was aimed towards a ‘social impact bond’ strategy whereby non-statutory bodies provided services, funded them in advance, and were paid by results.¹¹

The policy had a mixed reception from the voluntary sector (Corcoran, 2012; Mills et al., 2010; Nielson, 2009). Voluntary organisations working to rehabilitate prisoners exist and practice within a context of tension and competition. Concerns were largely based on the desire for ‘evidence’ of the efficacy of services provided. This raised the potential for conflict of interest between the ideological aspirations of many organisations and a growing dependence on state funding (Corcoran, 2012; Hutchison & Ockenden, 2008; Mills et al., 2010). For example, some organisations were too small or lacked sufficient funding to commission evaluations of the services they provided or they became

¹⁰ The Working with Offenders Directory is a free, comprehensive online database providing support for offenders in prison and the community. It features details of rehabilitation services available to offenders and their families. [<http://www.workingwithoffenders.org/wwodbSearch.aspx>]

¹¹ [<https://www.gov.uk/social-impact-bonds>]

marginalised as larger bodies ‘cherry picked’ easier to manage client groups (Corcoran, 2012). Equally, private sector providers, or large charitable bodies forming alliances with them, were seen to have an unfair advantage where greater resources could produce more ‘professional’ bids to provide services thereby depriving smaller bodies of further resources (Corcoran, 2012). Ideologically, there could be tension between a lobbying or reforming function and partnerships with the state to engage in punitive exercises such as running prisons (Nielson, 2009). A growing partnership between state and voluntary provision might undermine perceptions of independence and lessen the trust of service users (Silvestri, 2009).

It was likely that the increasing professionalism and specific targeting used by voluntary bodies added to policy changes was behind the acceptance of volunteers by HMPS personnel. Volunteers were increasingly considered valuable contributors to prisoners’ rehabilitation (Gordon & Dell, 2002; NOMS, 2005).

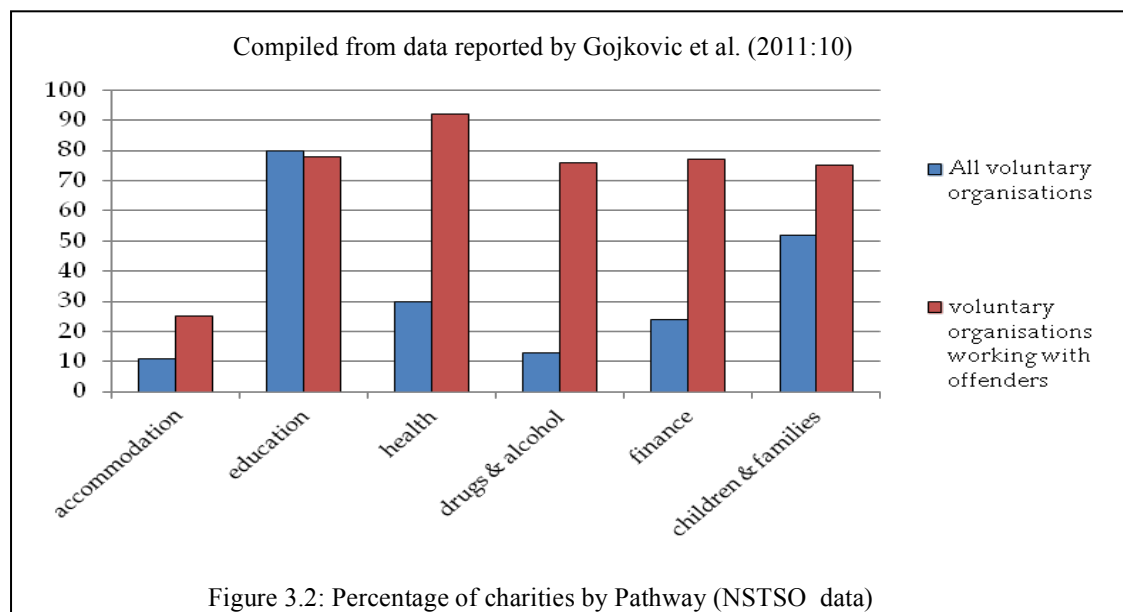
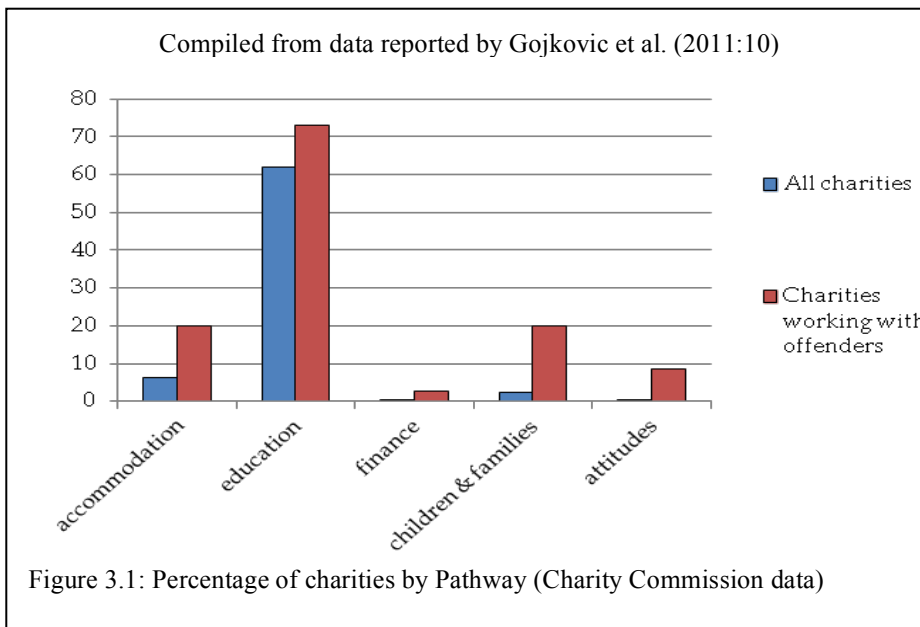
Nevertheless, official approval and user popularity did not prevent the collapse of charitable bodies from time to time. For example, the Inside Out Trust ceased abruptly in 2007 owing to financial problems (Gray & Wright, 2011). Alternatively, programmes and initiatives, although well received, ceased because they were discontinued pilot schemes or could not secure further funding.¹²

WHAT THEY PROVIDE

There is a vast variety of voluntary organisations working with offenders; these range from large, well-established to small, local, or niche providers. The different provisions and providers do not evenly address offenders’ needs, which are categorised as ‘pathways’ (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Seven ‘pathways’ were identified (Home Office, 2004) which Gojkovic and colleagues aligned to potential voluntary body provision (2011). Charity Commission and National Survey of Third Sector Organisations (NSTSO) data were used to identify the voluntary sector’s involvement in each ‘pathway’ (Gojkovic, Mills & Meek, 2011). Figures 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate that many voluntary sector bodies deliver educational, family, and housing services but fewer provide recognised

¹² Rob Owen, CEO, St Giles Trust, commented in his 12 annual report, “[A]s I write this (July 2012) some vital services are sadly ending. Our long-established, multi-award winning CAFÉ family support service for ex-offenders in Kent will close. [This] hugely important service has helped nearly 700 vulnerable families overcome poverty, disadvantage and crime.” (St. Giles Trust 2012, Impact Report, p. 8).

rehabilitative programmes aimed at specific criminogenic areas such as attitudes and behaviour (Gojkovic et al., 2011).



Many services offer media, such as sport or art, aimed at improving self-worth as well as skills:

Sport is increasingly being recognised as a positive diversion, intervention and rehabilitation tool for use with prisoners [...]. Several theories have been proposed to describe how sport may contribute to crime reduction, for instance as an alternative means of excitement, competition and risk taking, in conferring primary health benefits and in contributing to desistance.

(Meek, Champion & Klier, 2012:1)

Prison-based arts and media projects have a relatively long history [...]. They enable prisoners to express themselves creatively and to contribute to society – both within and beyond the prison walls – through that creativity.

(Edgar, Jacobson & Biggar, 2011:16)

Reformed ex-prisoners express a desire for lasting accomplishments or ‘something to show’ for their lives, describe newfound pleasures in creative and productive pursuits, and often have a special commitment to a particular community or social cause (from environmentalism to youth empowerment). In short, they find a reason to live that is inconsistent with continued offending.

(Maruna, 2007:4)

Fine Cell Work is a social enterprise that trains prisoners in paid, skilled, creative needlework undertaken in the long hours spent in their cells to foster hope, discipline and self-esteem.

(Website

[http://www.finecellwork.co.uk/about_us/stitching_a_future])

However, despite being highly regarded, few services have been evaluated.

A search of websites and databases reveals that most service evaluations are based on surveys, before/after measures, and elite interviews. Almost all had small sample sizes and limited comparison groups (Finnegan & Stewart, 2012; Adler & Mir, 2012).

Notwithstanding these methodological weaknesses, qualitative data suggest that voluntary sector organisations provide much appreciated support for prisoners and their families (Gordon & Dell, 2002; Meek et al., 2012; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002) that sometimes employs prisoners themselves (Edgar et al., 2011).¹³

Not all services are unfocused or solely ‘well-meaning’. The Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt) programme for prisoners with a history of drug and alcohol abuse (Liriano, 2002; Martin & Player, 2000; Martin, Player & Liriano, 2003) is an example of a targeted intervention. It began in HMP Downview in 1992 and is in regular use in 22 prisons in England and Wales (RAPt website).

¹³For example, the St. Giles Trust Peer Advice Project and the Call Centre at HMP Send.

BEHAVIOUR AND VICTIM AWARENESS

Most behavioural and victim awareness interventions are within the cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) paradigm and are mainly delivered by trained prison staff (Offending Behaviour Programmes). Although meta-analyses have shown that CBT can reduce reoffending the evaluations reviewed seldom used random assignment (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey, Chapman & Landenberger, 2001; Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson, 2007; Lipsey & Landenberger, 2006; Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee, 2002; Wilson, Bouffard & MacKenzie, 2005). Lipsey and colleagues found that few studies in their meta-analysis used random assignment designs or prevented attrition from affecting outcome. Furthermore, only six of the RCTs were conducted on “real world” CBT practice. They conclude that, “The amount of high quality research on CBT in representative correctional practice is not yet large enough to determine whether the impressive effects on recidivism found in this meta-analysis can be routinely attained under everyday circumstances.” (Lipsey et al., 2007:23).

In English prisons McDougall and colleagues (2009b) conducted the only CBT programme evaluation using randomisation. This was a multisite, short-term-effect evaluation using before/after psychometric measures and did not attempt to collect post-release outcomes. HMPS Chaplaincy offers a victim awareness programme, Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside (SORI). This was largely derived from the Sycamore Tree Programme and compressed into one week. The availability of the SORI programme was difficult to establish but in 2012 it was offered in seven English or Welsh prisons (Beech & Chauhan, 2012). All SORI evaluations to date have used before/after psychometric tests or qualitative methodologies and have not used control groups.¹⁴

Other behavioural and victim-awareness programmes, mainly using RJ principles, are provided by the voluntary sector. For example, the Forgiveness Project (TFP) has a programme similar to the STP, RESTORE, where victims meet prisoners and recount the effects of a crime upon themselves. This is delivered by TFP with at least one ex-offender RESTORE graduate as a co-facilitator. An evaluation with a small sample size using a

¹⁴ Beech & Chauhan cite three evaluations (Miles, C. (2008). A qualitative investigation of offenders’ experiences of a prison based restorative justice programme. Unpublished Division of Forensic Psychology chartered exemplar; Bird, L. (2008). Findings of the psychometric evaluation of the SORI (Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside) programme at HMP Cardiff. Unpublished report; Bourton, J., & Harrison, T. (2008). Supporting offenders through restoration inside, pilot project carried out at HMP Shrewsbury interim evaluation – Phase 1. Unpublished report) but I have been unable to trace them.

matched group as controls found a positive view of the programme from participants and prison staff together with improved attitudes towards offending measured by before/after tests (Adler & Mir, 2012).

Khulisa originated in South Africa. It provides a rehabilitative programme aimed at violent offenders, Stop The Violence (also known as Face It). The programme was adapted from the South African version to fulfil the ‘What Works’ principles used by HMPS (Pascoe, 2011). A pilot evaluation used an unrandomised comparison group and found generally positive improvements in coping mechanisms and behaviour in custody (Graham-Kevan, 2011).

Prison Fellowship

PFI is rooted in PF/USA, the body founded by the late Charles Colson following his own incarceration. Colson was a presidential aide to president Richard Nixon and was imprisoned for attempting to hide illegal activities inaugurated by Nixon and his team (the Watergate affair). During this time Colson became a ‘born again’ Christian, an overtly evangelical believer who dedicated his life to Jesus and his teaching.¹⁵

In the Gospels Christians are exhorted to visit prisoners (Matthew chapter 10:36-40) and Colson, convinced that the only path to true rehabilitation and change was the ‘transforming power of Jesus’, felt this applied to him. In 1976 PF began outside prisons with leadership seminars for ex-prisoners.¹⁶ Ex-prisoners were to attend these seminars and return to prison to lead fellowship groups inside (Van Ness, 2012). Bible studies were developed later and eventually both activities took place inside prisons. In 1980 PF, by now PF/USA, identified a need for advocacy to deal with systematic issues within U.S. criminal justice. Accordingly, a lobbying and advisory function grew alongside direct ministry to prisoners.

The evangelical impetus for prison ministry was not confined to the U.S.A. but Colson’s high-profile conversion provided a focal point that had hitherto been missing. For example, the late Sylvia Mary Alison, wife of a British Member of Parliament, had felt

¹⁵ *Born Again* (1976) is Colson’s autobiography and includes some details of his establishing Prison Fellowship in the United States.

¹⁶ *Life Sentence* (1979) is another of Colson’s autobiographies including the early days of Prison Fellowship.

drawn to prison ministry since the 1950s. It was Alison's meeting Colson in 1976 that led to the founding of PFEW in 1980 (Loux, 1987). Other Christians approached PF/USA to start similar ministries in their own countries and the idea of PFI came about as “an association of *national prison ministries*” (Loux, 1987:24) (original emphasis). Each national PF would be autonomous with PFI providing a global voice for “justice and righteousness [...] according to biblical standards” (Loux, 1987:38-39). Each body shared Colson’s principle that volunteers would be the workforce. He had recognised that prison Chaplains and staff had their own roles within the system, but that the vast network of Christians outside the laity “didn’t see or respond to the real needs of prisoners [...] they had no network of people who could help them lead a new life” (Loux, 1987:17).

PFI led the development of programmes intended to reach prisoners and their families. These programmes, together with training, advice, meetings, and technical assistance, formed the basis of the service that PFI offered its associates (Van Ness, 2012). Today, according to the PFI website (<http://www.pfi.org>), there are affiliated organisations working in 115 countries around the world. Although each is responsible for providing its own funding, trustees, staff, and volunteers, there is one non-negotiable requirement; acceptance and adherence to the PFI statement of faith:

We believe in one God, Creator and Lord of the Universe, the co-eternal Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary atoning death on the cross, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended to heaven where as truly God and truly man, he is the only mediator between God and man.

[...]

We believe that all people are lost sinners and cannot see the kingdom of God except through the new birth. Justification is by grace through faith in Christ alone.

(Loux, 1987:45-46)

Sycamore Tree Programme: overview

My literature and database searches revealed that the STP is the original educational/victim-awareness programme whereby convicted prisoners meet a victim of crime and, according to Chaplains, is the most widely used. PFEW, who deliver the STP,

is one of the larger voluntary sector organisations with a presence in 95 prisons in England and Wales (Clinks directory) although courses are not offered in each one (STP manager).¹⁷

All tutors and group facilitators are Christians but evangelising or proselytising is not allowed. They are instructed that the STP is not suitable for such activity; “We are quick to weed them out [should volunteers be found to undertake any form of evangelising] and recommend other things that we do with prisoners instead” (STP manager, 2012). The STP has always been offered to prisoners of any faith or no faith:

[...] The course [STP] left me with such a sense of hope and positivism. Being of the Hindu faith, I felt the religious element of the course was very well balanced and ‘not in your face’. Every inmate should do the Sycamore Tree course and I hope in time the Home Office realises this.

Never let the course ever cease, it simply makes too much of a difference to those who attend.

(extract from letter to PFEW, source, tutor)

PFEW volunteers are recruited through church congregations and word-of-mouth. There is a small, paid staff whose main function is to recruit, train, and supervise in excess of 1,700 volunteers (PFEW website).¹⁸ Before any are allowed into prisons they join and participate in prayer groups. In their explicitly Christian activities they assist with Bible study sessions for prisoners and may help deliver Alpha courses.¹⁹ Some volunteers support Chaplaincies with clerical duties and run PFI programmes within prisons such as Angel Tree and letter writing.²⁰ However, the programme directly aimed at behaviour and rehabilitation is the STP.

¹⁷ [www.clinks.org/directory/31664] last accessed 13.05, 16.5.14.

¹⁸ <http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk>

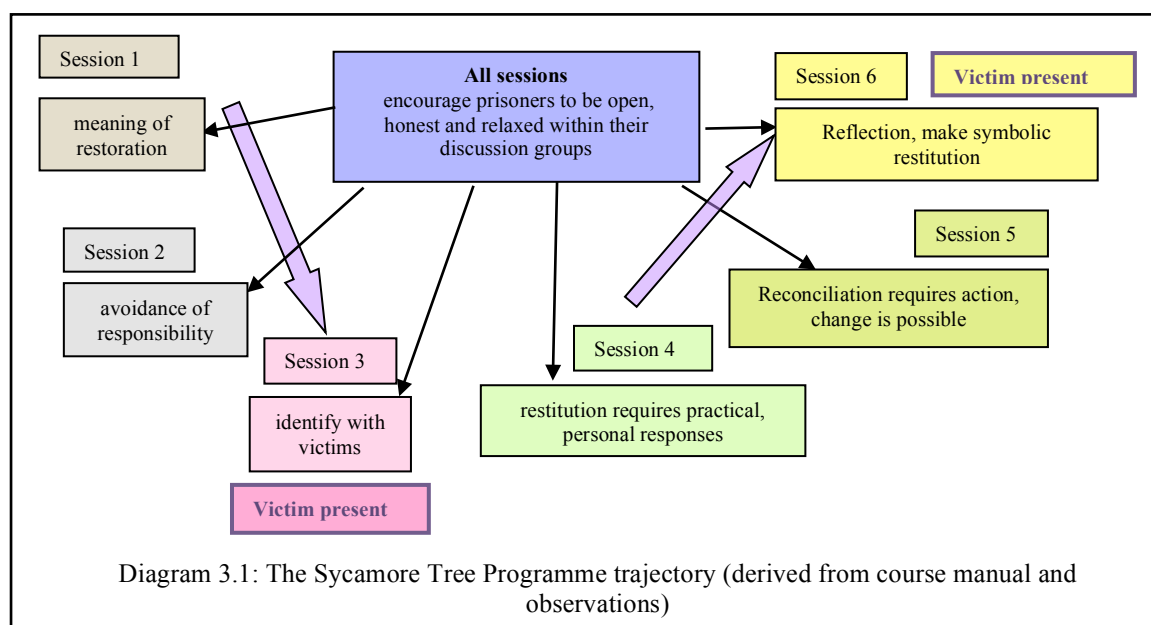
¹⁹ Alpha courses are informal gatherings (whether inside or outside prisons) where people are invited to explore the Christian faith. <http://www.alpha.org>

²⁰ Angel Tree assists prisoners to give Christmas presents to their children. Presents are bought and delivered by Prison Fellowship volunteers working with churches and prison Chaplains. Each gift is sent as though from the imprisoned parent and is accompanied by a personal message written by the parent for their child. This has been extended to Mother’s Day to provide presents for mothers of young offenders and through the year to prison ‘Family Days’, allowing parents to give a gift to their child as part of a day spent together. Volunteers wishing to write to prisoners are trained and matched to prisoners who want pen-friends.

The STP comprises six weekly sessions lasting 2-2½ hours with a tea-break. Each course, for 20 prisoners, follows a trajectory from introducing RJ, through presenting a victim of crime and taking responsibility, to encouragement that change is possible, and making an apology with symbolic act of restitution (see diagram 3.1). Tutors, assisted by at least four group facilitators, lead the course. Prisoners are taught that forgiveness is one of the keys to restoration, recovery, and rehabilitation and that unforgiveness causes suffering and prevents healing:

Did the boys who'd done it get hurt by my unforgiveness?. [...] It made *me* want to commit suicide. [...] I never talked about anything else. I wasn't very nice to be around. [...] If the other person never says sorry does that mean you can't forgive them?
(Victim during a session)

Thanks for making it clear that you can find forgiveness. The reason I'm in prison is because I couldn't find a way to forgive. Your story has been an inspiration for me. Just to hear someone say that it can be achieved is very encouraging for me.
(Prisoner)



Tutors follow a detailed manual. Prisoners must attend voluntarily and return a signed attendance form to Chaplaincies prior to the course start date. Places are usually prioritised by the proximity of release dates. In some prisons STP tutors interview

prisoners to assess their suitability for the programme. Increasingly, sentence planners allocate prisoners to courses.

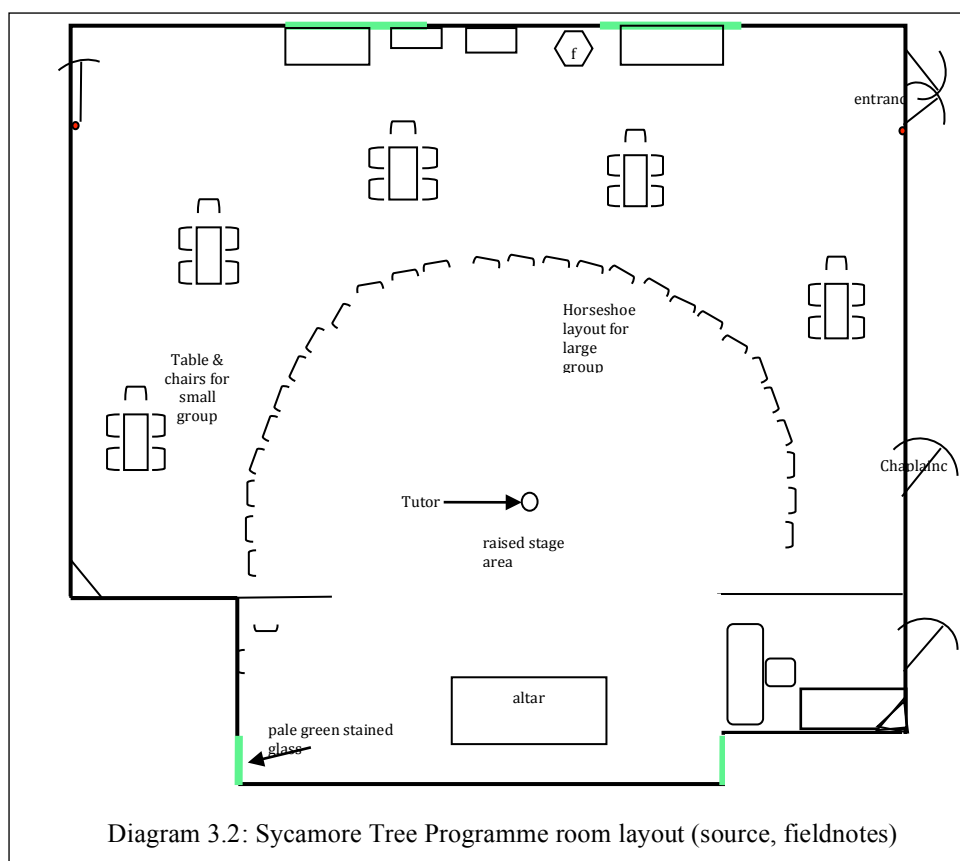
The course in operation

Here I describe the STP as I observed it and from meetings, interviews, and interactions with Chaplains, tutors, victims, prisoners, prison staff, and invited community guests. Chaplains and prison staff were not usually present during the sessions. The tutor and group facilitators prepared the venue. When attending, the victim and community guests often arrived at the prison later. Uniformed officers brought prisoners from the wings.

Prisoners usually self-refer to the STP or it is included in their sentence plan (see appendix 5); occasionally other staff recommend it. The chapel is convenient as a venue.²¹ This room is generally large enough to accommodate the people attending the session and removed from exterior disturbance, which provides reassurance of confidentiality. Teaching takes place in either small discussion groups or the whole group for feedback, using visual aids, or direction from the tutor. Small groups usually have four or five prisoners with one or more facilitator, seated around a table at the perimeter of the room. The whole group sits together in a horseshoe shape.²² (See diagram 3.2)

²¹ Some prisons had a multi-faith room where Christian symbols, such as crosses, were either absent or covered.

²² One prison accommodated the small group discussions in separate rooms off the chapel (which was quite small). Another prison had the whole group seated in three rows facing the front and, because it was an exceptionally large room, all the small groups were accommodated at the other end.



PRISONERS

The STP is considered suitable for all types of offender except sex and domestic violence offenders. PFEW eligibility criteria include admission of guilt (even if prisoners claim extenuating circumstances), attendance at all six sessions, and having sufficient language and literacy abilities to engage with discussion and writing. STP volunteers provide extra help with literacy where necessary. Any prisoner categorically denying their guilt is excluded.

PFEW request HMPS to ensure that prisoners are not transferred once they have begun the course. PFEW stipulate that prisoners must attend voluntarily and should not be allocated *solely* because they have a victim awareness course on their sentence plan (see appendix 5). They request a mix of offence types and that no more than four prisoners serving life sentences (including Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPO) or Indeterminately Sentenced for Public Protection (IPP)) are present on any one course.

The STP is not compulsory. Limited places have led to oversubscription. Nevertheless, prisoners do drop out. Sometimes they find the course requirements, such as discussion

and role-play, too difficult (tutor: personal communication). Sometimes they have been unable to reschedule appointments or visits from their family. Occasionally STP sessions clash with other activities and prisoners abandon it. Finally, prisoners may be released or transferred without the Chaplaincy being informed (see Chapter 7).

VICTIMS

It is tutors' responsibility to recruit victims and they are usually people known to PFEW volunteers. Crime victims are not expected to have forgiven their offenders but usually they had:

I have to forgive every day, but it's for my benefit. [...] When we do that [forgive] we can move on with our lives.

(Victim)

Victims found their sessions demanding. Although they described their experiences as cathartic and healing, several told the prisoners that the days and nights leading up to their prison visit were uncomfortable. Both men and women mentioned sleeping difficulties on the night before their visit.

Occasionally victims become 'professional' because they have told their story so many times. One tutor revealed that they had stopped asking one victim to attend because their story and demeanour had become almost perfunctory. Therefore, tutors said that they were constantly seeking new crime victims who were willing to come and talk to prisoners.

Operational environment

TUTORS

Individual prisons have a volunteer pool; in some prisons the pool provides for different groups to deliver the STP, in others it is too small and the same people deliver every course. The prisons in the study represented both situations. I met several individuals who only assisted with the STP and had little contact with PFEW; they were responsible to the tutor.

PRISONERS

Place allocation can be quite chaotic as prisoners have to be visited on the wings to get forms signed and confirm their willingness to complete a ST course. In larger prisons this could involve walking over a mile with the associated unlocking and locking of every door en route. Alternatively, it could involve wing officers moving men to the Chaplaincy or other suitable interview venue. There were rarely full-time staff available and it was frequently the STP tutors that served invitations.²³

It is sometimes too far into the course for no-show vacancies to be filled. If a prisoner does not appear for the first (and sometimes second) session Chaplaincy staff usually try to contact them via wing officers and have them escorted to the session or replaced by another prisoner from the waiting list. Several tutors said that they had a contingency plan of starting with 22 or 23 men so that, overall, they retained 20 (the recommended number of participants).

The tutor directs each session, completes all administrative tasks, and keeps the learning environment orderly and positive. A group facilitator welcomes every prisoner as they arrive for each session. Everybody is given a temporary name label (including me) and sits within the horseshoe layout. Once the whole group is assembled for the first session (with group facilitators intermingled) the tutor introduces him/herself and invites introductions from everybody else. Only first names are used. An icebreaker exercise ensues followed by an outline of the course, the session, and who the PFEW volunteers are. Prisoners are encouraged to establish the meeting rules by calling out suggestions. Examples were: no swearing, respect each other, don't talk over each other, and complete privacy.

Participants are reassured that everything within the room is confidential, prison staff do not have access to their work, and PFEW volunteers do not disclose information unless it is within standard ethical criteria.²⁴

²³ Several STP coordinators welcomed the random assignment involved in this study as it removed their involvement in selecting men for the available places.

²⁴ Any disclosure relating to the harm of an individual, any unsolved crime, or escape must be reported to prison authorities.

It was obvious that the men I observed were very wary as they arrived for their first session; they looked for people they knew and sat close to them or sat well-separated from others. Most men had little or no prior knowledge of PFEW and few knew what to expect of the course.²⁵ However, as men arrived for the third and final sessions they were clearly more relaxed and comfortable with the volunteers and each other. They smiled or shook hands with group facilitators and the tutor and generally began conversations immediately upon arrival. Men spent less time watching each other and I observed more eye contact between individuals leading to mutual support or encouragement.

Theoretical and ideological bases

PFI intended to offer a rehabilitative intervention for use in criminal justice systems and sought to work with both victims of crime and offenders. In 1998 a meeting was organised in London to research and design a programme; people from several PFI affiliates including the United States, Scotland, Zimbabwe, the Pacific region, and England attended; they planned to use biblical concepts but not evangelise or proselytise participants.

A balanced focus between victims and offenders was required whilst making offenders aware of crime's wider harm. This would be achieved by bringing offenders and victims together in prison. The original format was for equal numbers of victims and offenders to attend all sessions.

Additionally, to promote RJ as a sound means to address crime, representatives of public bodies and the community would be invited to witness acts of apology and restitution made by prisoners.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Luke's gospel description of the encounter between Zacchæus and Jesus formed the foundation because the meeting between an offender and a member of the affected community could stand as a symbolic example of RJ.²⁶ Zacchæus was, effectively, a

²⁵ It is likely that unfamiliarity with the STP is more common since it was included in sentence plans. If men are *required* to do the STP as a part of their sentence plan, they are not precluded provided they are willing, if reluctant, to attend. This may be coercive as prisoners wish to demonstrate cooperation and willingness to address their offending behaviour to 'progress' through their sentence (Crewe, 2007).

²⁶ Luke, chapter 19:1-10.

collaborator with an occupying force who exploited his position to enrich himself at the expense of his own people. Not only did he have direct victims from whom he extorted money, but he undermined his community causing them to hate him. Jesus was portrayed as a local celebrity who attracted large crowds wherever he went. Zacchæus' determination to see Jesus was revealed because he climbed a Sycamore tree to get a better view. This could be considered a form of exclusion because no one would let him through to the front of the crowd (it is noted that he is a short man).

Jesus saw Zacchæus in the tree, called him down and then, to the horror of the crowd, invited himself for a meal with Zacchæus and his family. "And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner"" (Luke, 19:7). Following the meeting (where Jesus signifies a community representative) Zacchæus repented of his offensive behaviour, publically apologised, and offered restitution to any that he had harmed. PFI thought this account exemplified the RJ conference between offenders, their victims, and their communities. Ideologically, the Bible story provided both a historical framework and the context of Christian values desired by a Christian organisation.²⁷ Moreover, taking a RJ approach offered the means to include victims.

Prisoners are encouraged to see this example as hope for changing their own lives and achieving a new identity if they reject their past and change their future behaviour.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

RJ aims to bring all stakeholders in a criminal event together. Restoration begins when everyone is treated equally recognising stakeholders' humanity, that the offender now has obligations, and that the victim needs to be empowered in the justice process. The process of meeting and discussion enables all concerned to explore the circumstances of the event; the victim might realise that the offender is similar to himself; the offender might realise that his actions caused trauma beyond his imaginings; and the community might realise they have the ability to take an active role in the outcome.

²⁷ Early proponents of RJ maintained that its roots were in old civilisations' methods of dealing with crime (Braithwaite, 1989; 2002; Van Ness & Strong, 2002; but also see Daly, 2003 for overemphasis on traditional justice).

The aim is achieved through various types of meeting: *mediation* between victim and offender, when they either meet face-to-face with a mediator (direct), or where they do not meet but use the mediator as a go-between (indirect); *conferencing*, where the offender and victim meet face-to-face with supporters present; or *circles*, when the wider members of the community are involved. These meetings require an agreement of the facts, if not a formal admission of guilt by the offender (see Daly & Immarigeon, 1998 for a review of different practices). This centrality of those involved in crime, victims and offenders, underpinned the STP.

RJ relates to several criminological theories: narrative (it allows one's story to be told), labelling (it seeks to avoid stigmatisation), strain (material and human differences between offender and victim become minimised during discussion), or control (it uses the moral dimension to arouse shame and involves a wider social context). RJ exists within the compass of all (see Mantle, Fox & Dhimi, 2005 for RJ's relationship with classicism, positivism, conservatism and Gehm, 1998, for narrative, and equity theories).

Although there was increasing evidence that RJ was useful in reducing reoffending, there was no "causal theory that describes the exact mechanisms by which face-to-face restorative justice is intended to work" (Strang & Sherman, 2004:5). Nevertheless, other theories have strong resonance in RJ practices, for example: Braithwaite's theory of reintegrative shaming (1989), Tyler's theory of procedural justice (1990; Tyler & Huo, 2002), Sherman's (1993) theory of defiance, and Braithwaite's (2002) theory of responsive regulation (Strang & Sherman 2004). Additionally, later evidence posited Collins' (2004) theory of interaction ritual chains (IRC) as the necessary, micro-social, 'active' ingredient of RJ conferences (Rossner, 2008; 2011).²⁸

At its simplest, society might be regarded as a cohesive organisation of heterogeneous individuals and to maintain that cohesion, Braithwaite (1989) suggested that the reintegration of offenders was a crucial step in preventing re-offending, and that the offence rather than the offender should be condemned. Zehr (2002) argues that a sense of 'belonging' to a group is vital and Maxwell & Morris (2002) make the distinction,

²⁸ Although several of these references are to later dates than the initial planning of the STP, they are linked to RJ by ongoing research and have informed the current study. They may also be helpful for readers interested in further research into RJ and the STP therefore are included here.

emphasised by Maruna (2001), that for the offender it is society's actions rather than intentions towards them that are important. Seeing reintegration in terms of social cohesion might be perceived as a revival of the rehabilitation ethic but restorative reintegration is concerned with a dialogue between offenders and society rather than offenders merely 'fitting in' or 'doing good'.

The STP acts as a microcosm of society and provides a means for dialogue between offenders and others.²⁹ Specifically, it mimics an RJ conference and its supporting theories in several ways. First, the attendance of unpaid men and women who consistently reinforce the human value of prisoners whilst not minimising their harmful behaviour fits Braithwaite's (1989) theory of reintegrative shaming where offenders' behaviour is sanctioned but, as individuals, they are valued. As a practical demonstration, a tutor took a new £20 note, screwed it up, threw it on the floor, and stamped on it. He then asked the prisoners how much it was worth. His action symbolised that, no matter how damaged or dirty the human being is, s/he is still as valuable as when s/he was brand-new.

Second, strong bonds often develop between the facilitators and prisoners as the course progresses. McCold (2007) asserts that close, personal relationships between the supporters and supportees involved in RJ conferences assist in providing long-term reintegration simultaneously holding offenders responsible for their actions. Furthermore, these bonds fulfil the 'belonging' required by Zehr (2002). Third, victims who attended STP courses all reported that they found the experience helpful. This fits increasing evidence that RJ benefits victims (Angel, 2005; Sherman et al., 2005; Strang, 2002; Strang et al., 2006). Fourth, the presence of community guests inspires hope that rejection is not inevitable and could address the defiance engendered when sanctions are perceived as unfair (Sherman, 1993). Finally, the STP's heightened emotional content when a (unrelated) victim of crime is present could fit Collins' IRC requirement for positive social interactions (2004).

Shapland et al. (2008) conducted a major evaluation of three RJ schemes between 2001 and 2008. Unusually, compared with many RJ evaluations, most offenders were adults,

²⁹ Interestingly, Shapland and colleagues found that both victims and offenders were less satisfied with indirect mediation where there was no direct dialogue between them. They suggest that lack of empowerment and doubt about the genuineness of apologies could be reasons for this (although many victims did not regret not meeting their offender) (Shapland et al., 2006).

some responsible for serious offences. In their fourth report they found that RJ conferences reduced recidivism and were cost effective. However, they observed that controls in the RCT study also offended less than the national average. They propose that there may have been a selection effect whereby offenders willing to take part in RJ “are prepared to talk about desisting from crime” (Shapland et al., 2008:22). They continue:

The authors think that, in order to agree sincerely to participate in restorative justice at all, offenders have to be at least on the cusp of trying to desist. They have to be prepared to admit responsibility for the offence, hear that they have inflicted harm, think about the problems related to their offending and agree to meet both the victim and their supporters [...]. *The conference itself, however, could provide an extra boost.* Much of what was discussed in conferences was what could be called ‘desistance talk’ because it allowed examination and discussion of how to resolve offending-related problems, might provide victim support or encouragement to desist, brought in offender supporters to aid the task of desistance [...]. (my emphasis)

Shapland et al., 2008:42

The STP, if it truly mimics an RJ conference, may also provide the catalyst, or turning point (Laub, Nagin & Sampson, 1998; Maruna, 2001) for prisoners to desist. Shapland and colleagues found that these were the offenders who were more likely to have less recidivism (2008).

DESISTANCE

Developing the theme begun in the Shapland et al. report (2008) mentioned above, Robinson & Shapland (2008) argue that, based on their experience of evaluating three different kinds of RJ, “the restorative justice encounter may serve to maximise [offenders’] motivation or ‘responsivity’ to engage with other sources of ‘rehabilitative’ help. But, by the same token, [...] the absence of such opportunities may be equally decisive: an intention to desist may be undone in the face of a lack of social support and/or other (appropriate) rehabilitative resources” (Robinson & Shapland, 2008:353).

However, desistance is difficult to define. Laub & Sampson discuss the elusive nature of a definition and various scholarly efforts to provide precision (2001:6). Viewed as an outcome, desistance is a non-event, an absence of offending, and so when does it begin? Viewed as a process of non-commission of criminal acts, desistance may mean committing less serious offences less frequently. In either case an offender’s intention is

the invisible, causal mechanism and harnessing their resolve seems to be at stake in assisting the process.

Thus, desistance is a process (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001) that can be interrupted, accelerated, or assisted, even if it has ill-defined start and end points; then where on this continuum does the STP stand? Criminal life-courses have ‘turning points’ which offenders often identify in retrospect but not always at the time they happen (Laub & Sampson, 1993). Aside from maturation, when offenders ‘naturally grow out of’ offending behaviour, other important life events such as marriage or parenthood can introduce impetus or stability into an offender’s life (see, for example, Laub et al., 1998). However, changing their life-narrative or self-perception is also required together with having an external source of belief that change is possible (Maruna, 2001). Emphasising ST participants’ human value may assist in building this human and social capital thought to enhance future efforts to desist (see for example, Farrall, 2002).

Ward & Maruna posit a goal-oriented approach to desistance, the ‘good life model’, whereby rehabilitative efforts are designed to “enhance individuals’ capacity to live meaningful, constructive and ultimately happy lives so that they can desist from further criminal actions” (Ward & Maruna, 2007:111).

Offenders do have choices although they may be limited by their social context (Bottoms, Shapland, Costello, Holmes, & Muir, 2004). In the process of desistance offenders face a continuous series of choices as they negotiate, for instance, peer pressure, material deprivation, or unstable housing (Shapland & Bottoms, 2011). If they can construct a new self-narrative that helps them resist old habits and make positive choices, this might assist their process of desisting.

Given Robinson & Shapland’s (2008) contention that RJ has the potential to boost desistance and, given the embeddedness of RJ within the STP, the message of human value and potential it aims to provide, and the realisation of the pain that criminal behaviour has caused, the programme seems well-placed to assist offenders motivated to desist. Furthermore, RJ conferences are rare and so the STP may be the only chance prisoners get at present to experience any kind of RJ.

Course structure and development

Structure

LAYING FOUNDATIONS

Once the STP's generic format was agreed, a pilot was run in Houston, Texas. The pilot course comprised 12 sessions with weekend events at the beginning and end (Van Ness, 2012). Pilots in HMP The Mount, England and New Zealand followed soon afterwards. The next year another course was piloted in HMP Swaleside. However, the English prison population was quite different from the U.S. with high levels of prisoner movement (see Chapter 7). As prisoners were potentially static for five weeks, PFEW modified the content to a five-session format. It was always standard in England and Wales for one victim to participate in each course by attending two sessions.

Capacity was built through volunteers. These were local people with an existing connection to 'their' prison through other work undertaken by PFEW. Costs could be kept to a minimum but volunteers were not free (Brudney, 1999; Ockenden & Hutchison, 2008). As potential tutors volunteered, the course structure, management, and training materials were provided by PFEW through distance learning and residential weekends. When tutors were required to have suitable teaching qualifications, in addition to shadowing other tutors, they took City and Guilds 'Delivering Learning' for Adults examinations.³⁰

The STP was a teaching course that taught the tenets of RJ although its ultimate aim was to change offenders' behaviour by addressing their attitude towards crime and victims. The STP was refined and the educationalist formulated a training manual for tutors and a structured schedule for the course.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

As the STP developed in England and Wales adaptations arose from working within HMPS. For instance, security clearances for multiple victims for every session were difficult to obtain. Additionally, PFEW responded to the pressure on available prisoner places by increasing prisoner participants per course from 16 to 20. The original authors were impressed by its continued adaptability without loss of integrity (Van Ness &

³⁰ Volunteers already possessing an educational qualification were exempt.

Walker, 2012). Nonetheless, some pressures were resolutely resisted. For instance, the STP continued to be administered through prison Chaplaincies capitalising on the existing good working relationships, and the biblical basis of teaching material was retained.

The STP had legitimacy because it produced measurable outcomes. Prison managers were able to include the programme in prisoners' 'purposeful activity' (Walker, 2012) (see Chapter 7). PFEW introduced an independent evaluative tool, Crime Pics II (CPII), a psychometric measure of offenders' attitudes to several aspects of crime. Of most interest to PFEW was victim empathy.³¹ CPII is a before/after instrument developed by M & A Research in 1994 comprising thirty-five questions targeting respondents' criminal attitudes. It is accepted in criminal justice as being a reliable instrument.³² Questionnaires were routinely administered during the first and final sessions.

The STP became popular which led to waiting-lists being created and maintained in Chaplaincies. Its main limitations were budget restrictions (see Chapter 7), resistance to the biblical content (tutor: personal communication), and logistical difficulties such as lack of volunteers or a venue within which to hold it (Chaplain: personal communication). From participants I only heard positive remarks:

It makes you think. Most courses are just ticking boxes. I thought this one would be like that when I started (pause) but it's not.
(Prisoner)

I've done loads of courses – there's nothing like this. There's another victim awareness course here but it's just filling in forms and writing.
(Prisoner)

We'll all be talking about it all the way back to the wing.
(Prisoner)

³¹ Two reports based on CPII data found significant improvements in attitudes towards victims (Feasey et al., 2005; Feasey & Williams, 2009).

³² "CPII is a widely used, fully validated questionnaire for examining, and detecting changes in, offenders' attitudes to offending. It has been used for many years by academics and by a variety of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, including the prison and probation services in England and Wales, to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitative programmes and other interventions with offenders." Information from website [<http://www.crime-pics.co.uk/index.html>] accessed 12.9.12.

RAISING AWARENESS

By the late 1990s PFEW had brought their three main concerns together: prisoners and their families, victims of crime, and RJ (Walker, 2012). They had created a programme to teach offenders about RJ and equipped PFEW volunteers to deliver it.

Support for the STP was uneven amongst Chaplaincies and Governors. Nevertheless, many who thought it offered something different from more conventional interventions endorsed it; interest grew. PFEW always worked through prison Chaplaincies. Before they allowed the STP to be provided, they required that the Chaplain, the local PFEW coordinator and volunteers, and someone of authority within the prison supported it. Once these criteria were met, local volunteers assumed responsibility for administering and delivering the programme.

A report in 1999/2000 commissioned by PFEW supported the mounting view that the STP should be accredited. This meant that the programme could be evaluated and shown to work (Ambler, 2012) but accreditation was not completed until 2003.

ACCREDITATION

HMPS senior officers advised PFEW that prisoners' time on courses was prioritised according to the contribution the course made to Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Following consultations with adult learning centres, Home Office personnel, and their Board of Trustees, PFEW sought accreditation through the Open College Network (OCN). This was achieved in 2004.

Accrediting the STP was an expensive undertaking for PFEW. OCN required all tutors to be qualified to at least one level higher than the level being taught. Prisoners' work had to be directed towards strict learning outcomes with agreed assessment criteria set for three different levels (Entry-Level, Level 1, and Level 2) and take into account low literacy abilities. The PFEW education specialist attended offender education days given by HMPS and held detailed discussions with tutors to combine HMPS requirements with the activities used in STP sessions. Workbooks were developed so that prisoners could record their learning and which could be assessed and quality assured.

Following OCN advice the STP was delivered as a ‘local programme’ for a year to establish the revised format. This protected the programme content from use by other organisations. In 2013 the STP became a national programme accredited by the Department of Education and Skills (Offender Management) (Ambler, 2014).

Seeking an educational accreditation was a pragmatic choice. At that time, most behavioural courses were within the psychology paradigm and none were delivered by unpaid personnel. The STP was teaching prisoners about ‘life’ issues through an understanding of RJ and giving them the skills to change their lives (Walker, 2012). Prisoners could also achieve an educational qualification so an educational accreditation was considered appropriate and was within PFEW’s funding capability.

Following accreditation, it became possible for prisoners to fail the course but those who passed could achieve either a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification.³³ The new workbooks gave offenders the opportunity to produce tangible evidence of their thinking and responses to questions posed during the sessions (see appendix 5). Assessment was based on participation during STP sessions and prisoners’ written work. Adding written work as private study ‘homework’ provided direction for the reflective time between sessions; it ensured that lessons and experiences derived from the previous session could become embedded and establish a foundation for the ensuing session.

Another major effect of accreditation was the introduction of charging. At the time of writing, PFEW charges HMPS £4,500 for up to 20 adult prisoners per course. Charging became necessary because of the increased costs incurred by accreditation procedures and workbook production. It was possible because the STP qualified as meeting some prison KPIs. Although the STP had always had a cost, the body meeting those costs changed from grant aid and charitable sources to HMPS.

Additionally, PFEW had to employ a full-time staff member responsible for overseeing and moderating the STP. Workbooks are assessed and graded by the tutor at the

³³ Level 1 and Level 2 refer to the credit value of the qualification obtained and reflect the notional hours of learning involved. Qualifications can be built on if participants wish to progress to a higher level. The awarding organisation is responsible for carrying out assessments of units and awarding credits and qualifications. Further information can be sourced from the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OFQUAL) website [<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-assessments/89-articles/145-explaining-the-qualifications-and-credit-framework>] accessed 12.9.12.

conclusion of each course then sent to PFEW head office. The STP Moderator randomly spot-checks them to ensure that grades are consistent and comply with OCN's outcome criteria.³⁴ Prisoners complete a questionnaire at the end of each ST course as a part of the quality control involved in maintaining delivery standards. The STP's structure became that observed in the current study.

STP CURRICULUM

Standardisation of course delivery eliminated any individual approaches that might have developed (Ambler, 2012). A teaching grid outlining the content and goals of each session was derived from the generic design and pilot sessions. The grid incorporated tutor and participant contributions, available resources, and why these worked. An educational approach shaped the evaluation guidelines and more discrete units for each session.

During developmental discussions the optimum number of participants per course, and room layouts, were settled. Direct feedback from tasks and activities was included within each session. PFEW's limited resources meant that most video visual aids were from the United States.³⁵

Educational content

The experiential Circle of Learning (Kolb, 1984) was the theoretical basis for the STP's mixed teaching methods involving different media and discussion. Visual aids, role-play, participation, and working in small groups enabled tutors and group facilitators to encourage all prisoners to contribute. The repetition, discussion, application, analysis, and feedback served to augment the cognitive processes involved in learning (Krathwohl, 2002).

The educational impetus enables participants to learn more about themselves (Kolb, 1984). Discussions are central to the sessions and, through the medium of RJ, prisoners have opportunities to think about themselves and their circumstances. Workbooks are intended to reinforce this learning. The most important aspect is how prisoners view their

³⁴ All workbooks are returned to prisoners via the Chaplain at the prisons where they completed the course.

³⁵ Tutors and group facilitators that I met grumbled about this as sometimes accents were difficult to understand and they felt that prisoners did not relate very well to American contexts.

futures in light of their pasts. This concept also provides the means for a 'turning point' from which prisoners can work towards change (Maruna, 2001). Using the symbolic story of Zacchæus, prisoners can examine their own behaviour through the less threatening lens of his. Moreover, they have an example of a 'victimless crime' through which to explore consequences beyond direct victims.

The STP is a participatory course following a non-didactic methodology ensuring active contribution from the prisoners involved. This engages all three areas of psychology; affect, conation, and cognition. Each session of the programme is designed to include attention, perception, learning, memory, language, concept formation, problem-solving, and thinking (Eysenck, 1993). This is achieved by using a story of crime to engage episodic and semantic memory (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968).³⁶ Thus, the victim's relation of a crime can bring personal events to mind. Tutors prepare for this, "Some of you may have been affected by the story you've heard from [victim]. Please come and talk to someone in the Chaplaincy. We don't want to hurt you or cells smashed up (we've seen that before)" (Tutor during session).

As the victim engages with prisoners in three formats; individually, in small groups, and by addressing the whole group collectively, offenders can examine their memories in a way most comfortable for them:

When asked to write about another crime [in their workbooks] –
[tutor] offers the DVD rather than their own crime but a group
facilitator says they can offer own crime – [this was] picked up
by one of the men, "so you can write about your own crime?"
(Fieldnotes, 15.3.12.)

Following discussion, engaging with tasks, and role-play learners give feedback to others. This contributes to an evocation of implicit memory as situations and contexts can be mapped onto prisoners' own experience (Graf & Schacter, 1985).³⁷ When participants engage with Zacchæus' crime, they can examine the direct and indirect effects on himself and the wider community without being defensive about their own criminal behaviour. "If

³⁶ Episodic memory refers to remembered experiences and events that enable individuals to recall the associated emotions and contexts. Semantic memory is a record of individuals' knowledge of the external world built up without reference to personal experience. The two types of memory interact with each other to build and expand life narrative. To paraphrase, they help individuals to make sense of and learn from experience.

³⁷ Implicit memory refers to unrecalled events which can work to enhance the present experience or performance.

you put your name in those questions instead of Zac, would some of those answers apply to you?” (Tutor, during session). They are then able to re-examine their own behaviour in light of the new experience they encounter and the knowledge exchanged during discussion:

It made me realise what I've done to my victim.
(Prisoner)

I didn't realise how much harm I've done to other people.
(Prisoner)

[Reading a letter addressed to his own victim] “I never gave you thought because I thought there was another victim, one of my co-defendants, [...] I met a victim in session 3 [...]. From that day on I have tried to live a different life [...].”
(Prisoner)

Gould found, in work with children with learning difficulties, that people with low literacy levels can develop language and articulate their ideas equally as well as good writers (1976). The STP was designed to encourage language formation and development so that participants and tutors can establish effective communication. All contributions are verbal, encouraged, and viewed as valuable and worthwhile. For example, I observed tutors responding to participants' contributions with, 'good', 'excellent', 'that's a really good idea', 'I can see you've been really listening to what's been going on'. Conversely, when a prisoner made an unsuitable suggestion the tutor responded, “We don't know that from the story; we *do* know he was hated by the community so we shouldn't really speculate.”

Public writing is done either by the tutor or prisoners who volunteer. Language acquisition is handled by feedback; for example, 'can you think of another word for...?' Individual writing takes place out of the public arena as 'homework' and prisoners are told that extra help is available. The emphasis on verbal contributions via speaking and listening enables prisoners' participation without stigma. Moreover, discussion helps prisoners to think through and make sense of their own and others' perceptions as language itself helps to shape ideas (Whorf, 1956).

People

TUTORS AND LEADERS

Although it was always envisaged that unpaid volunteers would teach the STP, they had to be selected and trained. Prior to accreditation most PFEW tutors completed a training schedule formulated by the people involved in designing and developing the programme. Following accreditation all tutors had to have a teaching qualification that met the requirements of PFEW, the Home Office Best Practice Guidance for RJ practitioners (2004), and the accrediting bodies ASET and Open College Network (OCN) Eastern Region.³⁸ Accordingly, PFEW developed an in-house educational curriculum for course tutors.

Volunteers were required who would lead small groups discussions. These ‘group facilitators’ did not need teaching qualifications because they did not undertake any teaching or assessment. Their role was to help prisoners respond to the questions they were given, assist with administrative form filling, and encourage and facilitate discussion. ST courses required at least four group facilitators, each leading a group of four prisoners. Their training mainly involved shadowing PFEW staff. Following the introduction of prisoners’ workbooks (see below), group facilitators helped prisoners with writing tasks and went through their homework with them. For example, I observed facilitators working with small groups or individuals prior to the commencement of teaching. Group facilitators are particularly helpful when individual prisoners find writing or discussions difficult as they can work on a one-to-one basis (Tutor: personal communication).

PFEW volunteers are given guidelines on their conduct within the prison environment including their relationship and manner with prisoners, their attire, and their attitude. It extends to how they deal with prison staff and the bureaucratic processes involved with security clearances for victims and community members.

PFEW volunteers enthusiastically responded to the call for tutors but the dropout rate was more than 50% for the first training programme (Ambler, 2012). This attrition rate

³⁸ ASET is an educational charity run by work-based learning practitioners for work-based learning practitioners and offers support, advice, guidance and representation to all professionals who work in the sector. (Information from website accessed 8.9.12.) [<http://www.asetonline.org/index.htm>]

reflected the varying levels of commitment, expectation, and ability of PFEW volunteers. Not all volunteers wanted to train as tutors and a long-term commitment was required from those that did. Furthermore, the need for a certain educational level had the potential to cause some tension (Le Metais, 1999). Eventually outsourced programmes were adopted which released the PFEW staff from teaching to supervise practice in prisons.

VICTIMS

Victims are intrinsic to the STP. PFEW provide guidelines on how to prepare and support victims but tutors are responsible for finding people willing to meet prisoners and share their story. There is no attempt to ‘match’ the crime that any victim has suffered with offences committed by prisoners on a course.³⁹ Yet their story often resonates with some prisoners. For example, one victim had been present during an armed bank robbery. Following the session two prisoners asked the tutor whether they had been targeted because their crime was armed robbery. The victim’s account had shocked them because it had never occurred to them that people on the ‘wrong end’ of a firearm did not know whether it would be used or that victims expected it *would* be used. For those prisoners, firearms constituted a tool of persuasion that they had no intention of using (Tutor: personal communication).

All victims that I met found the experience of speaking to prisoners rewarding:

I see so many lives turned round by this [STP]. To see them on week six. To see them stand up and make their reparation is always inspiring.

(Victim)

Victims attend two sessions of the STP. During the first visit they sit at the front of the assembled group to relate their story and the effect of the crime they suffered. Prisoners may ask questions and then the victim joins each small group for more intimate discussion. The victim usually attends the final session when prisoners make an apology and symbolic act of restitution (see below).

Some victims who speak on courses subsequently become PFEW volunteers. The crimes represented by victims I observed were varied such as burglary, an arson attack with

³⁹ Tutors rarely know what offences course participants have committed and disclosure is not required.

subsequent threats to kill, and some had had relatives murdered. One victim was the mother of a drug addict who supplied others. Her description of living with the detritus of addiction made a powerful impact on dealers and addicts in her audience as she related the effects of 24hr-a-day activity and the uncertainty of who was visiting her home. Her story debunked the notion of a victimless crime:

Until I saw [the victim] I never really thought I had any victims.
She could've been my mum, and that really got to me.

(Prisoner)

The prisoners' response and obvious contrition is the main reason given that victims find the sessions worthwhile. Victims unanimously said they hoped the prisoners they confronted, 'will never do it again' or that their story will, 'stop anyone else going through what I went through'. Equally, the time lapse between the victimisation and relating the story is irrelevant to the cathartic effect:

I felt quite a sense of relief as well, like I was able to talk to my
'crime doers' on some way. [*sic*] Very worthwhile.

(Burglary victim from 20 years earlier, source: tutor)

PRISONERS

Prisoners are expected to make an act of restitution. Together with the victim who told their story community guests are invited to the final session.⁴⁰ There are two aims; first, prisoners are encouraged that reintegration into the community is possible; second, community members witness for themselves that convicted criminals are ordinary people and can be remorseful. Additionally, guests meet a victim who has forgiven their offender and returns again and again to talk to prisoners.⁴¹ PFEW hope that experiencing a form of RJ in action is communicated to others as a positive influence:

I wish you well. I wish you to walk out and have change in your
hearts.

(Guest to prisoners)

⁴⁰ Not all prisons in the study routinely invited community guests.

⁴¹ Although it is sometimes difficult for STP tutors to find victims willing to come into prisons, they are cautioned against using victims so frequently that they became 'professional' because this could dull their story's emotional impact (tutor).

It's really been a privilege to come in here and talk to you.
(Guest to prisoners)

HMPS PERSONNEL

Senior officers within the prison usually attend the last STP session. They hand out completion certificates and frequently address the prisoners. Those I witnessed emphasised the STP's beneficial effects on past prisoners and their hope that the current cohort would find it helpful in changing their own lives. Senior officers' presence encourages the tutors and group facilitators as they see that prison staff appreciate their own efforts.⁴²

Research Methods

To augment the experiment, data gathered from the STP sessions had two main functions: first, to substantiate treatment fidelity at each site (Herrell & Straw, 2002; Lipsey et al., 2006; MacKenzie, 2013; Taxman & Friedman, 2009); second, to demonstrate that any findings would be generalisable to a wider prison population (Shadish et al., 2002; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Additionally, there was an opportunity to gather qualitative data with which to enrich any findings (Shadish et al., 2002; Babor et al., 2002; Cook et al., 2002; Cook et al., 2012; Leff & Mulkern, 2002; MacKenzie, 2012). Shadish and colleagues observe that “temporal, spatial, and micromediation processes [may be found that] explain an effect” (2002:392). Accordingly, I noted some local variations in delivery and some considerable differences in the physical venues.⁴³ Another purpose was to seek evidence of interaction ritual chains (IRC) and whether, if present, they functioned to facilitate empathy and group bonding (Collins, 2004; Rossner, 2011).⁴⁴

⁴² PFEW volunteers have very little to do with prison staff outside the Chaplaincy and those they meet when entering and leaving the prison.

⁴³ One chapel was very cold during each of my visits (N=4) and the tutor told me that it was rarely at a comfortable temperature being either too hot or too cold.

⁴⁴ Collin's (2004) theory of interaction ritual chains proposes that two or more people become 'entrained' when they have a mutual focus (that is, their attention binds into a cohesive, if temporary, group). This generates emotional energy that fuels the group, cohering it further. The legacy of the interaction may be extended if people leave with some kind of concrete reminder. When the interaction is finished the degree of emotional energy and entrainment generated predicts the level of participants' remembrance and may influence outcomes. Rossner (2011) found that when entrainment and emotional energy was present in RJ conferences recidivism was lower.

Session content and venue

As I was unable to observe every research subject's ST sessions, I needed to know whether observed sessions were typical and representative because the observations would be proxies for all courses at the particular prison.

All tutors followed a detailed manual but their manner of delivery differed. Some were affable and actively encouraged the men with verbal praise whilst others were quieter and more reserved. I was interested in whether any differences I observed in the physical or teaching conditions of programme delivery could be correlated with outcomes. Therefore, I prepared a global observation schedule, several teaching observation grids, and a crib sheet for recording my observations and impressions (Robson, 1998). Finally, I developed a questionnaire for tutors and group facilitators to complete immediately after the observed session finished. (See appendix 6 for observation schedules, coding, and questionnaires).

For evidence of IRC, group bonding and empathy, my observations were designed to use randomly selected individuals as a proxy for the behaviour and cohesion of the whole group (Altman, 1974; Kerlinger, 1973). This evidence will be relevant when final outcomes are known. It is not reported here because the full dataset is not yet available and this dissertation's purpose is to detail the RCT's implementation.

PREPARATION

I decided that systematic observations of participants would yield the best data as they could be coded (Hutt & Hutt, 1970; Kerlinger, 1973; Martin & Baleson, 1986; Robson, 1998; Simon & Boyer, 1974) and because I could not use any recording devices. I searched educational, psychological, and animal behaviour literature for information on structured observations as I found little in criminological literature. Additionally, I acquired helpful information from Sherman and colleagues' RJ observations in Canberra (Sherman et al., 2000) and the RJ interactions observed in the UK by Shapland et al. (2008).

Combining techniques from these sources, I prepared schedules designed to record body language, teacher/learner interaction, teacher activity and attitude, and general activities

present during the sessions. The schedules mainly comprised grids whereby each session was divided into equal time intervals (time sampling). This was identified as the most efficient means of recording 'pure' behaviour with as little observer inference as possible (Kerlinger, 1973); grids also enabled the simultaneous collection of multiple data (Simon & Boyer, 1974).

The observer marks the grids during each time segment using the code for the various behaviours to be recorded. However, as security clearances were not complete by the time I was ready to pilot them, I tested the schedules by observing students seated around me during several university lectures. This test revealed three shortcomings; one, a timing device was necessary; two, I needed a larger timeslot; three, my coding system required refinement.

Timing devices were not easily found. A chance remark to a computer software engineer produced the perfect solution; an interval timer as used by athletes during training exercises. It was cheap, compact, clipped discreetly onto my clothing, and could be set to silent mode. Another advantage was that, because the timer could not record, it was allowed into prisons without difficulty.

I did not always know whether any RCT participants were present during my observations neither could I identify them if they were. Participants had never met me but were told that researchers would observe some courses. STP participants were identified by their first names and I had randomised RCT cases using their code names up to two weeks before. Therefore even accidental recognition did not occur. The courses I observed could have comprised all research participants, research participants and others, or entirely prisoners not included in the experiment. Where possible, the tutors and group facilitators did not know which, if any, men were experimentals, which acted as a form of blinding.

PILOTING

I conducted three pilot observations in different prisons that resulted in revisions to several schedules and the questionnaires - and in observing easily identifiable men.

My first observation was a session with the victim present. Armed with several grids and schedules, I sat where I was unobtrusive and had good sightlines. Prior to everybody else's arrival I sketched the physical layout and attributes of the room. Gradually the men arrived.

Men sat around the room and I picked four of them at random. I noted a quick reminder of which one was which and numbered them on my grid.

The tutor started the session, settled everybody down, explained my presence, and told the men they were about to see a DVD. Off went the lights and I could see nothing! The DVD was short and then the men moved to their small discussion groups. Unprepared for this, I had not noted any identifying features on my grid, nor was I able to follow where all four had moved to. I lost time searching the room to re-locate the men. I had not memorised the behaviour codes well enough either and it became apparent that some of my proposed behaviours/body positions were unsuitable. For example, I had a category 'talking with hands' but nobody did.

It was obvious that I could not observe and code four individual's behaviour and teacher/learner attitudes and communication simultaneously as there were too many distractions and movements. Recording movement flow was impossible because I was juggling too many pieces of paper. I learned fast from this immediate feedback; I memorised my behaviour codes, abandoned all the teacher/student attitude schedules, and settled on a body language grid and the interactions between the men, the tutor, and the group facilitators. Additionally, I had a global observation schedule for group dynamics and physical properties and my crib sheet (see appendix 6). Eventually, I was proficient enough to track eight individuals and scan the room comfortably within five-minute time slots.

The advantage of five-minute slots was that I was could observe a large number of individuals which I considered would more accurately reflect the group dynamics. The disadvantage of five minutes was that activities and movement within the room crossed time-interval barriers (during any one time-slot a new activity could begin before I had noted each individual's position and behaviour). The pilots revealed that an individual's body language did not change much and five minutes was sufficient to capture data.

I had prepared a single questionnaire to be completed by tutors and group facilitators to cover the different sessions but it was too confusing. Therefore, I used separate questionnaires specific to each observed session (see below).

Observations

I decided to observe the STP sessions most likely to yield evidence of IRC. Theoretically, these would be the sessions with the most emotional energy and entrainment (Collins, 2004). As all the men would be new to the course and few would be known to each other, the first session was expected to yield least evidence of group dynamics. The victim's presence during the third session would likely stimulate emotional responses and generate emotional energy. Finally, the last session when the participants made their act of restitution in front of guests, senior prison officers, and the victim (if s/he returned), offered to be a daunting, if hopeful, experience for the men and yield the opportunity to observe group solidarity and entrainment.

To minimise the impact my presence had I was in position before prisoners arrived and did not sit close to individuals. I usually sat by furniture, such as a piano or a desk, so that I was partially obscured. I did not move during the entire proceedings and where possible avoided eye contact. I was introduced with a minimum of fuss.

The importance of being ready before the tutor and group facilitators began their preparations was emphasised at a later observation when, because of that prison's staffing logistics, I arrived very shortly before the prisoners but after the tutor and group facilitators. I completed the observation but was surprised when a man remained after the prisoners had left. It was several moments before I realised that I had observed a group facilitator! However, my mistake exemplified the ease of interaction between prisoners and PF volunteers. Furthermore, prisoners were not readily distinguishable by specialised clothing or other means.

STP sessions were divided into periods when the prisoners worked as a whole group or in small discussion groups. This affected observations as it was impossible to ensure excellent sightlines at all times because the men moved around. Sometimes they would arrive and sit in the main seating area (whole group) or some would sit at their discussion

group table. Once the session began, men who were clearly visible in one position may move to an obscured position. Occasionally, especially when the victim and other guests were present, there was some ‘musical chairs’ when people changed places more than once. When sitting in their small groups I sometimes had men’s backs towards me so I was unable to see their facial expressions.

One prison held all small group discussions in separate rooms outside the main venue. Since these rooms were much smaller, an extra seat was likely to interfere with proceedings and I did not follow any small group. As men always brought feedback to the larger group, I thought that what was missed would not influence my observation of the larger group dynamics in which I was interested.

Questionnaires

The tutors and group facilitators answered questionnaires themselves. At the end of each session they held a debriefing and completed various STP administrative tasks. They were usually rushing to leave the prison before it was ‘locked down’ for the night. With session-specific questionnaires tutors and group facilitators completed them easily. Only one group facilitator did not complete a questionnaire as she had to leave immediately. However, despite encouraging them that their opinions were important, open questions asking for reasons for some answers produced least responses. For instance, from the session 3 questionnaire; “In your opinion how well did this session go? give reasons...”

Sycamore Tree Programme: as delivered

The sessions

SESSION 1

The objective was for prisoners to commit to the course, understand what to expect, and receive their first workbook in readiness for private study time. Various administrative tasks were completed, for example the ‘before’ questionnaire from CPII.⁴⁵ Prisoners were expected to learn the basic differences between retributive and restorative justice. They heard the story of Zacchæus (Zac), examined it from the offender’s point of view, and were encouraged to remember and appreciate that Zac’s behaviour changed. This was achieved through the tutor’s teaching from the front, watching DVDs, and small-group

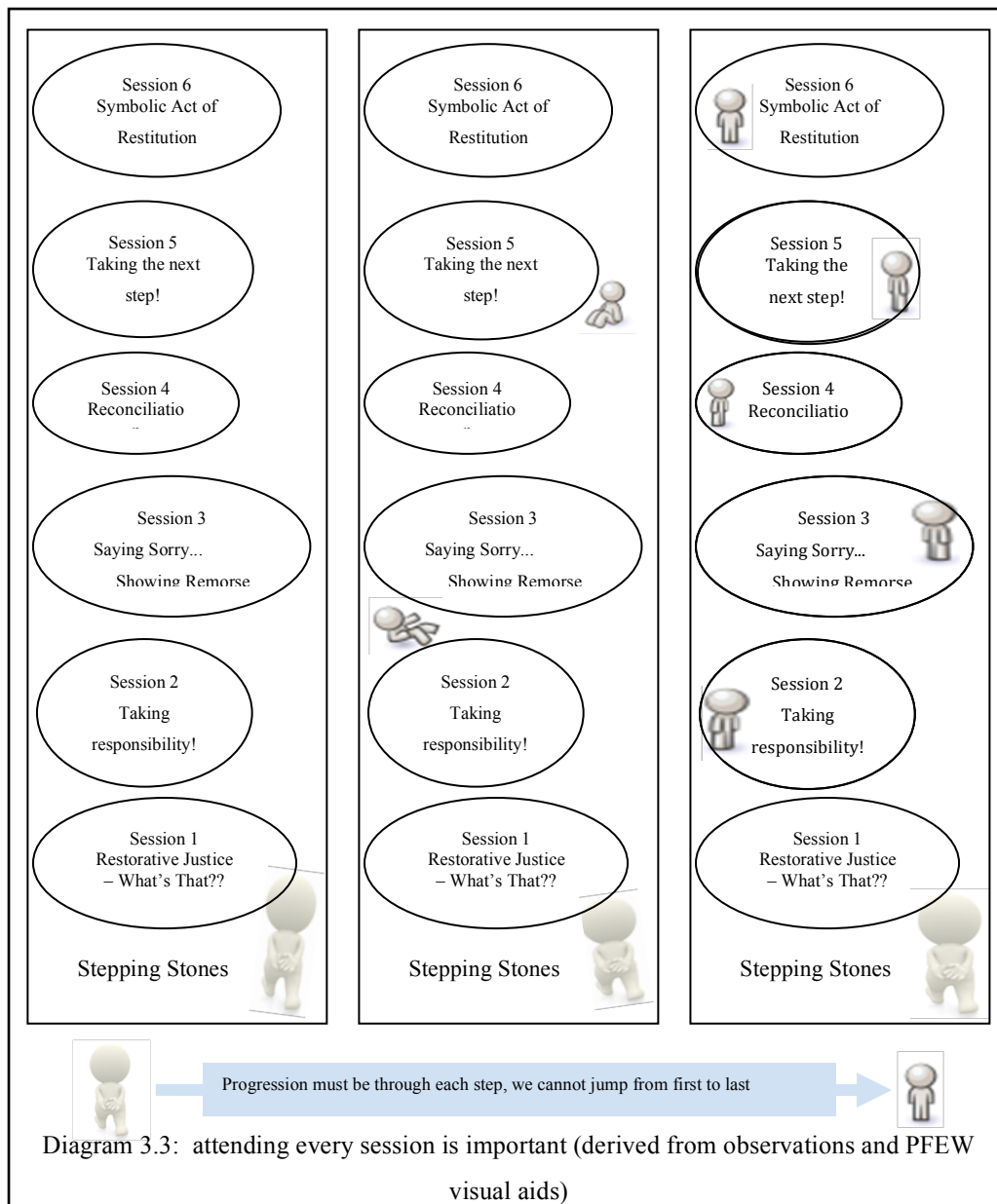
⁴⁵ During the current study PFEW discontinued the systematic use of CPII.

discussions guided by set questions. Each group presented feedback from the front having decided in advance upon a spokesman. Sometimes feedback took the form of question-and-answer and could involve role-play.

Although participating prisoners were from within a single establishment, generally they did not know each other. Initially they were allowed to sit where they liked but they were subsequently allocated to small groups by the tutor. This helped break up familiar groups and counteract any dominant or reticent individual's influence. Many individuals I observed were quite daunted by the prospect of role-play and being highly visible. Nonetheless, by the end of every observed first session (N=10) the men engaged with the questions and readily presented responses from the front. This progression was typical according to facilitators. All tasks were addressed in their small discussion groups.

Before they left, prisoners were urged to complete their private study answers in their workbooks. They were expected to remember the things they had learned and told that they could help each other but were not to copy directly. Copying would be obvious and they would fail the course as a result. They were also given an outline of the next session.

Tutors gave a practical demonstration of why participants were expected to attend every session: diagram 3.3.



For successive sessions the prisoners sat with their small groups. The group facilitator went through the previous week's work and their private study tasks with them. This ensured that all learners began the ensuing session equally and that group facilitators could identify any individual's difficulties and deal with them discreetly. Tutors did not participate in any small group discussions although they walked around the room and offered encouragement.

SESSION 2

Prisoners learned about taking responsibility for their behaviour. They were introduced to the wider effects of crime, the 'ripple effect', and looked at the victim's perspective

through Zac's victims. They examined an offender's perspective using Zac's behaviour before and after he changed and were challenged to think about their own victims. There was usually at least one offender with no direct victim and any neutralisation was counteracted using real and hypothetical examples. For instance, drug dealers and suppliers often excused their crime as a 'service' to addicts viewing themselves as having no victims:

I can see now it was all greed; I never had enough money. I didn't care how they [drug addicts] got their money, as long as it was in my pocket.

(Prisoner)

Participants gave feedback in groups continually repeating and reinforcing learning from the earlier session. Simultaneously they were laying foundations for future sessions. Individuals could share their personal experiences with the larger group but were not expected to. Before they left they were reminded of the session's topics, to complete their private study time, and told that they would meet a crime victim during the next session.

SESSION 3

The purpose of this session was to expose the prisoners to victims' pain. The victim was present throughout and mingled with prisoners. Participants examined the benefits of restoration for victims. They learned that, generally, victims are not punitive. They were assisted to consider the benefits of forgiveness for both the victim and the offender but reminded that forgiveness does not exclude punishment. Just before the break the victim related her/his story. The atmosphere suddenly became highly charged. I observed men fidgeting whilst appearing to listen intently. Such is the emotional charge that volunteers were affected even though they may have heard many victims' accounts before. Once I witnessed an immediate effect; a man stood up and said:

Listening to you – I didn't realise. When I'm doing that [burgling houses], I don't see the ripple effect. So, I'm sorry.

(Prisoner in response to burglary victim)

Having discussed forgiveness before the victim spoke, the prisoners understood how important confession of wrongdoing is to victims. One victim said that prisoners always ask questions about her forgiveness and seemed more interested in that than in the actual

crime.⁴⁶ Before the prisoners left their workbooks were collected and new ones distributed. The tutor would check their progress and identify any men that were struggling.

SESSION 4

During session 4 prisoners learned about reconciliation and taking responsibility for their own crime:

I would recommend that where it asks you to put a name in connection with a crime, you put your own name [in the workbook]. If you're not confident to do that, that's fine, but you'll get more out of the course if you do. The more you consider your own crimes and actions, the more you'll get out of it.

(Tutor during STP session)

They were taught to 'act sorry'. It was emphasised that they *could* change, returning to past behaviours was not inevitable, and that restitution is a part of reconciliation. They compared restorative and retributive outcomes of crime and discussed possible routes to changing their own lives. The final act was a group facilitator's reading of a poem entitled *Drop a Pebble in the Water*. Although it begins by illustrating the harms [ripples] caused by a seemingly small action, the final verse is the opposite. It illustrates the equally widespread effects of positive acts. This was intended to reinforce the hope of a positive future.

SESSION 5

Session 5 concentrated on *how* people can change and the effect this can have for offenders, their victims, and their social circle. They recapped the personal, written, and DVD victim accounts they had experienced and discussed the benefits that might ensue for themselves if they 'made amends'. They were encouraged to plan changes in their own lives and told that they would be able to make their own symbolic act of restitution. They were encouraged to spend time preparing to demonstrate the beginning of their own change by writing a letter to the victim they had met, their own victim, or their family or community; alternatively, they could prepare a poem or some kind of artwork or craft which they could bring to the session.

⁴⁶ She became a victim through the murder of her brother.

FINAL SESSION

The victim usually returned to this session to witness the prisoners' acts of restitution.⁴⁷ Also present were community guests. Most prisoners brought something as a demonstration of 'acting sorry'. The tutor recapped the course and there were further small-group discussions after which the men gave a group presentation from the front.⁴⁸ Everybody then sat around the horseshoe and the prisoners were invited to make their own public act of restitution.^{49 50}

This act was emotional, some prisoners were overwhelmed and unable to stand before their peers to read their work aloud. To assist them either their group facilitator or the tutor read out their writing (or showed the piece of work they had produced together with its explanation). Once the victim read aloud a prisoner's letter.

It was clear that many hours of care had gone into making such items as a large cross constructed with matchsticks, a red rose made with salt dough, a wooden, inscribed and lined jewellery box, and the 3D word 'SORRY' made with various media. The victims I met greatly valued these items.

Sometimes several tea lights were arranged on a table in the middle of the horseshoe and prisoners could light one as a symbol of change in their life. There might be a bowl or dish of water into which they could drop a pebble, the ripples formed were meant to represent positive change in their lives. Group facilitators and guests also had an opportunity to speak. Guests were impressed with what they witnessed and several spoke:

It takes something to get up and say you have problems with
reading and writing.

(Guest to prisoners)

⁴⁷ One victim told me that she found the final sessions so rewarding in terms of men's changed attitudes that she would only attend a 'session 3' if she was also free for the final session.

⁴⁸ The community guests were briefed prior to the arrival of the prisoners in all cases I observed. However, sometimes guests remained with the men at all times, including their small group discussions and role-play presentations; at other times they were shown DVDs about RJ whilst the prisoners participated privately in their small group discussions.

⁴⁹ In one prison the horseshoe was modified to a complete circle.

⁵⁰ According to tutors this was usually 100% but I witnessed one session where only 83% (15/18) had prepared something.

I'm thoroughly impressed. Seeing how they really seem to have 'got it'. Seeing how receptive they are. How they see the benefits of forgiving.

(Guest to me)

Are they asked to thank the volunteers? I was impressed that they went round and said thank you.

(Guest to tutor)

A senior prison officer, normally the Governor or head of the Offender Management Unit, attended (although rarely present throughout) and handed out completion certificates to the prisoners. These officers congratulated the men and spent time chatting privately to individuals. They frequently addressed everyone saying how much they appreciated the STP, the work done by PFEW volunteers, and the achievement of those who had completed the course. The tea-break followed; it was usually more 'special' with chocolate or cake instead of just tea and coffee. I witnessed many incidents of handshakes, pats on the back, and some hugs with the victim.

Before leaving prisoners completed administrative tasks and handed in their workbooks. They were told that their work would be assessed, sent to PFEW head office for internal audit, and be returned. If they had passed the course, their certificate for Level 1 or 2 pass would be sent to them via the Chaplaincy.

The workbooks, completion certificates, and pass certificates were all reminders of the course. These concrete items could act as tokens (Collins, 2004) that would underscore the memory of the programme and help prolong any empathy they had achieved with victims.

AFTERWARDS

The PFEW volunteers had no further, formal contact with prisoners who completed the STP. Many expressed the desire that some kind of follow-up programme be devised especially for prisoners with an awakened interest in meeting their own victim for some kind of RJ process. Any prisoner wishing to follow up the STP did so through the Chaplaincy.

Conclusion

Although an accredited course, the STP exists within the voluntary sector. Delivered by PFEW volunteers, it is a labour-intensive course requiring a minimum of five individuals plus a victim and community guests willing to come into prisons. This entails administration by Chaplaincies (internal) and tutors (external). The administrative complexity means that courses can be cancelled at short notice or take weeks to implement if there are problems.

The STP structure and methods are based on educational theory making the content relevant and accessible to prisoners. The course appeared to generate empathy as witnessed by the interactions between prisoners and unrelated crime victims. Combined with the emphasis on hope and possibility of change, these factors situate the STP within the process of desistance and, given close parallels with RJ conferences, provide a theoretical basis for reducing recidivism.

Researching the STP entailed contacting and interviewing the people responsible for its inception and development together with observing it in practice in eight prisons. Prisons' logistical idiosyncrasies influenced observations inasmuch as prisoners engaged in small group discussions could not always be clearly seen. Preparing and piloting my observations required the abandonment of schedules that had involved much preparation but responding to the immediate feedback ensured that I was better equipped to gather data intended to enhance the RCT findings.

Prisons were chosen for expected case numbers; their geographical distribution was demanding as I drove over 22,000 miles in three months. Nevertheless, having a single observer provided consistency, which was important as ambience can affect staff and volunteer morale that, consequently, might affect programme delivery and outcomes (Stuart & Ellis Paine, 2007).

Course delivery and content were consistent with the PFEW manuals but individualised by tutors' personalities and teaching characteristics. It was unavoidable that non-research participants were present on ST courses; this precluded recording sessions. To have prohibited such a mix would not have measured the course as delivered in practice (Flay

et al., 2005; Goldkamp, 2008; Rossi et al., 2004; Sherman & Strang, 2004a). It might have been possible to gain non-research participants' permission to make recordings but custodial conditions made accessing them impractical and one refusal would have meant it was impossible anyway. Additionally, it was a weakness that I did not observe sessions involving all research participants as they may have experienced some kind of aberrant programme delivery that will not be known.

Chapter 4

Building Coalitions, Reaching Agreements: the central skill

We must also remember that enthusiasm by operational people for the project may sometimes be confused with enthusiasm for the intervention to be tested.

(Strang, 2012:214)

This chapter details the process of building and gathering the organisations into the coalition necessary to implement a multi-site, randomised controlled trial (RCT) in eight prisons. I knew that I needed to build a coalition but I did not know exactly what would be demanded of practitioners. The experiment was designed to test a well-established intervention, the Sycamore Tree Programme (STP), in 'real-world' conditions. From inception of the idea to implementation of the fact took almost three years. In the beginning I worked with Prison Fellowship England and Wales (PFEW), which provided a gateway to Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS). Using the STP manager's experience of delivering the programme within the prison environment we planned and prepared a model protocol.

The protocol was the basis of my relationship with HMPS. Here the practitioners knew what was likely to succeed and what was probably wasted effort. The individuals who were undaunted by the task ahead were those that grasped the mettle and agreed to participate. Nevertheless, as experience proved, it was often enthusiasm for the STP rather than the RCT that led to their collaboration (epigraph).

I believe that approaching the field within which the RCT would operate through the front-line practitioners who would be most affected was at the root of its success. Caution and resistance increased as I climbed the hierarchy of power seeking permissions. Eventually, I decided that I must go to the top of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Here too, it was an individual that made the difference between going on or giving up.

The coalition comprised PFEW, HMPS, NOMS, and a police force (see Chapter 8 for the police). The final RCT protocol was the product of experience, negotiation, and adjustment. Between us all we randomly assigned 465 men with 92.5% fidelity to treatment as assigned. The common denominator of the coalition partners was the genuine desire to know whether the STP's apparently powerful effect was sufficient to prevent prisoners returning to their offending behaviour after release.

The advantage of evaluating the STP in operational conditions was that its *effectiveness* would be measured (Piantadosi, 2005; Sherman, 2010; Sherman & Strang, 2004a; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Testing *effectiveness* tends to emphasise external validity and, consequently, "have immediate impact on [...] practice" (Piantadosi, 2005:324). Conversely, tests for *efficacy* (or whether a treatment works in ideal conditions) are usually based on interventions where dose and context are controlled and monitored (Piantadosi, 2005; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) and outcomes are often analysed only for cases where the full treatment was received (Sherman & Strang, 2004a). Put another way, the research question, 'Does the STP reduce reoffending after release?' was more likely to be answered if it was tested in the conditions in which it was delivered, as opposed to idealised, controlled conditions which could not be routinely reproduced.

The chapter is divided into five sections: first is my relationship with PFEW and the early stages of planning the RCT; second I detail my introduction to Chaplains within HMPS and prison Governors' initial resistance to the RCT. The third section covers my relationship with NOMS and how this was crucial to the experiment being implemented. Next follows a note of my initial visits to all the potential research sites identified and, finally, a brief assessment of the factors that contributed to forming the coalition.

I: Prison Fellowship England and Wales

In April 2008 I matriculated into my degree; although I was confident funding would be secured, at that time it was not assured. On 19th March 2008 the Managing Director of PFEW had commissioned the evaluation of the STP by means of an RCT. My relationship with the charity began in 2006. PFEW's then Managing Director had approved a study of the STP for my Master's degree (MPhil). The study was mainly descriptive but there was a tantalising epilogue when a small sample (N=62) of STP

participants had lower recidivism than expected.⁵¹ An earlier before/after study using psychometric data had found significant attitudinal changes attributable to the STP (Feasey et al., 2005). However, all these data were anonymous with no criminal histories known and no reconviction data sought. Together these findings suggested the hypothesis that the STP reduced reoffending after release and, effectively, amounted to pilot studies for this RCT. Accordingly, we decided to test the STP. Both PFEW and I sought academic and private funding to support the evaluation.

The STP manager was appointed as my liaison. She had well-established contacts with PFEW Regional Coordinators (RCs), trained STP tutors, and oversaw the programme's implementation and smooth operation in prisons where it was offered.⁵² She had working contacts with HMPS Chaplaincy and Home Office research departments. Additionally, she had been involved in the early development of the STP. Her knowledge was extensive. However, she was not an academic and had no background in experimental research so we sometimes found blind alleys together.⁵³ Her knowledge of delivering the STP enabled us to begin preparing a protocol for recruiting research participants. In her training and supervisory role she knew, and was known by, many STP tutors and group facilitators which was helpful in disseminating to them the potential, forthcoming evaluation of the programme.

Funding and meetings

Although the STP manager and I were both committed to implementing the experiment, during most of 2008 we were pulling in different directions. I was anxious to approach prisons but had no real entry point. Through academic colleagues I made contact with the Governor and psychologist at HMP Wandsworth in April and suggested that my liaison and I met them together. I was told that I should do nothing except through PFEW and that my recently completed draft application to conduct research within HMPS would be

⁵¹The Home Office Reconviction Analysis team conducted all analyses and results for that sample. No STP participants were identified and no sub-analyses were conducted (Wilson, 2007).

⁵² Regional Coordinators are employees of PFEW who are assigned a geographical area of England and Wales in which to establish a relationship with the prisons therein. Their main function is to recruit and equip volunteers to support the work of PFEW and coordinate their activities within prisons. They are the interface between the volunteer force on whom PFEW depends and the managers and staff who enable it to function. They also work closely with Chaplains and Chaplaincy staff in the prison service.

⁵³ For example, in August 2008 we both attended a meeting at the Home Office during which I was advised to use their new Integrated Research Application System (IRAS). The system was so new that no research colleagues I spoke to had heard of it. (See below).

presented to the PFEW Board of Trustees. With no progress by the end of May I continued to plan the experiment's design according to the CONSORT flowchart (Schulz, Altman & Moher, 2010).⁵⁴

At this time I had no idea of where STP courses were delivered and no authorisation to make a formal application to HMPS. On 3rd June 2008 I received a list of dates and locations for STP final sessions from PFEW head office together with instructions that I was to attend the sessions as a community guest for information only.

On 3rd July I was told that I must continue waiting as the funding PFEW had expected did not materialise. The operations manager at PFEW reiterated that PFEW would not support any actual research work at that time. On 9th July I heard that my academic funding application had been refused. This was slightly mitigated by the award of a college studentship the following day.

At the end of July 2008 a meeting at the Home Office with members of the Offender Management Service Analytical Team was confirmed. Their function within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was to “provide insightful, consistent, quality assured intelligence on business issues through building the evidence base to support the delivery of [...] protecting the public and reducing reoffending and [...] safer communities.” (MoJ, 2009). The commissioning of interventions context was discussed as was my RCT proposal. I was ‘strongly advised’ to seek permission to conduct the research direct from the Home Office by means of a new, online application form; the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS). I left hoping to progress matters as the Home Office staff were pleased that our research design was an RCT. Following the ‘strong advice’ I immediately downloaded the IRAS form and abandoned the direct HMPS application.

Rather than informally view several STP sessions, I worked on the IRAS and continued to plan the recruiting strategy. However, by November my independent work on the IRAS had reached a stage where I needed to consult PFEW and I pressed for a meeting. On 26th November my liaison disclosed that PFEW had been deliberately delaying

⁵⁴ The Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials Statement (CONSORT) was developed to help authors improve the reporting of RCTs enabling readers to understand a trial's design, conduct, analysis and interpretation, and to assess the validity of its results. The flow diagram is intended to depict the passage of participants through an RCT. The CONSORT website available at [<http://www.consort-statement.org/consort-statement/>].

progress. Unbeknown to me the MD had left PFEW, now they had no Director and there were major changes at senior management level. Additionally, the board of trustees was functioning with acting appointees. My liaison was no longer employed by PFEW but was described as a consultant. Consequently, her ability to work or authorise my work without direct instructions was constrained. In December an interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was appointed. She and two other trustees would discuss the RCT on 15th of December.

I believe that the relationship I had established with the STP manager during those eight months was instrumental in her active support for the experiment and her lobbying for it within PFEW. Eventually, on 19th January 2009 PFEW secured partial funding and I was able to progress. PFEW employed a fundraiser tasked with securing the remainder. My own relationship with PFEW changed as they had formed a subgroup to oversee the research. My liaison and the operations manager, were to be a part of the group as was a senior PFEW Regional Coordinator (RC). Additionally, there was the possibility that someone outside PFEW, who was familiar with research methods, would be involved. He was a director of Theos.⁵⁵

On 6th February 2009 PFEW and I settled an arrangement whereby I received funding termly, in arrears. On 10th of February I met the senior PFEW RC when he and the ST manager attended a meeting at the Theos office in London. The meeting was convivial but did not produce any direction or progress. There was uncertainty at this time exactly who in PFEW I was supposed to liaise with which made introductions to prisons complicated. I concentrated on meeting someone from HMPS Chaplaincy head office as it seemed courteous to familiarise head office staff with research plans. I planned that, if Chaplains within prisons contacted their head office about the research, they should be able to find someone who knew about it. I also continued developing the recruiting protocol.

⁵⁵ The website describes Theos as “a think tank working in the area of religion, politics and society. We aim to inform debate around questions of faith and secularism and the related subjects of values and identity.”
<http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk>

Finding and recruiting cases

Target population and invitation

I was clear that the pipeline began with the STP waiting-lists administered within prison Chaplaincies (Bachman & Schutt, 2001). This decision first ensured that the sample to be randomised would all be eligible for the programme (Rossi & Freeman, 1983); second, it reduced potential research sites to prisons where the STP was offered and the anticipated number of STP courses might provide sufficient cases. Prisoners not wishing to complete a Sycamore Tree (ST) course would not be considered. This was necessary because, should any reduction in recidivism be found, it could not be attributed to the programme under investigation if completers were compared with prisoners with no wish to participate in it (Robson, 2002; Crewe, 2007). Recruiting only men from the STP waiting-list ensured that like was compared with like once cases were randomised. I constantly repeated this necessity during meetings as all PFEW staff, tutors, and volunteers had to understand it.

Another consideration was inviting prisoners to participate. My Ph.D. supervisor, Professor Sherman, had lent me copies of an unused, recruiting VHS video that he had commissioned for another experiment. This seemed to be ideal as a filmed invitation guaranteed all potential research participants would receive identical information and I would have control over what they were told. Moreover, a recording meant that my physical presence was not required when research presentations were held and we could simultaneously reach many prisoners. It also ensured that low literacy levels would not prevent prisoners understanding what they were being asked to participate in.

Using the video as a template for this RCT's recruiting presentations, I ensured that prisoners were told: what to expect, that their participation was entirely their own decision, and that there would be no adverse consequences if they decided not to volunteer. The script explained that there would be a 50-50 split between those who consented to take part in the experiment; half of them would not get a place on the STP and this would be randomly decided by a computer programme. In December 2008 the ST manager offered to find someone to read and record the finished script. Initially, she offered an amateur with the necessary equipment but, as PFEW had recently worked with Premier Radio, she suggested an introduction to them. Premier Radio produced the DVD

that prisoners were eventually shown (see appendix 9). However, obtaining the finished product entailed a steep learning curve, especially as it had to be vetted for ethical approval at the Institute of Criminology.

I sent the approved script to the STP manager to forward on to Premier Radio and a recording was arranged for 24th April 2009, which was when I next saw the script prepared in hard copy for the teleprompter. A copy of the DVD was sent for my approval five days later. When I watched it and heard the words 'better than not doing it' I realised there had been a mistake. An important ethical amendment was missing. There could be no suggestion of benefiting one group of participants over the other (Liebling, 2009). Several telephone calls and Emails later I realised that the script version that had been sent had not had ethical approval. It was a costly lesson as a completely new recording was necessary. I received the correct DVD on 3rd June 2009.

Recruiting protocol

Between April and December 2008 the ST manager and I concentrated on devising a recruiting protocol. Her expertise and knowledge of Chaplaincies' working conditions was invaluable. All prisoners applied to do the STP through prison Chaplaincies. Thus, Chaplains, and Chaplaincy staff, had to be involved with the recruiting process and were likely to be my first contact point. I wanted a provisional recruiting protocol to hand when I met them so that we could tailor it to fit operational needs if necessary. My liaison suggested that PFEW RCs could provide any extra manpower required.

We needed a venue in which to show the DVD, a consent form for each research participant to sign, and a rapid method for transmitting names between the prisons and me. Professor Sherman had suggested that, once consent forms were signed, they should be faxed to me at the Institute of Criminology (IoC).

Prison chapels were the best venue as this was where ST courses usually took place. They were ready-equipped with DVD players and TVs for viewing. We had to anticipate questions and devise answers to them. Each attendee had to be given a consent form for him to take away and consider. This form had to be returned to the Chaplaincy once men

had made a decision. According to my liaison, prisoners were notorious for losing pieces of paper so I had to find a preventative incentive.

To answer questions arising from watching the DVD I compiled a frequently asked questions form (FAQ). The ST manager and I wrote down as many questions as we could think of to cover all eventualities. We decided that a small chocolate bar would be the incentive for men to return their signed consent forms. I would pay for the chocolate. This incentive gave no pecuniary advantage and chocolate should be easily purchased. My liaison assured me that it would be popular. All men who returned the consent form to Chaplaincy, whether they had agreed to participate or not, would receive a chocolate bar. Once signed forms were received in Chaplaincy someone could fax them to me. (When the fax was received I could randomly allocate the men and telephone the result to the prison.)

The final provisional protocol led from a man being on the STP waiting-list through being invited to participate in the RCT to being told whether he would be in the group that did the course (treatment, T) or the group that did not (control, C). This would be the basis of my discussions with prison Chaplains when I met them. At that stage any man on the waiting list seemed to be eligible.⁵⁶

PFEW would supply the attendance records, pass/fail results, and Crime Pics II (CPII) scores sent to and retained at PFEW head office (see Chapter 3). However, the STP manager left PFEW altogether in June 2009. The PFEW operations manager supplied the Email addresses of all current PFEW RCs instructing me to liaise directly with them or him if contact with RCs was unsuccessful. All of our agreed action plans were passed to the senior RC as he was my new PFEW liaison.

On 23rd June 2009 I went to PFEW's Maldon office to present our progress. I had a recruiting DVD, a provisional recruiting protocol, and I was currently designing the various forms that I anticipated we would need. The ST manager had contacted HMPS

⁵⁶ PFEW had a contractual agreement with HMPS which set eligibility criteria for STP participants. Prisoners should admit their crime, have sufficient literacy and language ability to cope with the work involved (although volunteers provided extra assistance where necessary), not arrange visits which would clash with STP sessions, remain in the prison, and have no other commitments (such as other programmes or doctor's appointments) which would prevent them attending all STP sessions (see appendix 5).

Chaplaincy and arranged a meeting for me on 9th July when I planned to discuss the RCT and its implications for Chaplaincies. I believed that the next major progression would be engaging the people that the STP manager and I had decided would bear the main RCT workload, the PFEW RCs. All RCs were due to attend Milton Keynes for a meeting on 6th July 2009; the experiment was on the agenda.

Ends and beginnings

Meetings and MoU

I gathered all the progress to date; the DVD, the recruiting protocol, the consent form, the FAQ form, and my high hopes, then drove to the meeting. All but one RC were present, together with the interim PFEW Chief Executive Officer (CEO). I had prepared a presentation detailing the research design, which I expected to be challenged. I also had a list of questions for the RCs to answer. These covered practical matters such as where chocolate bars would be stored. I was confident that I could win over any resistance to the RCT and that, once I had the RCs' support, real progress was imminent. The meeting, however, did not go according to plan and the following day the senior RC cancelled the meeting arranged with HMPS Chaplaincy.

Nevertheless, I continued my academic preparations whilst PFEW found and appointed a new CEO. The new CEO contacted me on 17th September 2009. She was taking over as my liaison with PFEW and had responsibility for oversight of the research. I had realised that the best person to convince PFEW that the RCT was viable was my supervisor, Professor Sherman. With his experience of RCTs, I was certain all their questions concerning timelines would receive satisfactory answers. The CEO and I agreed that this was the way forward and arranged a meeting.

On 6th October 2009 Professor Sherman and I met the new CEO and Chairman of Trustees. The meeting was successful for the experiment, resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between PFEW and Professor Sherman representing the Jerry Lee Centre of Experimental Criminology on behalf of the University of Cambridge. The MoU meant that PFEW changed an earlier decision not to fund the final two years of my Ph.D. and committed the Jerry Lee Centre of Experimental Criminology to providing additional funding beyond the time limit of the degree. I drafted the MoU, which was agreed

between both parties on 26th November 2009 (being signed in hardcopy on 11th January 2010).

Following the London meeting I attended another PFEW management meeting on 7th December 2009. This time I made my research presentation supported by the knowledge that NOMS National Research Council (NRC) had granted permission for the RCT on 24th November (see below) and that the PFEW board had approved an additional two years' funding at the end of October. There was a useful question and answer session with the people I expected to be at the front line of the experiment, the RCs. This was the first time that I heard of many prisoners being added to STP waiting-lists because it was included as a part of their sentence plan rather than lists solely comprising self-referred prisoners. I did not think that this would be a problem, quite the reverse; I thought it might increase the target population. It would increase oversubscription for places and consequently mean greater viability for the research design. If men with the course on their sentence plan could be released without completing a STP because they had been unable to secure a place then, in my view, a man's assignment to the control group (when it would be withheld) was no different.

The meeting was the first time I encountered the term 'Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection' (IPP) (see below – working practice). The eligibility of IPP prisoners for the RCT needed careful consideration. Another first was discovering the circumstances surrounding the assignment of prisoners to STP places. In some prisons, particularly London local prisons with high numbers of short-sentenced men, tutors commonly had to search around the wings recruiting course participants. This situation reportedly arose because the rapid turnover in the prison population meant that men who should be starting ST courses had left the prison. Tutors were attempting to fill the vacant places.

I was informed that providing any form of chocolate bar incentive was extremely unlikely to be permitted owing to a recent tightening of security. My provisional protocol, developed in abstract, albeit with the input of an experienced person, already required further thought and amendment.

That evening I sent each RC the forms I had designed and requested their feedback. I included a copy of the MoU setting out both sides' undertaking. For the CEO I wrote a

project description for inclusion in the PFEW newsletter. At the end of 2009 it was agreed that my liaison with PFEW would be the operations manager and the senior RC would liaise between the RCs and me.

Volunteers and RCs

During January 2010, whilst awaiting responses from RCs to a request for introductions to Chaplains and Governors at the prisons in their areas, I began a small survey of PFEW volunteers. Although the prison they worked in would not be a research site, I thought their experience could provide useful depth to the experimental data. Questionnaires were designed to elucidate the volunteering experience and the volunteers' motivation. The survey was relevant to the changing context of the voluntary sector within which PFEW existed and which had the potential to affect the RCT.⁵⁷ It also had an unintended but useful consequence, the volunteers I contacted told me that they were overjoyed to hear about the experiment. The hope of some 'real evidence' about the STP was a great encouragement to them. This, in turn, reassured me of likely cooperation when I began to work in prisons.

By the end of January 2010 I had received no feedback and I re-sent my request for introductions to Governors and Chaplains to RCs.

On 10th February the CEO requested a schedule of the next phase of RCT implementation but I was unable to produce any schedule until I met the Governors and Chaplains. Eventually, on 29th March I spoke to the senior RC and he told me that RCs had been instructed to avoid all involvement with the experiment so that there was no suggestion of influence from PFEW. I noted in my diary that day, "maybe that's why they've practically disappeared".

⁵⁷ Since the 1980s considerable changes occurred within the voluntary sector, partially fuelled by privatisation (Hemmings, 2009). As statutory provision for services was reduced, the shortfall was made up by a growth in not-for-profit and voluntary organisations (Wolfenden, 1978; Davis Smith, J., Rochester, C. & Hedley, R., 1995). Charity law also changed (Morgan, 2007). The context within which charities worked became more commercially orientated and market-driven (Hemmings, 2009). Charities often found themselves in competition with other providers (Lewis, 1996). There were also consequences for governments as they implemented their social policy because they became more dependent on the voluntary sector (Harris, 2001).

From April 2010 my relationship with PFEW mainly concerned administrative matters. There were further staff changes and PFEW relocated to London in August 2010. In late 2011 I asked them to explore the possibility of adding more prisons to the experiment (see below). Later still, in January 2014 and January 2015 I spent time in the PFEW office extracting STP course data from their records (see Chapter 7).

II: Her Majesty's Prison Service

Initial contacts

My relationship with Chaplains and Governors within Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) began indirectly. Frustrated by the cancelled HMPS Chaplaincy meeting and the dismal PFEW meeting in July 2009, I then discovered that the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) that I had begun was the wrong one. It was a completely new system therefore no academic colleagues had heard of it and I received no guidance on completing the online form, which was complex. The IRAS was a registration of all proposals and was designed for information storage and retrieval. The system was dynamic inasmuch as answering one question activated the next relevant questions and inactivated irrelevant questions. Between August and October 2008 the electronic form changed twice. This was disconcerting as new questions appeared, some already completed questions were deleted, and the order changed. Nevertheless, I supplied all the information that I could and sent the form to my PFEW liaison for her approval of PFEW-related content. However, on 8th January 2009 PFEW decided to delay the experiment until their internal restructuring was complete. Eventually, as the IRAS was almost ready to submit, I had to telephone various Home Office and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) departments seeking advice.

I finally traced someone who knew about the IRAS in early July 2009. He just said, "It's the wrong form." He wondered why I was using the IRAS as it was, "intended for high-level research intended for Ministers and Policy Advisers." I was informed that HMPS had their own research application system accessed directly from the NRC.

I immediately contacted them and received the correct application form on 20th July 2009.⁵⁸ The IRAS had one benefit that practically all the information required by the NRC was already prepared. The NRC system was more accessible and easier to complete.

Just prior to this I had sought some academic advice and contacted a Professor who had been the HMPS Head of Psychology. We met on 28th July 2009. Our meeting resulted in the suggestion that I contact the Lead Psychologist (LP) for HMPS. This I did and she came to see me at the IoC on 28th August 2009 when we discussed my RCT proposal and application to the NRC.

The LP was business-like, helpful, and, as it transpired, well-connected. I gained an insight into HMPS research policy and she was reassured that the target population and sample size was realistic. I was concerned about access to data and was assured that, if permission for the RCT was granted, this was unlikely to be difficult. We agreed that the experiment was feasible and on 15th September 2009 I submitted my application to the NRC. The council required clarification about statistical analysis, consistency of delivery across each research site, and the absence of a pilot study. Professor Sherman and I answered these questions satisfactorily and, on 24th November 2009, permission to conduct the RCT was given.

Despite the permission, there was further delay as I awaited PFEW's introduction to prison Chaplains and Governors (see above). This was important because individual Governors had to approve access to their prisons.

On 8th March 2010 the PFEW operations manager sent an introductory letter via Email to the Chaplains at each of twelve prisons identified as most likely to supply sufficient cases. Between them, there were enough ST courses booked or planned to provide 1,220 treatment places during the forthcoming year. They were also prisons where the local RC thought that Chaplains would support the experiment. Most already knew informally that PFEW proposed to evaluate the STP. However, the prisons were not the prisons on the

⁵⁸ It was on 20th July that I received an Email response to my electronic enquiry from the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) queries line informing me that the IRAS was the wrong system for me to use – several days after I had solicited that answer from a person I could speak to.

original list I submitted to the NRC, nor the ones where the experiment would, ultimately, be sited.⁵⁹

Research sites

Presenting the experiment

The following narrative is an overview of my initial contacts with prison Chaplains.⁶⁰

Almost two years after beginning my Ph.D. I began telephoning the Chaplains who had received the introductory Email. Although anxious to start, I was somewhat apprehensive. I spoke to a very enthusiastic Chaplain who said he was delighted to see the STP evaluated. His attitude encouraged me in my subsequent calls. I briefly outlined the research protocol but my goal was to arrange a visit to the prison. There I wanted to meet the Governor and the Chaplain together with anybody else they thought would be relevant. This initial encouragement gradually declined as call after call went unanswered.

I noted in my journal. “Why did I think that every Chaplain on my list would be waiting in his office for my call?”

At this stage I still expected PFEW RCs to attend initial meetings. It was two more weeks before I discovered that they had been told to keep their distance from the RCT. Chaplains and Governors were very busy and meetings took almost four months to complete. The timing was aggravated by the approaching end of the annual leave cycle (April) when many officers and Chaplains were taking leave. One prison was unable to meet the eligibility criterion of a maximum 18 months’ remaining custody, otherwise I went to every prison on the list.

I usually met the Chaplain, frequently the Governor and STP coordinator, and sometimes the prison psychologist or someone from the Offender Management Unit (OMU). My

⁵⁹ Unknown to me ST courses had been cancelled at some prisons we had originally identified as likely to supply cases. One prison joined the research much later when the experiment had already begun. I subsequently sent an amended list of all research sites to the NRC.

⁶⁰ I use the term Chaplain to denote the person holding the title Coordinating Chaplain who was the senior person, usually employed full-time by HMPS, within Chaplaincies. Coordinating Chaplains were most frequently Anglican ministers. However there were Imams, Jewish Rabbis, Roman Catholic, and Free Church Chaplains as well.

first visit was arranged hastily as the Governor concerned with the STP was due to retire and wanted to scrutinize the research proposal before she left.

I had a 'presentation' pack comprising the forms that I had compiled (see below), the questionnaires I planned to use for STP tutors and group facilitators, and a list of questions to be answered.

Meetings were a two-way exchange during which I was received courteously and heard critically. I was exploring the practicality of each task and my hearers were gauging their ability to carry them out. Whilst I had to control and guide the research requirements, Chaplains and staff alerted me to practical difficulties and potential problems. All were solidly behind the STP being evaluated; 'we really need this to be done', 'I want to help as much as I can'. Nonetheless, individual staffing issues and prison populations meant that enthusiasm was tempered by cold possibilities. Although I aimed to impose a minimum of extra work by disturbing established practice as little as possible, it emerged that some assumptions made during planning were not feasible; for example, Prison Fellowship RCs showing the DVD and taking on extra administrative tasks. With Prison Fellowship staff 'keeping their distance' and timings being crucial, it was obvious that either I, or Chaplaincy, had to do this.

Practical issues

Discussions with practitioners soon revealed impracticalities. The chocolate bar incentive proved unworkable. I had been alerted to potential security problems but Chaplains' responses to the proposal varied. A few thought that it would be possible to use them with certain provisos. One suggested that I supply money to purchase them through the Chaplaincy system. This ensured that approved suppliers were used and security issues would not arise. Another thought that random samples could be taken from the box I supplied which would then be subjected to destructive searches as a security measure. Several said that security issues would be so complicated that any benefit would be lost altogether. We decided that a certificate of thanks would be sufficient as "the men like certificates" (Chaplain: personal communication).

A more important security concern was taking my audio recorder into prisons.⁶¹ Chaplains and Governors were unlikely to permit its use as all recording devices were strictly regulated. Although not refused outright, I was prepared for future difficulties. A purpose-made interval timer resolved the issue. I was required to send a copy of its technical specifications for approval before I was allowed to use it inside some of the prisons. This was easily done and the timer was authorised at every prison.

A fast method of confirming that prisoners had signed a consent form was required before I could carry out the random assignment. Sending copies by fax had seemed the best method. However, the first prison I visited had no fax machine and no Chaplaincies had one nearby. Additionally, a Sycamore Tree (ST) coordinator observed that each signed consent form (an A4 document) might take up to one minute to send. If a single batch comprised a large number of men, this method could take a prohibitively long time. An alternative, yet speedy, system was necessary.

By the end of April 2010 I had visited eight prisons. Responding to suggestions I amended my FAQ form and wrote a script for Chaplains' use when informing men that they had been assigned as controls. Prisons were at different stages of transferring their inmate database onto a new system; from the Local Inmate Database System to the Prison National Offender Management Information System. This delayed starting the process of security clearance in some prisons as personnel were occupied with the transfer. During May and July I visited the remaining four prisons.

From the meetings it was not clear who would be responsible for the additional administrative tasks nor whether I would be able to interview any research participants on a one-to-one basis if necessary or desirable. I therefore anticipated a need to spend considerable time at each research site. To reduce the impact of these visits I thought that drawing keys would obviate the need for an escort.⁶² Being warned by several Chaplains that security clearance could take up to six months and that separate clearance would probably be required at each prison, I wanted to begin the process as soon as possible.

⁶¹ I had recorded an alarm sound at five minute intervals to facilitate my structured observations (see Chapter 3).

⁶² Moving around prisons requires continual locking and unlocking of gates and doors. People have to be trained to draw keys as there are many security considerations surrounding their issue.

Unfortunately, my application was delayed until 11th August 2010 when all initial visits were completed.⁶³

Security

Personal

My entry into each prison was straightforward as it was done using the casual visitor system. Prison gates have a daily visit-list. Only people whose names are on the ‘gate-list’, together with a photographic identity document, are allowed into the establishment.

Despite the pessimistic predictions to the contrary (and the commencement of security clearances at five different prisons) I was cleared to the highest security level after two months on 11th October 2010. Now I could enter (and leave) any prison in England and Wales. An unexpected benefit of the new, centralised, security system was that my clearance was accepted by all participating prisons including privately operated establishments. However, I still had to undertake security training and await an HMPS identity badge before this had any practical use.

The training began in February 2011 with a further eight weeks’ wait until 27th April before I received my identity badge. The wait was caused because the Chaplain had forgotten to put my name on the gate-list. On this occasion I was only allowed into the prison because it was proved that I had been booked in for security training. However, the time taken to resolve the issue meant that I missed the appointment at which my photograph was to be taken for the identity badge. The photograph was taken at another visit to the prison on 15th March when I attended to complete prison IT training and simultaneously received key clearance from a Governor grade officer. Thirteen months had elapsed between my first prison visit and being equipped with high-level security clearance and acceptable identification to initiate recruiting men.

⁶³ Owing to HMPS’s lack of uniformity with regard to security clearance, I prepared for every conceivable scenario. I collated copious forms of identification and documentary evidence of my previous employment history including one from 20 years earlier. As a student, I had two ‘regular’ addresses but the application form was not designed for people with more than one address. The Ph.D. administrator at the IoC and the admissions assistant at my college provided a ‘bridge’ where both addresses appeared on an official document.

Data

Data security was high priority to Governors. I reassured them that each research participant would receive an anonymous identity (see Chapter 6). I undertook that any electronic document or spreadsheet containing sensitive data would be password protected and that no electronic transfer or storage of data would involve the use of a laptop computer. They were satisfied that the IoC IT system had sufficient security.

To allay concerns for receiving and sending signed consent forms by fax I explained that the IoC had only one fax machine. This was situated in a manned area that was locked whenever no one was present. The fax machine had an audible warning and so all faxes were dealt with on arrival. Any fax addressed to me would be removed, placed in a sealed envelope, and locked in a cupboard until I collected it following notification that it was there. As this area was only manned during office hours, a note was made in the recruiting protocol that faxes could only be received securely at these times.

An ST coordinator suggested an alternative method on 31st August. All prisoners' workbooks were sent to PFEW head office at the end of every course together with all administrative documents. It was agreed that signed consent forms would be included in these bundles and sent to PFEW head office by tutors. The operations manager allowed us to use PFEW's secure postal service for this purpose. However, this would incur a lengthy delay in my receiving evidence of prisoners' consent. Therefore, to provide a guarantee that could be sent by Email, I compiled a table in a Word document (later converted to an Excel spreadsheet) with which Chaplains could send me the details required for the random allocations. Columns headed 'prisoner consented Y/N' and 'thank you certificate given Y/N' were my guarantee that a signed consent form was in the possession of Chaplaincy staff and that the gesture of appreciation from me ('thank you' certificate) had been given. I notified all the Chaplains of this alternative and sent the new form and an amended copy of the recruiting protocol. I sent a separate Email supplying the password for this document and a reminder that no sensitive information should be included in the body of any Emails.

Control group

Catch-22

Several Chaplains and Governors balked at the concept of the STP being deliberately withheld but they reluctantly accepted this research methodology. However, progressing men through their sentence and crediting them with their willingness to undertake a STP even if they did not complete it, was a bridge too far for most of them. The STP evaluation was in a stalemate. Completing the STP was regarded as ‘addressing a dynamic risk’ with no evidence to support its effectiveness. The research to find any such evidence was being compromised by an assumption that the STP ‘addressed a dynamic risk’.

In some establishments alternative programmes were suggested for the control group but these were unacceptable as participants met a victim of crime. Although men on waiting-lists were frequently transferred or released before completing a ST course to suit operational needs or because they had a determinate sentence, Governors were reluctant to withhold it for research purposes. Whilst this unwillingness was understandable, it seemed to be a risk-averse, defence mechanism (NOMS, 2009; Debidin, 2009).

In practice many establishments viewed the STP as an 'offender behaviour' programme; that is, it was delivered with the expectation that participants' behaviour would be beneficially modified. However, it was accredited as an educational programme whereby participants achieved an educational benefit and imparted no reduction of dynamic risk posed by offender behaviour. Intuitively such faith in the STP was reasonable given its apparently powerful emotional impact and the proven attitudinal changes it invoked (Feasey et al., 2005; Feasey & Williams, 2009). Notwithstanding this, other rehabilitative programmes, when tested, have yielded counter-intuitive results. For example, the Scared Straight programme in the USA was found to *increase* reoffending for some participants (Petrosino et al., 2000; Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Buehler, 2009; Wilson, MacKenzie & Mitchell, 2008). Remaining impartial towards the STP meant that it was necessary to ignore the unproven beliefs supporting its routine use as a behavioural intervention. The reluctance to progress men and credit them as though they had completed the STP did not comply with any Prison Service Order, Directive, or rule but resulted from a practice that had arisen over the preceding decade (offender manager: personal communication).

Predicting risk

Risk (the possibility of harmful consequences) and risk-management fall within the risk-need-responsivity model (Andrews & Bonta, 1995) that is the "premier rehabilitation theory in existence in the world today" (Ward & Maruna, 2007:75). From my perspective it appeared that risk assessment tools and statistical models, such as Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS), Offender Assessment System (OASys), or Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), intended to guide sentence planning were being implemented as rigid requirements rather than used as the management tools they were designed to be (Debidin, 2009). Neither was it clear how the STP was being fitted into the dynamic risk-assessments within these statistical models.

OGRS is a static, actuarial tool based on age, gender, and criminal history (Howard, Francis, Soothill & Humphreys, 2009) and OASys uses the same static risks but combines them with dynamic risks known to be associated with criminogenic needs such as employment or educational problems (Debidin, 2009; Howard, Clark & Garnham, 2006; Howard, 2009).

The OASys is expected to be central to sentence planning and have a key role in assigning offenders to appropriate interventions (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). It was developed to provide a standard means of directing offenders (both inside and outside prison) to targeted programmes or indicate the need for further assessment (Howard et al., 2006:100). OASys scores are produced from practitioner assessments and weighted to produce a figure related to the percentage likelihood of reoffending. The higher the score an individual has the more s/he is considered at risk of recidivism. Dynamic factors associated with criminogenic needs allow for this score to change (Debidin, 2009). Interventions are categorised and scored so that offenders who complete them can reduce their OASys score by that magnitude. Similarly, offenders who increase their dynamic scores (for example by losing accommodation) will increase their OASys score (Debidin, 2009). Nevertheless, the largest contributors to OASys are the static risks of criminal history, age, and offence-type.

“A maximum score of 168 is available – this unlikely number being chosen deliberately to ensure that the score is not mistaken for, say, a percentile predictor, as the system was

not calibrated to attach specific reoffending rates to given scores” (Debidin, 2009:79). From the model, ‘education and training’ carry a maximum of 20, ‘thinking and behaviour’ 12, and ‘attitudes’ 15 (*ibid*:79). As an educational programme, the STP could influence an OASys score by 20 points. Alternatively, treated as an offender behaviour programme, it had a possible score of 12 points, or 15 points as an attitudinal programme. It might even be viewed as addressing all three dynamic factors thereby scoring a possible 47 points.

Governors, Chaplains, and other prison staff clearly believed the STP was a beneficial intervention. Nevertheless, they could not *know* that men allocated to the control group would be any more or less at risk of reoffending than those who completed a STP as there was no *evidence* available to them on which to base a decision (Kahneman, 2011). As Ward & Maruna observe, risk assessment is imprecise (2007).

The literature repeatedly measures the accuracy of risk assessment models by how well they predicted the reoffending of their research samples. For example, “since the late 1990s, the [...] (OGRS) has been the standard method of predicting reoffending” (Howard et al., 2009:1). The inherent danger of such language is the tendency to conflate ‘risk’ and ‘prediction’ (Towl, 2005). Hart, Michie & Cooke illustrate the point with a neat syllogism:

Major premise In the samples used to construct Test X, 52% of people with scores in Category Y were known to have committed violence during the follow-up period.

Minor premise Jones has a score on Test X that falls in Category Y.

Conclusion Therefore, the risk that Jones will commit future violence is similar to the risk of people in Category Y.

(2007:s60)

I felt that OASys scores should not be allowed to prevent the RCT methodology. The greatest part of the score comprised static risks. Therefore, as no prisoner was able to eliminate his past, his OASys score was always influenced by his history. Moreover, risk assessment tools and reoffending prediction models should be used for individuals with great caution (Ansbro, 2010; Cann, Falshaw, Nugent & Friendship, 2003; Coid et al., 2009; Hart et al., 2007; HM Inspectorate of Probation 2006b; Manchak, Skeem &

Douglas, 2008; Naughton, 2009). Arnold advised that conceptualising measurements of risk (up/down) or magnitude/errors of any changes may be difficult (2007).

Additionally, I knew that there were fewer available STP places than prisoners who wanted them and thought this was a powerful argument for random assignment. I was wrong. Withholding an unevaluated, yet routinely administered, intervention was a major obstacle that I had to address. Listening to Governors' indications that authorisation from the Director of NOMS would enable them to approve the methodology I contacted him. In fact it was his successor who supported the study and enabled the experiment to proceed (see NOMS below).

Implementing the experiment

Recruiting the cases

I visited twelve prisons to select eight that appeared best able to accommodate the RCT protocol, maintain the integrity of random allocation, and supply sufficient cases. In fact the prisons selected themselves when five Governors and Chaplains declined to proceed.

The reasons these prisons declined to accommodate the RCT varied. In one the Governor and Chaplain so earnestly desired 'their' men to complete a STP that they could not agree to deprive the control group 'just for research reasons' (Chaplain: personal communication). Another Chaplain said that they were unlikely to have sufficient eligible numbers to provide a sample. The obvious understaffing in a further prison meant that I was unsurprised when the STP coordinator rang and said that they would not proceed as a research site. Two London prisons cited high inmate turnover and relatively chaotic conditions surrounding short-sentenced prisoners eligible for STP places as their reasons for refusing.⁶⁴

Of the seven prisons that first agreed to implement the RCT four were public prisons and three were each operated by private contractors: Serco, Kalyx, and G4s. Further, the operation of one private prison and one public prison was subsequently placed out for

⁶⁴ Later budget restrictions imposed service-wide resulted in the cessation of all STP courses in the London area so it was a blessing that they had not been included.

tender by the government.⁶⁵ Of these two, the private contractor lost the bid to one from HMPS and HMPS retained operational control of the public prison.⁶⁶ The final research sites were representative of all operational regimes active within HMPS.⁶⁷

Coalition complete, protocol produced

After a year of recruiting cases in these seven prisons, an eighth agreed to join the experiment. During my original planning meetings with PFEW this prison had not been running any ST courses although they had in the past. Once they recommenced ST courses, PFEW wanted them to settle the volunteer team and renew their expertise before they were invited to be a research site. I visited on 15th March 2012 and met the ST coordinator, the Chaplain, and the offender manager. At this meeting I outlined the research protocol with the benefit of a year's experience.

The RCT coalition was established in eight research sites. As recruiting cases commenced some matters that needed adjustment emerged (see below - eligibility). As I did not play any part in the recruiting process, every step required clear guidelines and eligibility criteria had to be unambiguous for the Chaplains and ST coordinators who managed it. With strict and simple instructions potential research participants could be identified from the STP waiting-list and invited to watch the recruiting DVD. There was a battery of forms that was intended to help answer prisoners' questions, protect the integrity of random assignment, and reassure prisoners in the control group that they would suffer no disadvantage.

This protocol's advantage was that I did not have to make lengthy journeys to participate in any recruiting or administrative matters. It also meant that Chaplains and their staff could integrate the protocol into their existing work patterns and interfere with the STP's regular administration as little as possible. The disadvantage was that I had to trust non-academic personnel with busy schedules to implement the protocol and maintain the

⁶⁵ The government returned in May 2010 had a manifesto of 'austerity'. This not only led to reduced numbers of STP courses but to a requirement for efficiency savings and several public prisons being put out to tender.

⁶⁶ This became effective on 1st July 2013. The prison had always been operated by a private contractor so this was the first time it had been operated within the public sector.

⁶⁷ Although the prisons in the RCT represented operational regimes, prisons housing longer sentenced prisoners (such as category A) could not be used for practical reasons (see below) and no local prisons (with very short sentenced prisoners) agreed to participate.

integrity of the random assignment. With hindsight, I think it was responsible for the uneven and slow recruiting of cases (see Chapter 5).

Working practice

ELIGIBILITY

As men were already on a waiting-list, eligibility for the RCT began as a simple decision based on their expected release date. I knew that life-sentenced prisoners (lifers) could complete a STP during their incarceration. However, they could not be included in the experiment as their final release date was uncertain. When sentencing to life imprisonment the sentencing judge would have given a minimum period of incarceration.⁶⁸ A parole board hearing, the members of which would wish to see evidence of an offender's effort towards rehabilitation, also controlled their eventual release. Completing the STP could form a part of that evidence. Therefore, lifers could be incarcerated long after they had served their tariff period if a parole board was not satisfied that they were safe to be released or they had not managed to complete recommended interventions.

Other categories of prisoners emerged during my meetings with PFEW RCs, men sentenced to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) or categorised as Prolific and Persistent Offenders (PPO). IPP sentences operated in a similar way to life sentences inasmuch as they had a tariff and such prisoners needed to satisfy a parole board that they could be safely released. Conversely, PPO prisoners were those identified as being in the minority of offenders responsible for the majority of crime. Their sentences were intended to involve intense access to rehabilitative interventions (Sherman, 2007); not a new group but one which was the subject of recently renewed attention (Worrall & Mawby, 2004) and which was prioritised for programmes such as the STP (McDougall, 2009a).

Should any IPP prisoners volunteer for the RCT and be randomly allocated to the control group, they could not rely on the same inevitability of release as prisoners with a

⁶⁸ People sentenced to an indeterminate term of imprisonment have no fixed release date. Their sentence includes a 'tariff' which is set by the sentencing court. That is the minimum time that such a prisoner must remain in custody before they can be considered for release by the parole board. Even when the tariff period has expired prisoners must remain in custody until they have satisfied a parole board that they are safe to be released. (See Prison Reform Trust (2008) for further information).

determinate sentence (a sentence with a known release date). Whereas a determinate sentence meant that a prisoner *must* be released whether he had completed recommended interventions or not, a prisoner with an indeterminate sentence could remain incarcerated until he had completed everything recommended regardless of how long that might take. In 2011 there were over 8,000 prisoners in custody post-tariff (Spurr: personal communication). These prisoners could suffer disadvantage if the STP was withheld because the parole board was independent of HMPS hierarchy and might disregard any research requirements. I decided that these prisoners were ineligible for the experiment.

In practice another date became important, the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) date. If prisoners were assessed as eligible for early release then, under HDC, they could be released with an electronic tag. Being considered suitable for HDC release did not mean that a man was released automatically but many were. In the early stages of recruiting cases several men were given HDC release after they had signed a consent form but before they were randomly assigned. Following consultation with Professor Sherman I instructed Chaplains and ST coordinators to assess eligibility using the earliest possible release date (see Chapter 6).

Another prisoner category emerged when a Chaplain asked me whether foreign nationals were eligible. Foreign nationals regularly comprised around a quarter of the prison population and sometimes a third at his prison. I checked with all of the other Chaplains but few reported high numbers of foreign nationals. Nevertheless, as these men were liable for deportation on release and could not be followed up for reconvictions they were excluded.

FLEXIBILITY

Despite some individual differences in the way the STP was administered in each prison (such as selection for each course being done by a Chaplaincy volunteer, PFEW employee, ST course tutor, or the Offender Management Unit (OMU)) it was important to work with existing routines (Petersilia, 1989). Thus the RCT findings would reflect actual practice and not a controlled research context (Piantadosi, 2005). Every case was drawn from a waiting-list which was not in the control of the Chaplain or Chaplaincy staff, therefore they were to invite all un-excluded men to attend a research presentation. The

existing waiting-list and clear eligibility criteria ensured that they had no opportunity to influence the characteristics of the sample.

Once recruiting began, my original idea of recruiting large cohorts of men and allocating them in small batches to successive ST courses was obviously impractical. There were several reasons: first, men wanted to know as soon as possible whether they had been assigned to the ST course, withholding their allocation could have led to frustration and withdrawal from the experiment; second, delays between recruiting and random assignment increased the potential for transfers; third, checking to see whether men were still in the prison was as time-consuming as recruiting them prior to each ST course; fourth, the continuous updating of waiting lists, particularly with men prioritised by the OMU, meant that research participants assigned to treatment could miss several courses if there were insufficient places; fifth, occasionally courses were cancelled or postponed for many months (see Chapter 6).

We also changed the time between watching the DVD and handing in a consent form whether signed or not. I had thought that the men would take time to consider their decision. Overwhelmingly, Chaplains and ST coordinators told me that once the men left, I would neither see the consent forms again nor have any research cases. Therefore, all consent forms were signed before leaving the research presentation (any undecided men could take a form away). The Chaplains were correct; overall, 83.1% men who attended research presentations volunteered to participate (see Chapter 6).

This extra workload was never discussed as it was assumed by the Chaplains and their staff.⁶⁹ My input was to provide the step-by-step recruiting protocol and a protocol for forms (see Chapter 6 and appendix 4). The most onerous task, after the recruiting session itself, was dealing with the before/after CPII questionnaires for the control group (see Chapter 5).

The control group was to mirror the passage of the treatment group as closely as possible (Strang: personal communication). As prisoners undertaking a ST course completed CPII questionnaires at the beginning and end of the course, we aimed for controls to complete

⁶⁹ There was one exception, in a private prison, where a uniformed officer managed recruiting for the RCT.

them as contemporaneously as possible (McDougall et al., 2009a). Additionally, the CPII data should indicate any temporal changes occurring in the control group. On 29th March 2010 the PFEW operations manager agreed to print easily identifiable CPII questionnaires especially for the control group to complete. The usual format was beige paper; RCT copies were printed on purple paper (known colloquially as purple Crime Pics). These would be administered by Chaplaincy staff, collected, and sent to PFEW head office by the STP tutors together with their regular end-of-course bundle and any consent forms. The questionnaires would then be analysed using licensed software and I would collect the results later (see Chapter 8). Chaplaincy staff would notify me how many questionnaires they needed, I would order them from PFEW who would send them direct to the Chaplaincy.

These tasks caused a good deal of extra work as many Chaplaincy staff traced each individual to his cell to administer the questionnaire there (see Chapter 5). All men in the treatment group had CPII questionnaires administered by STP tutors and group facilitators, these were returned to PFEW following their usual practice (see Chapter 3). However, early in 2012 PFEW told me that they were considering discontinuing the CPII instrument. I told them that I had no objection and they could make their own decision. From April 2012 CPII was discontinued (see Chapter 5).

The year I engaged with HMPS between March 2010 to February 2011 built on the plans and preparations begun with PFEW. Some of the practical issues described above were settled but a 'form of words' that had sufficient weight to allow control group prisoners to progress through their sentence as though they had fulfilled the victim-awareness requirement, was necessary to overcome the risk-averse resistance I had encountered. This was achieved through an approach to the Director of NOMS (see below).

III: National Offender Management Service and others

I have described the stalemate that arose in April 2010. This was surprising as I had received approval for the RCT from the IoC ethics committee in September 2009 and the research design was accepted by the NRC the following November. It was doubly puzzling as an STP tutor told me that her prison (not one involved in the RCT) had refused to credit a prisoner's sentence plan with 'victim work' even though she was

currently going through the ST course.⁷⁰ From a research perspective control group men were no worse off than men released or transferred before they could complete a course – in fact I subsequently had research participants transferred part-way through ST courses. I decided to take the bull by the horns and contacted the Director of NOMS on 4th May 2010.

The meeting took place on the 14th May and was not all I had hoped as the then-Director echoed Governors' concerns about released prisoners posing a potential risk if they had not completed this victim awareness course. Nevertheless, he listened sympathetically to my argument, asked penetrating questions, and invited me to return with some evidence and convince him. His retirement was imminent but he told me he would pass on my difficulties to his successor. His successor, he informed me, knew more about the STP than he did as he had been in more prisons where it was used. Should I return during his remaining tenure, the Director indicated his willingness to be persuaded and to write to Governors who wanted reassurance about the RCT methodology. This was crucial as, despite the goodwill of the coalition being built so far, having no control group would completely undermine the experiment.

Risk assessment

THE LITERATURE

This was the biggest challenge so far. The coalition had to include willing prison Governors and, although some were comfortable with the RCT, too many were not. I had to convince the Director or his imminent successor that allowing men to progress through their sentence plan without participating in the STP, 'just for research reasons' presented no additional risk. In this section I describe the preparations I made for meeting the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NOMS (the position's title changed).

There was a legal precedent concerning Restorative Justice (RJ), the central tenet of STP teaching, which could be cited in support of allowing the control group to complete their sentence without detriment. In 2003 two sentences of imprisonment were reduced on appeal by offenders who had either taken part in an RJ conference or who had volunteered to even though the conference did not take place:

⁷⁰ A Chaplain explained that this was because the STP's accreditation was educational through the Open College Network and not behavioural through HMPS.

[...] Whilst there may have been a question mark over whether the offence was suitable for the [RJ] programme, B was entitled to rely on his willingness to go on the programme. HELD: (1) it was clear that B had genuinely offered to go on the programme. [...] [W]here, as here, the offer was genuine it could be taken into account in his favour. 2½ years reduced to 18 months imprisonment.

R v Genc Barci (2003)

In R v Collins (Times Law Report, 14 April 2003) the Court of Appeal reduced a sentence for unlawful wounding and robbery from seven years to 5 years for an appellant who had taken part in an RJ conference.

(Aitken, 2009:196)

Next, I reviewed the risk assessment literature and Home Office guidance on sentence planning. The main, structured risk assessment tool available to OMUs was OASys. However, not all prisoners who wished to do a ST course had an OASys score or MAPPA rating, which was not widely used in 2010.

The greatest part of the OASys score comprised static risk factors. This is because the greatest ‘predictor’ of future offending is an offender’s criminal history. However, offenders cannot eliminate their past (see above).

Although development of OASys involved processing data from several thousand offenders, the majority were supplied by the Probation Service. This reflected the intended focus on ‘acute’ factors, such as accommodation, which contributed to offenders’ effective management. Practitioners should consider whether the effectiveness of any interventions had been monitored and to share and act upon information gathered (NOMS, 2009). This guidance seemed more relevant to post release management and was certainly more critical when offenders were considered ‘at risk’. Moreover incarcerated prisoners were *de facto* closely supervised. The Guidance noted that much information was omitted in prisons.

A recent review of OASys reported that it was a satisfactory and useful tool for offender management (Debidin, 2009). OASys provided “valid indications of future re-offending” (*ibid*:107) and the findings were ‘encouraging’ and ‘reassuring’ (*ibid* :134). However these observations were tempered by acknowledging that further analysis was required to test how sensitive dynamic changes were within the model (Debidin, 2009). Indeed, the

NOMS Guidance stated, “the lack of consistency in the quality of risk assessment and management also needs to be acknowledged. [...] The Guidance can serve to ensure that resources are appropriately channelled in securing the best levels of public protection within our budgets and utilising current risk assessment tools.” (NOMS, 2009:6). The literature was clear that risk assessment tools depended on the inputted data which, in turn, relied on high levels of practitioner training (Manchak et al., 2008) and subjective opinions (Naughton, 2009; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Additionally, Debidin noted that, “OASys samples are not representative and adjustments are required towards the lower overall risk and needs levels” (2009:178).

I estimated that, given good practitioner training, sufficient data, and an ideal world OASys was at best 79-82% accurate in 'predicting' reoffending *for a group*. In other words, when 80 pairs of offenders were checked, a re-convicted offender would (on average) have a higher OASys score on the predictor than a non-reconvicted offender in 80 cases. Conversely, in 20 cases they would not and, in the 80 where they did, this was an average assumption (Debidin, 2009:97). Introducing dynamic factors included further assumptions. The likelihood of re-conviction was predicted in 69% of cases and serious harm in 68% of cases (*ibid*:173) meaning that predictions were not realised in nearly a third of cases. Furthermore, potential accuracy “will only be realised if OASys assessments are reviewed diligently” (*ibid*:104).

The dynamic factors introduced by accredited programmes, although intended to improve accuracy, introduced some doubt where the STP was concerned because it was not universally recognised as an ‘offender behaviour’ programme. It was an accredited educational programme and some offender supervisors did not accept it as a risk-reducing intervention. Further, this RCT’s purpose was to test whether the STP affected reoffending so, from the evidence, it was hard to justify any addition to the dynamic model (see above – predicting risk).

The NOMS Guidance referred to “appropriate offending behaviour programmes or other interventions [being identified] with the aim of reducing risk whenever possible” (NOMS, 2009:13-15). We could not know that men in the control group would be any more or less at risk of reoffending than those who completed the STP because static factors cannot be changed and, in summary, the OASys model assumed:

- That they will be in the cohort that reoffends
- Their details have been entered accurately and reviewed regularly
- The Instrument is used in conjunction with observed assessments
- That the STP is efficacious and beneficial
- That all prison Offender Managers regard completion of STP as risk-reducing

I thought it likely that Governors and Offender Managers were over-reliant on the OASys tool with regard to the STP. The Guidance said “one size does not fit all” (NOMS, 2009:8). In practice it looked as though it was expected to. Debidin commented upon accredited programmes’ efficacy and how they fitted into the OASys tool (2009) but the STP was not included, presumably because of its educational accreditation.

Prisoners applied for the STP for a variety of reasons; they heard about it by word-of-mouth, it was recommended by Chaplains, or it was written into their sentence plan. The sentence plan requirement was often a voluntary request by the prisoner so that they increased their opportunity to do the course. However, one Governor told me it was frequently an automatic addition because an offender had a victim, with no consideration for all other circumstances in his history.

Another Governor alerted me that men may have been ‘playing the system’ on waiting-lists. He meant that prisoners sometimes applied to complete rehabilitative interventions to show that they were ‘addressing their offending behaviour’ when they had no intention of participating. Their hope was that they would be released or transferred to a prison that did not offer the programme in question before they had to complete it. Being assigned to the control group in the RCT would be their perfect outcome. Such ‘learned responses’ were a recognised phenomenon (NOMS, 2009:10) but I presumed that such men, if in the treatment group, would test the STP’s efficacy and, if in the control group, would form a genuinely representative part of the sample population. This would ensure that effectiveness was being evaluated (Piantadosi, 2005).

Other authors, writing from the perspective of risk assessment tools leading to detrimental outcomes for offenders, summarised my overall concerns:

Test users should be very careful when using ARAIs [Actuarial Risk Assessment Instruments] to make sure that consumers of test findings (other mental health professionals, patients, courts, etc.) understand that it is, at least at present, impossible to make accurate predictions about individuals using these tests; this may help to minimise their potentially prejudicial impact on decision-making.

(Hart et al., 2007:s64)

It is to be hoped that the law will develop so that such simplistic, defensive, cover-our-backs, attitudes to risk taking may lead to liability.

(Carson, 1997:3)

THE FIGURES

The NOMS director had requested current figures and policies relating to STP waiting-lists. I gathered information about numbers of men on STP waiting-lists, whether a queuing/priority system operated, and how many men were likely to complete a STP before they left the prison. Although local variation affected the availability of courses, the Chaplains I asked reported that up to half of the men on their list would leave the prison before a place became available. In one 12month period (2009 to 2010) 20 men did not complete ST courses before their release; this figure excluded transfers.

Waiting-lists at the seven research sites comprised between 182 and 30 prisoners.⁷¹ Such high numbers of men waiting for a place on a course with a maximum of twenty places meant overtaking by those with higher priority was inevitable. Waiting-lists rarely contracted unless further STPs were arranged. One Chaplain thought that most men would get a place before release but that may take up to two years (in fact his prison became a research site and lost eight men from the research cohort within 12 months). Furthermore, the STP was not available in all prisons.

Thus, with uncertain numbers of ST courses each year (ten courses were cancelled in 2009 to 2010 owing to budget cuts) and waiting lists consistently oversubscribed by at least 100%, high transfer rates, and queue-jumping based on priority, I was able to demonstrate that between 10% and 50% of men awaiting a STP place would not get one.

⁷¹ Two Chaplains said that local church congregations had raised money to pay for additional courses so that more men had the opportunity to complete a ST course. This note is included because the Chaplains said that this was the only reason that their oversubscription was so unusually low.

Government policy favoured an ‘evidence-based approach’ to dealing with offenders in preparing them for release (Blunt, 2010) and this RCT aimed to provide evidence about a rehabilitative intervention. By illustrating the weaknesses involved in heavy dependence on risk assessment instruments, demonstrating a legal precedent involving other research participants, and showing the high number of men released without completing a STP despite it being on their sentence plan, my argument showed that policymakers were unlikely to be given the evidence they required if such weak lines of reasoning against it were upheld.

THE NEW NOMS CEO

On 30th September 2010 Professor Sherman and I met the new CEO of NOMS seeking his support for the RCT design. I presented my case (discussed above), the figures surrounding the STP, and my impression that his support would be sufficient to persuade Governors that the RCT methodology was sound. It transpired that the CEO supported policy informed by evidence and was keen to allow research that provided it. He asked whether a different methodology would produce equally good evidence but Professor Sherman was firm that an RCT was the best available method. Given the existing arbitrary nature of STP places, the CEO saw no ethical dilemma caused by withholding the STP from controls, and agreed to write to all the Governors at the intended research sites.

As my security clearance arrived shortly after this, on 11th October, I informed all the Chaplains that recruiting participants should be possible soon.

On 5th November at the behest of the NOMS CEO I again met the HMPS Lead Psychologist in Cambridge to discuss the way forward. Only prisons with willing Governors and Chaplains would be used as the integrity of random assignment had to be preserved and I needed to be as sure as possible that no bias was introduced during recruiting of cases. Any unwilling or unsympathetic staff could undermine the RCT (Strang, 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). The psychologist told me that she was checking HMPS’s legal position with reference to prisoners in the control group subsequently suing because they had been deprived of a beneficial intervention but was confident there would be no further obstacles. I reiterated that we could only recruit men from waiting-lists and that the control group could not comprise men from other prisons

or who had no desire to complete a STP. This would be like comparing apples with bananas.⁷²

Our conversation was extremely positive and I thought the psychologist represented a 'how can we help' attitude on behalf of HMPS and NOMS which was reassuring. I agreed to send her details of the STP and the security of the University Email system. She would report back to the NOMS CEO. On 6th December I received an Email from her with a letter (drafted by her from our discussions) from the CEO addressed to the Governors of the intended research sites. He gave his full support to the RCT and thereby cemented HMPS into the coalition. Extrapolating from his letter, the 'form of words' mentioned above became the 'no detriment' form, msw3 (see appendix 4). Telephone calls to the Chaplains together with confirmatory Emails brought all seven prisons into the experiment.

IV: Prison visits, a summary

Although I had the permission of the NRC to conduct the experiment, the permission of each establishment's Governor was essential. Even though I had not anticipated the withdrawal of PFEW Regional Coordinators, I knew that I would rely on goodwill and cooperation from Chaplaincy staff. My initial contact with them was, therefore, very important. I had always considered it essential to speak directly to a person rather than communicate by an impersonal medium such as Email even though this could mean delays. Just as vital was the first impression people had of me. Therefore, I ensured that I was well prepared with a clear outline of the RCT, a list of questions that required specific answers (see appendix 2), and wore appropriate clothing.⁷³ I had a 'thank you' gift of home-made chocolate truffles to be left after my initial visit; for all subsequent visits I always left a couple of packets of 'nice' biscuits for the Chaplaincy tea locker. I am pleased to report that these gestures of gratitude were appreciated for what they were

⁷² Two unpublished evaluations of the STP in 2001 and 2006 illustrated the point. Although men that had completed a ST course had reduced numbers of adjudications, neither author could attribute the reduction to the STP. Marsden (2001) found that prisoners who showed improvement were already the most empathetic and Smith and colleagues (2006) thought men on the programme were already likely to be addressing their offending behaviour. Both recommended further investigation to target those who would most benefit from the programme.

⁷³ I followed PFEW's guidance for STP tutors, group facilitators, and other guests for what to wear and what to avoid wearing.

– I expected no extra favour and none was given – those prisons that declined to accommodate the RCT also received truffles.

The coalition that enabled the implementation of the RCT was established when the Governors accepted the NOMS CEO's authorisation of the design. Once I had their agreement (some in writing, some verbal) I revisited the seven research sites to finalise each step in the recruiting protocol. I now detail my first impressions of the *original* twelve prisons that I visited and the people I met.

These were my first encounters with the environment in which I would be involved for the foreseeable future. Despite the general consensus that an evaluation of the STP was valuable, it was clear that joining the coalition to assist was not always possible, nor was it a priority.

Enthusiastic, cautious, overworked – and willing

PRISON 2, 23RD MARCH 2010

This was my first meeting so I had few expectations. I was familiar with the entrance as I had been to this prison before. Once I had checked in the Chaplain was called and came to collect me. He was very friendly and we chatted as we walked to the Chaplaincy. Once we were comfortable, he telephoned the deputy Governor who joined us, together with the ST coordinator.

I outlined the proposed RCT, showed them the forms I had devised, and went through the technical questions such as could any of the STP sessions be video recorded. Prison 2 was likely to have sufficient eligible men and usually ran eight STP courses per year. They were operating the new electronic database PNOMIS which meant that all prisoners had a unique number that remained theirs for life (see Chapter 8). (At the time I thought that this would make data cleaning much easier for me). I was told that no video recording would be possible and no recording device would be allowed into the prison. Neither was it possible to connect any digital storage device (such as a flash drive) to the prison computer system.

I had envisaged that prison psychologists would be very interested in the RCT but there was no psychologist. The psychology department was described as being in “complete disarray”. My security clearance was foreseen as straightforward because I had no plans for unsupervised one-to-one meetings with prisoners. However, higher-level clearance was necessary for other than ‘student observation’. There was no fax machine so I would need to make arrangements for collecting consent forms and being notified of research participants’ details.

There was a potential problem with control group men and sentence planning. I had anticipated possible difficulty and unilaterally developed a form intended to cover a prisoner’s failure to complete a victim awareness programme. The deputy Governor thought the form a good idea but, as it stood, it had insufficient authority. She told me that she would not be prepared to “sign off” a man with “just that form” on his record. She suggested it would need a sanction from offender managers who were outside the immediate management of the prison. The Chaplain commented that, with an overall target sample of 400 men for the control group, this represented approximately 0.5% of the current prison population (then around 80,000) and was unlikely to lead to the mass release of high-risk prisoners. I said it was relevant that all men on the waiting-list for the STP had indicated a desire to address their offending behaviour (that is, an apparent desire to reform) so the control group was unlikely to present a danger to the public. The deputy Governor, as the officer with that level of responsibility, remained unwilling to accept any perceived risk.

Overall, all the prison staff that I met were keen to establish the effectiveness of all the rehabilitative programmes offered at Prison 2.⁷⁴ They were generally impressed with the STP and willing to accommodate the RCT if I could find a way to alleviate their concerns.

PRISON 4, 12TH APRIL 2010

At Prison 4, a private prison operated by Serco, I met the prison Director and the ST coordinator. The Chaplain was unavailable being at a training session. The ST coordinator was very friendly and, although friendly, the Director was forthright asking

⁷⁴ One could infer from this view that few of those programmes had any supporting evidence of beneficial effects.

practical questions about the research requirements and my permissions. I showed him copies of my application to the NRC and their subsequent permission. He was concerned about my independence and asked who was funding the RCT. Security matters were high priority particularly with reference to my data access. Discussion on this subject mainly centred around the availability of prison staff to accompany me while I searched the database or to search it on my behalf. This prison was not a part of the centralised PNOMIS database at that time.

The Director alerted me to the possibility that men would ‘play the system’ to take advantage of the control group ‘free passage’ through their sentence plan. He thought men may volunteer for the RCT hoping to be randomly allocated to the control group. My view was that this would not harm the evaluation as we would be measuring the real-life circumstances in which the STP functioned.

Although the Director was willing to accept my control group form he was dubious that other Governors would. He understood the RCT design and that the STP had no evidence of benefit (although both he and the ST coordinator were impressed with the two CPII based findings (Feasey et al., 2005; Feasey & Williams, 2009)). He was confident that the course was beneficial and was keen to see it evaluated. He said that although he always supported research whenever possible, he doubted that their population would produce sufficient eligible men as most of their prisoners had at least two years left to serve. He was the first Governor to give written permission for the RCT without reference to other authorities.⁷⁵

PRISON 1, 13TH APRIL 2010

This visit prompted me to write, “wow – really positive feeling about potential cooperation, can-do attitude, and numbers going through” in my notes. The Chaplain, Offender Manager, Psychologist, and the ST coordinator were all present with me in the Chaplain’s office.

The meeting mainly comprised my presentation of the RCT methodology which was only interrupted by constructive questions and helpful suggestions. Although the Chaplain was

⁷⁵ Although the officers in charge of privately operated prisons are referred to as Director, I use the generic term Governor to signify their position of responsibility.

extremely reluctant to withhold the STP from men in the control group, he accepted the design as something that would contribute to the ‘greater good’ if the programme proved beneficial. The psychologist was very interested in the research and sent me a copy of an unpublished STP evaluation conducted by a colleague (Smith, L., Lorimer, H., Hockley, O. & Hastings, K., 2006). For his part, the Offender Manager was confident that he could help prevent attrition problems caused by transfers. Although men sometimes refused to continue the STP once they had started it, I assured all present that this type of drop-out was something the RCT had to accept. We would not expect replacements as, once a man had been randomly assigned, he would be counted as though he had complied with his allocation.

The ST coordinator expressed some concern about the extra work involved with the administration of CPII questionnaires for the control group. She was willing to try and accommodate it before I attempted to make other arrangements. The Chaplain asked me to supply a script for him to follow when informing the men that they were in the control group; this I did.

An excellent suggestion was for the men to be given a copy of the control group form in addition to one being kept in their paper records (see Chapter 7). This would ensure that controls could take some responsibility for its safekeeping and that, should the official copy be lost, they had something to support their non-participation in this victim-awareness programme.⁷⁶

The STP was highly regarded at Prison 1 and they had eight courses planned for the forthcoming year. I left thinking that, if they could give half of the available places (N=10) to the RCT, they had the potential, when including an equivalent number of controls, to recruit 160 cases. They could fulfil their target within a year.

PRISON 7, 14TH APRIL 2010

My meeting at Prison 7, a private prison operated by G4s, took place on the same day as ‘board’. I presumed this to mean a parole board hearing but my extremely positive

⁷⁶ Once I had the NOMS CEO’s personal authority his name was added and the wording was altered so it became the ‘no detriment’ form (msw3).

reception seemed unaffected. The prison Director, Chaplain, the ST coordinator, and the Roman Catholic Chaplain were present and very interested in the RCT.

At this stage my incentive scheme for returning consent forms was not finalised and so some discussion concerned chocolate bars. This was not considered possible but the Director said that they could offer a small cash incentive of 25p (supplied by the prison) along with the 'thank you' certificate that I provided. My control group form posed no problems for the Director. He told me that it would be placed on men's records and he offered his personal support to progressing men in the control group if a victim-awareness requirement was on their sentence plan. This team said that they could devise an in-house means of ensuring that RCT men would suffer no detriment to any sentence progression and would maintain their priority level.

I would not be allowed personal access to the prison database but with at least 24hrs notice all I needed could be supplied in hardcopy. However, I would be allowed to draw keys and key-training in any other establishment was acceptable.

Prison 7 had a policy of not inviting community guests to the final STP session. This was because the team felt that strangers introduced at the end of the course could threaten the trust and confidence that prisoners built up. The Director and Chaplaincy staff seemed very supportive towards their inmates.

PRISON 3, 20TH APRIL 2010

At Prison 3 I only met the Chaplain as the head of offender management did not think her attendance was necessary; she gave him 'carte blanche' to authorise and discuss everything the RCT entailed. Prison 3 was a large prison which meant a long walk through many corridors to get to the Chaplaincy.

The Chaplain heard me out with little question saying that he and the head of offender management considered it vital to evaluate the STP. He foresaw no difficulty with a chocolate bar incentive scheme and was generally positive towards my security clearances and data access which he volunteered to process. He said that Prison 3 was very efficient. The prison operated another victim-awareness programme called Justice Awareness. It was derived from the STP mainly for Muslim prisoners in case of any

sensitivity to the STP's Bible basis. This looked like a good alternative programme to offer the men in the control group to avoid the resistance I had begun to encounter in other prisons. Further investigation revealed that prisoners on this course would meet a victim of crime so this alternative was ruled out. The same reservations about withholding the STP from controls then became manifest.

Although the Chaplain had listened carefully to my outline and given generally positive responses to my questions, I thought that he had some difficulty grasping how the random assignment would fit their existing arrangements for delivering the STP. I had some concerns that he envisaged conducting some kind of selection process and noted that I must reiterate that he must adhere strictly to the eligibility criteria I dictated. The only 'selection' permitted was to prioritise men with the closest release dates if necessary.

PRISON 6, 26TH MAY 2010

Only the Chaplain met me at Prison 6. He was affable and informed me that his line manager had delegated him to make decisions about the RCT. The STP was highly regarded as were the volunteers who delivered it. Apparently local fundraising to pay for additional courses had impressed the Governor so much that he had authorised two additional courses, paid for from his budget, for the forthcoming year.

The Chaplain's helpful and direct manner made him seem confident the Chaplaincy could absorb the RCT administration. He was unconcerned about the controls as he envisaged that they could complete a Justice Awareness course (see Prison 3 above). I was unsure whether this was acceptable and told him I would let him know. I had all my security clearance identity documents copied to commence the application for that establishment.

The Chaplain was clear that money or chocolate bars would not be permitted as incentives.

He was unable to confirm whether I would be cleared to access the prison database or draw keys. He suggested that I returned to see the Governor separately.

PRISON 5, 13TH JULY 2010

My final visit was to Prison 5 where I met the prison Director and the programmes manager whose department managed all interventions. This was a private prison, operated by Kalyx, now Sodexo. The Chaplain was at a training session and unavailable. We met in the Director's office within a 'sterile' area.

The meeting was very friendly and both were proud of their record of providing rehabilitative programmes for their prisoners. They were keen to accommodate the RCT but were doubtful that they could fulfil the target of 100 cases as many men on the STP waiting-list were classified as Prolific or Persistent Offenders (although they did have a determinate release date).

Thus much of our discussion centred on the control group and the authority required which would allow men to progress as though they had completed a ST course when they had not. However, other matters such as the administration required and the research presentation itself posed no difficulties.

PRISON 8, 15TH MARCH 2012

Prison 8 joined the RCT coalition two years after my initial round of visits. In 2010 they had not been delivering STP courses. They were invited to join the coalition in early 2012 as I sought to boost our recruiting rate. By this time the RCT recruiting protocol was established as were all the eligibility criteria. As Prison 8 had a slightly different system for bringing men into the course from the waiting-list we needed to ensure that it would fit the protocol and maintain the integrity of the RCT.

I met the ST coordinator, the Chaplain, Offender Manager, and a Chaplaincy assistant in the prison multi-faith room. We had had some dialogue before the meeting so it was different from all my other initial visits. Furthermore, as the RCT was already in place, the prison was aware of it and very keen to participate. Thus our discussions were more informed on both sides than earlier ones.

The ST coordinator was a research scientist himself so he had a good grasp of the RCT methodology. However, I was concerned that the point of random assignment might be problematic because they operated a 'taster' session 0 for the STP when prisoners learned

what the course entailed and were invited to continue and participate in the full course or withdraw. To fit their practice I accepted the need to make the random allocations before session 0, any attrition would have to be absorbed. I would have preferred the random allocation to take place after session 0 but there was an argument that men who had experienced the taster session and wished to progress to the course may withdraw from the RCT altogether to enable them to do it if they were assigned to the control group. (This would fit other findings of dissatisfaction with treatment assignment (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008)).

Prison 8's commitment to join the coalition was made in full knowledge of what was entailed. All present at the meeting were committed to the efficacy of the STP and were enthusiastic about the evaluation stating that it was "very much needed".

Enthusiastic, cautious, overworked – and unwilling

LONDON, LOCAL 1, 27TH APRIL 2010

This visit began badly as I was late. I had travelled by public transport and misjudged the time necessary to cross London – at least an hour – and saw my bus leave as I emerged from the underground station. The confusing entrance compounded this and I went into the visitors' door instead of the staff/official visitors' entrance. I was kept waiting several minutes before I was told the correct entrance. As I had travelled by public transport and had an overnight bag, I had a lot of forbidden items with me which needed to be handed in and this took several minutes.⁷⁷ Next, I had to wait about ten minutes for my escort to the Chaplaincy.

I had expected to meet the Chaplain's line manager but he was in a meeting so it was just the Chaplain and I in a busy office. Without a Governor present several matters remained unresolved; my data access and the viability of my control group form. There was doubt about the prison's ability to supply sufficient eligible men. The Chaplaincy was very large and short staffed which had led to excessive workloads; there was an imminent change of Governing Governor which meant that any decisions concerning the RCT would be delayed until he or she had taken office. The Chaplain thought that the prison

⁷⁷ I had arranged my visit to another London prison for the next day and was staying overnight to avoid excessive travel.

psychologist would be very interested in the RCT should the prison become a research site.

There were concerns about the logistical difficulties involved in making the research presentation. This would involve large numbers of men out of their cells and he was unsure how much time prisoners would have to view the DVD between other activities.

Following our polite discussion I left the prison feeling that, despite the Chaplain's keenness to have the STP tested, the working practices could not accommodate the RCT requirements. For example, there appeared to be a large degree of selection based on men's 'suitability', ability to associate with each other, and having a balanced mix of offence types and any random allocation would be subordinated by those criteria. Regardless of what looked like a very long waiting list, the Chaplain thought he was unlikely to provide more than ten eligible men for any one course. He presented this prison as being unable to offer several recruiting rounds adding that he thought there would be no forthcoming ST courses as they had been cancelled because of budget cuts.

LONDON, LOCAL 2, 28TH APRIL 2010

This prison had a different 'feel' from the other prisons I had visited thus far. A number of their procedures such as security clearances were idiosyncratic. They did not use the same application process as I had encountered elsewhere and this promised that I could be security cleared within two or three weeks. The STP administration in which I was interested was largely controlled by the OMU; apparently the waiting-list was held in Chaplaincy but was refined by a PFEW volunteer working with offender managers and probation. All prospective STP participants were risk assessed and then interviewed by the PFEW volunteer. Great emphasis was given to men's ability to get on with others and anticipated problems could mean that individuals may spend some time awaiting a course.

Whilst most of my practical concerns, such as using a recording device within the prison, presented no problems the 'no treatment' aspect of the control group did. The ethical dilemma was, I thought, seen as insurmountable. This was paradoxical as I was informed that the prison was unlikely to commission further STP courses owing to budget restraints. The logistics surrounding their selection system posed potential problems with random

allocation as there was frequently only one or two days between men being given a place on the course and the first session. Furthermore, I was told that most prisoners had short sentences and frequently remained in custody for only a few weeks.

The Chaplain said that the Chaplaincy was attempting to gain full control of the STP waiting-list but the psychologist was about to transfer so this was likely to take some time. Generally, although I viewed the prison as a good research site owing to the degree of cooperation available, the uncertainty of further STP courses and strong resistance to a 'treatment as usual' control group suggested difficulties. High attrition was likely owing to the large number of very short sentenced prisoners and finding a suitable opportunity for the research presentation was problematic given their tight timing arrangements.

MIDLANDS CAT. C, 29TH APRIL 2010

I met the Chaplain and the Governor in the Governor's office. Both men were extremely enthusiastic about the STP and their STP volunteers particularly the tutor whom they had nominated for a national award (which she won). They were happy to accept the administrative burden the RCT would impose once we had discussed the envisaged process. Before I left the prison I went to the security office to commence my security clearance for that prison. With regard to the STP course itself, I learned that there were no community guests for the final session but that the Governor and other senior officers normally attended.

My control group form seemed acceptable to the Governor, and he was prepared to work out a system to enable the chocolate bar incentive. Logistically, the prison was near Cambridge and both men were keen to have the STP evaluated. However, they were equally passionate about its rehabilitative efficacy and were reluctant to consider a research design requiring withholding what they perceived as a beneficial intervention. The Chaplain especially found this difficult even though he obviously understood the strength of the RCT design. They evidently worked well as a team and wanted to give their prisoners the best possible assistance in avoiding recidivism. The Governor welcomed the opportunity to interact with prisoners as they went about their daily business in the prison. When I left I was unsure whether they would be willing to accept the RCT design.

NORTH CAT. C, 17TH MAY 2010

The Chaplain and Governor were unavailable and I met the psychologist and STP coordinator. Both ladies were polite and interested in the proposed RCT but expressed concern about the extra work it would impose. I understood that the Chaplaincy was short staffed with further, long-term sick leave imminent. The psychologist was also the Offender Manager but she was due to commence maternity leave, meaning that a further vacancy was forthcoming. There was a very large waiting-list for the STP (N=100-150) men, but the ST coordinator was unsure how many would be eligible for the RCT.

The additional pressure on an already stretched staff was considered unacceptable even if I undertook some of the administrative tasks. This was because my presence would impose a burden as I would not be allowed to draw keys. Removing men from 'gainful employment' to enable them to attend the research presentation was seen as difficult to justify.

Both the psychologist and ST coordinator thought the STP was extremely beneficial and were reluctant to consider allowing a control group that could not complete it. I undertook to send a copy of the argument I was developing in support of this design.

EAST CAT. D, 5TH JULY 2010

This was the only category D prison I visited and I was surprised upon my arrival to see men walking around wearing what was obviously prison service clothing. There was no 'airlock' entry system, perimeter wall, or constant locking and unlocking of doors. I was expected and rapidly met by the Chaplain and Offender Manager.

It became clear that they would have great difficulty accommodating the RCT as they had an unusually small STP waiting-list. Additionally, there were many 'lifer' and IPP prisoners who would need to satisfy a parole board that they were ready for release. My control group form was not designed for the parole board and I was already beginning to think that such prisoners would have to be excluded from the RCT.

The Chaplain said that the number of men awaiting the STP was usually just sufficient to fill each course (four per annum). This meant that controls, who could not have a place, would create unfilled vacancies which could not be justified on value-for-money terms.

Both men supported the STP, believed in its efficacy, and valued the RCT being commissioned by PFEW.

Summarising

When I left the open prison I already knew that they were unlikely to supply sufficient men for the RCT. Soon, telephone conversations and Emails confirmed that another four prisons were unwilling to join the coalition. The Midlands Cat. C prison's Governor and Chaplain refused to withhold the STP from their men on the grounds of research. The ST coordinator at the North Cat. C prison said that understaffing prohibited any extra workload; having seen for myself the apparent pressure on her time I was not surprised. Both London prisons decided that they would have difficulty supplying the sample as the STP's future in both prisons was in doubt.

V: Conclusion

As might be expected the RCT coalition comprised organisations with different perspectives. For PFEW, the RCT was partially a business undertaking. Their goal was finding evidence about the effectiveness of their main rehabilitative programme. For this they undertook a large financial investment and were heavily involved in the RCT planning and strategy. They also provided the initial 'bottom-up' contact with prisons. However, once introductions were made, PFEW preserved a neutral position by maintaining distance from the RCT although they facilitated some practical solutions when challenges arose.

In contrast, HMPS provided all the research sites and facilities including the manpower necessary for the additional workload. However, they had no investment in the outcome as the STP was an intervention they commissioned through a commercial arrangement with PFEW. This was illustrated by several STP courses being cancelled owing to financial constraints. Despite this commercial dimension, the individual front-line practitioners were committed to and supported the RCT and its aims.

A similar tension existed for NOMS's contribution to the coalition. The bureaucratic systems within HMPS and, by inference, NOMS, operated against the RCT methodology because of the risk-aversion built up over time and the increased use of 'predictive'

methods of assessing perceived risk. However, individuals within NOMS were able to bring their desire for evidence to bear and facilitated the RCT (see Chapter 8). The NOMS CEO was effective in authorising compliance with the RCT methodology.

Unlike HMPS, NOMS did have an investment in the outcome. Their interest lay in the policy decisions that would be informed by the RCT's results. As commissioners of interventions they could recommend continued use of the STP or its termination. This was a powerful incentive for them to support the RCT.

The twelve prisons originally considered as potential research sites were identified because they all provided at least four ST courses *per annum*. The eight prisons that joined the coalition had a common expectation of ability to absorb the extra workload and enthusiasm for evaluating the STP. There was no clear common denominator linking the five prisons that declined to participate. For some producing the sample was clearly not feasible despite the number of ST courses expected during the forthcoming year. For others impending budget restraint was the main consideration. The extra workload and loss of control over selection of men for the STP were also contributing factors.

I believe that approaching HMPS through Chaplains, who unanimously valued the STP, believed in its efficacy, and embraced its evaluation, was the overriding factor in building the coalition. These front-line practitioners knew that they would be the people most affected by the RCT's burden yet agreed to submit to it. Had we approached from the top down, we might have caused resentment and encountered resistance from the very people who could scupper the entire project. As it was I suspect that Strang's warning (epigraph) was actually our entrée.

Chapter 5

Implementing Agreements: A Different Skill

When asking existing line staff—who are doing their own work and responding to their own sets of pressures—to take on new tasks, adapt new operating procedures, or interact with new research staff, researchers should be cautious.

(Roman et al., 2012:325)

In January 2011 I revisited the seven prisons that would be research sites. The Chaplains, ST coordinators, and I finalised the recruiting protocol (see appendix 4). My security clearance was complete, I had a prison service identification, and had completed Prison National Offender Management Information System (PNOMIS) training and was authorised to draw keys.

Having assembled the necessary coalition and obtained permissions, the RCT had to be implemented. Conditions were not ideal; questioning systems, finding solutions, persuasion without being overbearing, and dealing with frustrations were required. Threading through the rigidity of preserving random assignment and treatment fidelity, was the informal backdrop that enabled trust and confidence to grow. I relied on many people in different positions and situations to comply with the RCT's demands whilst they relied on me to provide justification for those demands. The process developed new skills and called upon those I already possessed.

In this chapter I describe transforming the agreements made into a well-implemented experiment (over 80% fidelity), which should lead to better outcomes (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). I begin with I. an account of seminars hosted by Professor Sherman during which we held question and answer sessions with the Governors and Chaplains. Next II. I characterise the Chaplaincies in which the experiment was based and how the RCT was incorporated into their working practices. I conclude with III. a description of how the prison environment affected the caseflow and rendered the experiment vulnerable.

I. The green light

Consolidating the coalition

After almost two years we were able to open the pipeline for the STP evaluation experiment. Although the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had written to the research site Governors authorising the RCT design, they were probably unaware of each other's participation. Therefore, following the meeting with the CEO, Professor Sherman proposed holding a seminar in conjunction with a dinner. The CEO accepted the invitation to be the guest of honour.

The seminar enabled the participating prisons' Governors to meet and hear more about what the RCT would involve together with its scientific and policy justification (Cook et al., 2002; Lipsey et al., 2006; Stoker, 2010; Strang, 2012). It was an opportunity to discuss any concerns that they had with their own Chief Executive and a leading RCT scholar. The CEO of Prison Fellowship England and Wales (PFEW) was also invited. The informality was designed to reinforce the collective purpose of the newly-formed coalition and emphasise the experiment's contribution to the evidence surrounding rehabilitative interventions in prisons (McDougall et al., 2009a; MacKenzie, 2013; Petersilia, 1989). The event was held at the Athenaeum club in London, funded by the Jerry Lee Foundation. Although no London prisons were included in the RCT, the venue provided excellent transport links with all seven prisons. The event served to launch the RCT.

Senior managers from the collaborating prisons attended the London seminar as support for experiments at the highest level helps to secure the cooperation of administrators and practitioners (MacKenzie, 2012). However, frontline practitioners were also vital to the RCT's success (Kilburn, 2012; Rawson et al., 2002). We therefore hosted a similar event in Cambridge for Chaplains and ST coordinators. The venue was Darwin College. I prepared a short presentation describing the experiment and arranged a timetable for the Cambridge function. The presentation included a CONSORT flow chart (Schultz et al., 2010), a copy of which was given to all persons present. It is reproduced in diagram 5:1.

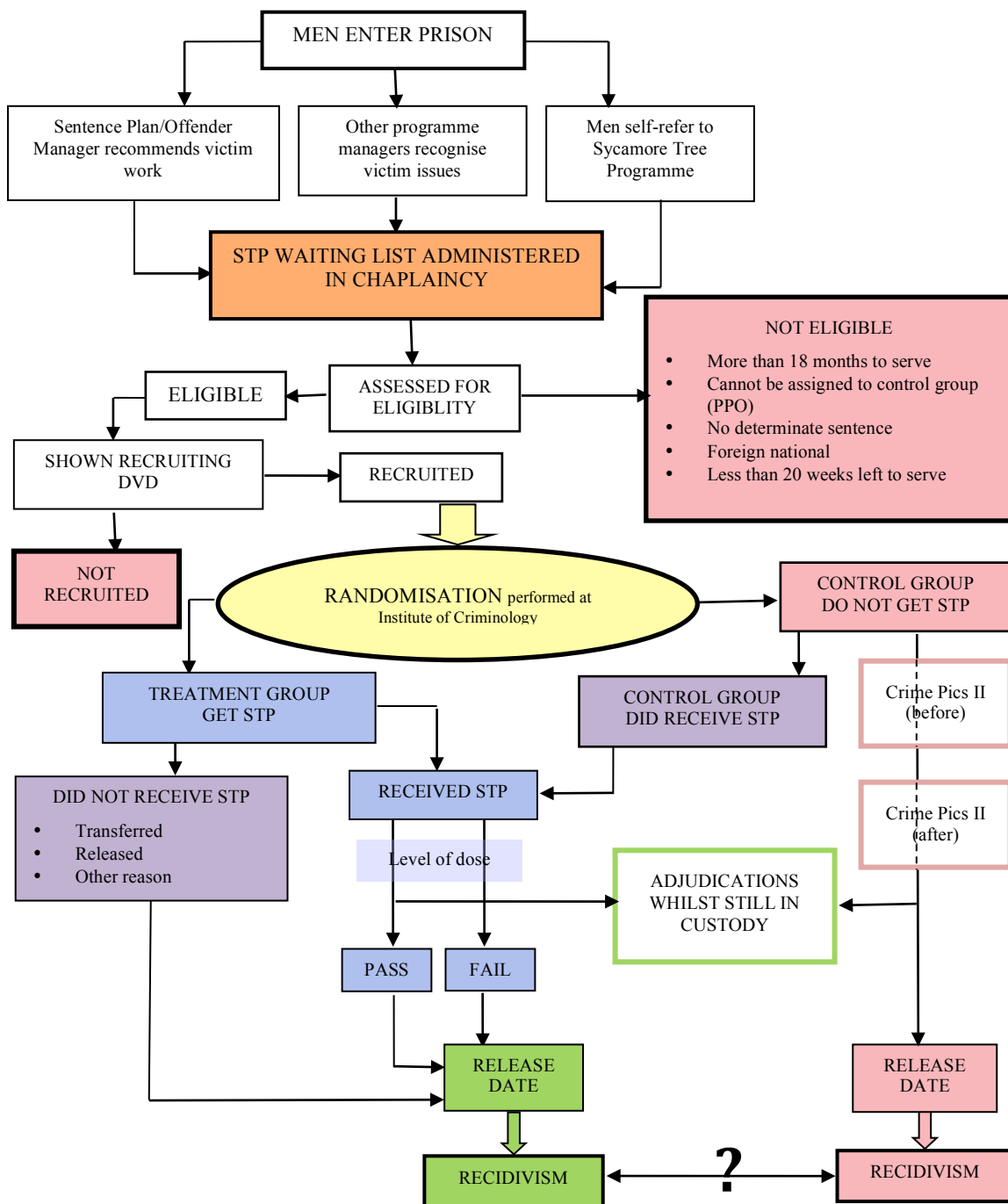


Diagram 5.1: CONSORT flow diagram (adapted from Schulz et al.2010)

The Governors’ seminar took place on 29th March 2011. A Governor or Governor’s delegate represented six prisons. The PFEW CEO described the aims of the STP highlighting the manifest regard prisoners had for the volunteers who delivered it. Professor Sherman summarised the RCT literature, especially experiments conducted in prisons. He informed the Governors that, so far as the literature showed, they were about to implement the first RCT in Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) with post-release

outcome measures for thirty years adding that multisite evaluations such as this one strengthened findings (Straw & Herrell, 2002).

The NOMS CEO confirmed his support for evidence-based interventions. He told the Governors that he knew the STP and had been impressed by the courses he had seen. He added that the RCT was timely because it fitted the government's intended policy of payment by results, restorative justice, evidence-led practice, and cost-effectiveness. He reassured Governors that the RCT design was ethical for all prisoners with determinate sentences.

My contribution was to present the context surrounding STP delivery within HMPS generally and the seven research sites specifically. For example, one Chaplain had estimated that less than half of all prisoners on his STP waiting-list completed a course. I outlined the protocol and how we would fit the RCT within prison regimes. I highlighted the difficulties we had already encountered and the lack of notice given to Chaplains when transfers or early releases occurred. Governors fed back that they had been unaware of the importance of the STP as a behavioural programme. They unanimously agreed that I should have whatever access to PNOMIS was required to complete the study. Following the seminar we all enjoyed dinner. The addition of dinner to an informative presentation encouraged the construction of 'social capital' so important to the experiment (Sherman, 2010). The following day I compiled the minutes and on the 12th April 2011 sent a copy to the Governor at each research prison and all others present (see appendix 3).

Continuing to build the 'social capital', the Chaplains' seminar was held on 7th February 2011. Three prisons were represented. We assembled at the Institute of Criminology (IoC) for a briefing by Professor Sherman and Dr Heather Strang, two leading scholars of experimental criminology. They outlined the history of RCTs emphasising how well-meaning practitioners could undermine them. This directly addressed the concerns that many Chaplains had about withholding an intervention that they believed was beneficial (Petersilia, 1989). Practitioners were reassured about both the ethics and scientific justification of this methodology. All were conscious of the STP's oversubscription in their own prisons, which frequently required them to select participants. They understood that the RCT performed an unbiased version of what already happened in practice (Kilburn, 2012).

Following Professor Sherman's briefing I took the guests around the IoC building pointing out the security arrangements; also the safe storage area where all sensitive hardcopy documents would be kept. Later we rejoined Professor Sherman and Dr Strang for a reception at Darwin College. The Chaplains and ST coordinators did not know each other so this occasion was invaluable for cementing relationships in readiness for recruiting our sample (Cook et al., 2002; Strang, 2012). They were able to discuss various situations they had already encountered as some had recruited their first cases.

We had not anticipated that prisoners would ask *why* we required access to their criminal history. Prisoners had also been worried that researchers would arrive at their home address after their release. I had reassured the men at the time when the ST coordinator telephoned me (see Chapter 6). Sharing this type of experience and evidencing the speed with which things were resolved was a valuable contribution to the RCT's implementation.⁷⁸

II. Moving forward - at the front line

Chaplains

Chaplains were key to the experiment. They were my liaison point with the prisons and the practitioners responsible for the target population, the STP waiting-list, and were busy people (Petersilia, 1989). Chaplains had to champion the RCT if it was to succeed as they were well-placed to confound it if they doubted the methodology or did not accept its importance. I had to ensure that they understood the rationale for random assignment, allay any ethical dilemmas they may have, encourage them in their supply of cases, and support them when they met resistance to RCT procedures.

Chaplains assumed responsibility for identifying eligible men and holding research presentations but not all were good delegators or administrators. Moreover, the working practices within Chaplaincies seemed quite fragmented. Chaplaincies relied on several part-time assistants and volunteers. Nearly all ST coordinators were part-time employees or volunteers; sometimes they were paid by PFEW and sometimes by HMPS. Their time was limited to a maximum of two days per week. Volunteer ST coordinators were also

⁷⁸ The prisoners' questions indicated that they had carefully read the consent form before they signed it (see Chapter 8). Subsequently practitioners often told me that the men were 'very suspicious' and 'quite sophisticated' in their interaction with prison authority.

busy people as they juggled their family priorities with their prison work. For example, a ST coordinator left one prison giving domestic circumstances as the reason.

HMPS functioned on Emails; meetings within the prison, and sometimes the same department, were arranged and coordinated by Email. Consequently Email was not always the quickest means of communication. Chaplains confirmed my impression that anything that could not be classified directly to a specific department was sent to them. As they were responsible for the pastoral care of inmates, they could be called at a moment's notice to deal with a crisis. For instance, one Chaplain collected me from the gate, escorted me to his office, and then left me while he went to inform a prisoner that his father had died. The circumstances were unusually difficult and the Chaplain was gone for some time. It should be noted that I would not have been allowed to enter the prison at all except that there were other Chaplaincy staff in the office.

The Chaplains unanimously supported the experiment but recruitment began just as the government began to implement budget cuts and efficiency measures. This changed staffing levels, workloads, and working practices (Roman et al., 2012; Sherman, 2010; Strang, 2012). Chaplaincies where there were fewer changes coped better. Furthermore, I increasingly concentrated on conducting observations (Lipsey et al., 2006) and so devoted less attention to their sample production. I continued to offer encouragement, prioritising prisons that were recruiting slowly. I telephoned regularly and had problem-solving conversations when I visited. Except when in prisons, I was constantly available by telephone should Chaplains need advice or reassurance.

Although unfailingly courteous, some Chaplains and ST coordinators were slow to organise research presentations. Whilst there were often several people working in Chaplaincies, they were unconnected with the STP and so were never asked to assist. Without staff to whom recruiting cases could be delegated, presentations were not held. Planning recruiting presentations did not become 'routine' because they were only necessary when the next ST course approached as holding research presentations too far in advance risked higher attrition (Asscher et al., 2007; Gueron, 2002; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, personal communication).

When ST courses were imminent several factors prevented recruiting efforts. These included annual leave, training sessions, or lack of time (caused by other staff absence). Having assumed responsibility for cooperating with the RCT Chaplains seemed to infer that they could not delegate outside people directly involved with STP administration. I met one Chaplain (not the Coordinating Chaplain) who disliked the STP on the grounds of its cost to HMPS. This Chaplain was acting as Coordinating Chaplain so I was in some difficulty. I asked the ST coordinator at that prison (a volunteer) to arrange research presentations but no cases were supplied. This situation arose despite the Governor and Offender Manager's support for the experiment (see Chapter 9).

As other experimentalists have discovered, once initial enthusiasm began to wane, slow starts themselves became obstacles (Roman et al., 2012). That is, at prisons where recruiting began quickly, their success in supplying cases fuelled enthusiasm for further recruiting. For prisons with delays, low numbers of cases themselves became decelerants. I attended prisons regularly and was always received with apparent pleasure. However, it was obvious that morale was affected by budget-cutting, uncertainty about further ST courses, and staff losses. I always tried to be positive but the prisons that had held few or no research presentations seemed to find it harder to get started. After 18 months (June 2013) the earliest prisons to supply cases were clearly the most productive. This is consistent with the literature (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Even though they were all working in similar environments, the prisons that supplied regular, large batches demonstrated that progress provided its own propulsion.

Two prisons rapidly produced cases; one operated by HMPS, the other by a private company. At the private prison a uniformed officer recruited cases, in the public prison PFEW employed the ST coordinator who worked closely with the Chaplain. The common denominator was organisational efficiency, an assertive method of inviting prisoners to research presentations, and ensuring that the presentation was included in the men's daily schedule; they followed-up immediately if men failed to attend. This was not coercion, rather an approach of 'come and see' instead of 'would you like to'. The less productive prisons had no common factors although three lost Chaplains, staff members, or volunteers early in the experiment. Without someone at the site to prioritise the experiment, case production was slow. Notwithstanding the unexpected lack of

presentations, in all prisons the percentage of attendees who consented was consistently high (83.1% overall) (see Chapter 6).

Governors

Governors' permission to implement the RCT was necessary but individually they were barely involved. I met a Governor at every prison at some stage of the RCT's implementation but, as recruiting began, few were free to meet me when I attended the prison. My visits had to suit Chaplaincy timing and fit with ST course observations rather than Governors' schedules.

There was some staff turnover of Governors as they moved around the prison service in the same way as any other officer. Thus new Governors had not had the opportunity to meet me and discuss the implications of allowing an RCT in their establishments. There were other changes at Governor level that threatened the experiment (see below). To forestall potential problems, I attempted to meet all new staff soon after they took up their appointments.

All the Governors expressed an interest in the RCT and some were keen to have informal progress reports. Nevertheless, my contact with them was largely through Chaplains as Governors had delegated decision-making to them. Governors' authority was important, though, as they supported the integrity of random allocations when other officers threatened it (see Chapter 6).

Governors managed their prison budgets and, as prisons were charged for the STP, their support for further courses was paramount to ensuring the continued availability of treatment places.

III. The amber light

RCT participant recruiting began in a mood of optimism, partially from the high-level support demonstrated by the NOMS CEO and partially (I suspect) from finally being allowed to proceed with the promised STP evaluation. The two introductory seminars enabled Professor Sherman and I to emphasise the strength of the design and the

importance of maintaining treatment integrity. Governors also noted the RCT's importance to NOMS.

There were initial teething troubles as the untried protocol was adjusted (Durlak & DuPre, 2008) and prisoners asked unexpected questions, but these were soon eliminated by discussion and collaboration; always aligned to maintaining implementation fidelity. A more entrenched difficulty only emerged as recruiting progressed, slow case production (see Chapter 6). This was puzzling as projections conservatively estimated much higher numbers.

Possibilities and projections

In early 2011 most prisons had finalised their arrangements for ST courses. PFEW negotiated with prisons annually so, from the number of ST courses booked at each prison, I projected the supply of cases for that year (Chandler, Dennis, El-Bassel, Schwartz & Field, 2009). Each ST course comprised 20 prisoners and I knew that some excluded men would require places.

I agreed with Chaplains that they could allocate research places according to their local needs but assumed we would have an average of five experimental places (25%) per course. Across the seven prisons there were 34 scheduled courses although not all had confirmed start dates. Table 5.1 presents these projections (See also Chapter 6).

February 2011 to April 2012				
Prison	No. STP expected	No. Treatment places	No. potential cases	% target achievable
Prison 1	8	40	80	69%
Prison 2	8	40	80	69%
Prison 3	4	20	40	34.5%
Prison 4	3	15	30	25.9%
Prison 5	4	20	40	34.5%
Prison 6	6	30	60	51.7%
Prison 7	1	5	10	8.6%

Table 5.1: projected caseflow during 1st year

Reality and realisation

Chaplains' or ST coordinators' task was to identify eligible men from their STP waiting-list. Depending on the number of research places available (see Chapter 6) they were to invite these men to a research presentation. If there were more eligible men than ST

places available, then only those with the closest expected release date should be invited. They showed the attending prisoners the recruiting DVD that I had provided. They had frequently asked questions (FAQ) forms (msw5) to hand out which covered most questions the men raised. If there was any difficulty they contacted me as soon as possible and dealt with the issue as best they could at the time.

After the first unanticipated questions arose I contacted all Chaplains to brief them on their response and amended the FAQ form. I was never contacted about any further problems. I also provided a copy of the DVD script (msw8) in case it was useful. Men who agreed to participate in the RCT then signed a consent form (msw2). All the men were to be given a certificate of thanks signed by the Chaplain (or Governor) for attending (msw4). They then returned to their cells having handed in their consent forms (see appendix 4 for all forms).⁷⁹

Another major task added to Chaplains' workload, apart from holding recruiting presentations, was administering Crime Pics II (CPII) questionnaires (see Chapter 3) to control group men. This synchronised with the first and final ST course sessions during which the treatment group men completed the same questionnaires. Different prisons developed their own method but once I identified the most efficient protocol I Emailed the details to Chaplains to use if they wished.

The procedure was that first questionnaires were sent, together with an explanatory letter, to controls. The letter informed the man that this questionnaire was to be completed by him and returned to the officer concerned in the enclosed addressed envelope. It explained that there would be a further questionnaire in a few weeks' time. The recipient received the second questionnaire and an accompanying letter stating that this was the final form they would have to complete for the research. A further addressed, reply envelope was supplied. To preserve men's privacy everything was conducted via sealed envelopes. Completed questionnaires were stored until they were passed to the tutor for posting to PFEW. Any late responses prompted a telephone call to the wing manager who was asked to remind the men concerned to complete them. The officer concerned could assist sensitively and privately any man having difficulty completing the questionnaire.

⁷⁹ Prisoners moving around the prison were escorted by uniformed officers. When men came from different wings, or locations such as workshops, several officers were required as escorts.

In early 2012, the PFEW operations manager asked me if the CPII data were crucial to the RCT as PFEW were considering discontinuing them. They decided to stop using the CPII instrument in April 2012. This change meant that control group men had no further contact related to the RCT once they had been informed of their random allocation. The treatment group completed the ST course in the normal way.

Over time the Chaplains' initial optimism and determination slowed. The STP was routinely provided through Chaplaincies and attracted no extra resources because of the RCT. As the STP's effectiveness would be tested in its real-world context (Piantadosi, 2005), this was the optimum environment for the evaluation (Roman et al., 2012). The RCT imposed a deal of extra administration but, as the STP was a routine programme, the research was frequently given low priority (Cook et al., 2012; Fletcher & Tims, 1992; Gondolf, 2010; Kilburn, 2012; Petersilia, 1989; Roman et al., 2012). For the experiment these were challenging circumstances. It was individuals that influenced the efficiency of implementation. I worked in a balance of probing and persuasion without being overbearing and had to accept frustrations without rancour. Had Chaplains been unwilling to undertake the extra workload, the experiment could not have started regardless of its high level support.

The slow supply of case rendered the experiment more vulnerable to staff changes and shortages.⁸⁰ These two factors fed each other; low case numbers meant longer recruiting periods and longer recruiting periods increased the capacity for staff turnover. I could usually meet incoming Governors and Chaplains to outline the experiment. Whereas meetings with new Governors were desirable, it was imperative that I briefed incoming Chaplains and this could take months to organise.

By June 2013 six Governors and five Chaplains had changed. Neither of the two high performing prisons had staff changes during their main period of recruiting.⁸¹ Although changes of Chaplaincy staff did not prevent the experiment continuing they did interrupt continuity and caused considerable delay in some prisons. These interregnums were

⁸⁰ The RCT's vulnerability to fluctuations in staffing levels encompassed the tutors and volunteers who delivered each ST course. Although they were outside the scope of the experiment, the treatment under evaluation was entirely their domain. At one prison two ST courses were postponed for months because insufficient volunteers were available to run it.

⁸¹ One high-performing prison lost its Governor, Offender Manager, Chaplain, and ST coordinator but had already completed the sample by the time these individuals left.

rarely concurrent across the research sites and frequently happened with short or no notice to me. Although ST courses sometimes continued during these periods no cases were supplied. When new Chaplains were appointed, incumbency was not immediate or straightforward as security checks were required, long periods of notice had to be given to parishes, and prisons used lay Chaplains as temporary relief. Whilst temporary Chaplains continued the ministerial functioning of the Chaplaincy, none were able to continue the RCT.

As mentioned above, one prison had two staff changes that threatened the study. A new Chaplain was appointed who was familiar with the RCT protocol but wished to withdraw the prison from the study (see Chapter 6). Some months later, in early 2013, a new Governor was appointed and he cancelled all future STPs. This was the only prison that had provided continuous ST courses (N=8 *per annum*) and the threat was considerable.⁸² Nonetheless, there was a positive outcome; first PFEW employed a part-time ST coordinator to complete the prison's scheduled ST courses and simultaneously prioritise providing RCT cases. Second, correspondence between NOMS, PFEW, and HMPS Chaplaincy head office produced funding for several ST courses. The result was a motivated ST coordinator, more than expected ST courses, and a final sample of 111 randomly assigned men.

Conclusion

The RCT was implemented in seven prisons (later eight) disbursed across a wide geographical area of England. Three prisons achieved samples over 100 men and two had more than 40, see table 5.2 and figure 5.1 below. Overall implementation fidelity for both experimental groups (N=465) was 92%.

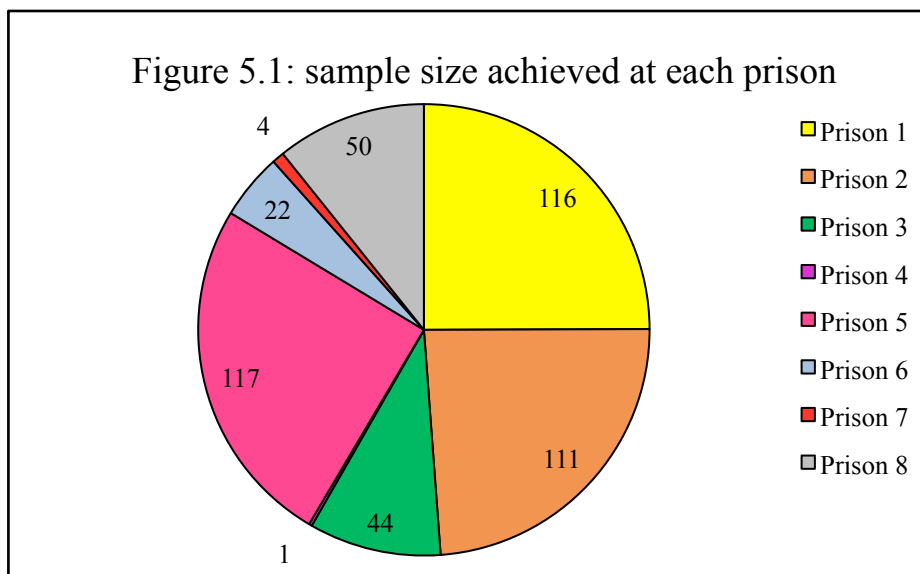
The full cooperation of Governors, Chaplains, and ST coordinators was promised (Shepherd, 2003; Strang, 2012). Although the RCT's implementation was not straightforward, most challenges were surmountable by a process of discussion and collaboration leading to adjustment or enforcement of RCT protocols (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Initial caseflow was erratic but the experiment was implemented in a real-world context without any extra resources (it drained resources to an extent). Therefore, the

⁸² But see Chapter 6 for poor first-year caseflow at that prison.

RCT should measure the effectiveness of the STP in true operational conditions. Had the RCT been implemented in ideal, controlled conditions any findings may not be generalisable to the STP's routine delivery (Kilburn, 2012).

Prison	No. consented	Target	No. randomly assigned	% Target sample achieved	Known Attrition
Prison 1	121	116	116	100%	1
Prison 2	120	116	111	96%	4
Prison 3	50	116	44	38%	0
Prison 4	1	116	1	1%	0
Prison 5	139	116	117	101%	4
Prison 6	23	116	22	19%	0
Prison 7	4	116	4	3%	0
Prison 8	52	116	50	43%	0
Overall	510	928	465	50%	9

Table 5.2: sample size at each prison



Chapter 6

Random Assignment

The promise of randomized [*sic*] field experiments is not an academic question, but a practical matter of life and death. The iron lung of rising prison rates has ruled policy without evidence for far too long.

(Sherman, 2000:312)

In this chapter I describe the progress of cases through the pipeline from identification to treatment and the methods of random assignment. Research participants were first recruited in February 2011 once we had agreed when random assignment would take place (Gueron, 2002; Roman et al., 2012; Sherman and Strang, personal communication). I had prepared for the process of random assignment in 2009. However, the method of randomisation changed because a new computer programme became available. Additionally, practical issues that emerged as research presentations were held meant that we revised the pipeline management.

The chapter begins with a short discussion of I. the ethical and scientific context of experiments, continues with the methods of random assignment, and then describes recruiting cases at the prisons. Next, II. I report the baseline characteristics of the treatment and control groups followed by some details of the challenges that I encountered. III. I conclude that the RCT has a substantial sample (N=465), balanced experimental groups, and good fidelity to treatment as assigned (92%).

I. Random assignment methods

Ethical context

Evaluating the STP is likely to benefit offenders because it will provide decision-makers with information currently unavailable (Federal Judicial Center, 1981) [*sic*] because we are uncertain of the STP's beneficial effect versus its *perceived* benefit as better than no programme at all. This 'equipoise' describes the context surrounding the STP (Piantadosi, 2005) and is the only ethical basis for experiments.

The term ‘clinical equipoise’ (Freedman, 1987) describes the notion that there is a ‘collective uncertainty’ about the benefits of one intervention versus ‘its alternative’ (Piantadosi, 2005:31). For this RCT, that uncertainty is illustrated by the view of some Governors that the STP is beneficial. These Governors either refused, or were reluctant, to allow an experiment that caused prisoners to be released without completing the STP. Paradoxically, other Governors (in some cases the same ones) were prepared to withdraw the STP on the grounds of unaffordability thus viewing it as of insufficient benefit to be provided (see Chapter 4).

Scientific context

BALANCE

Random assignment is the best approach we have for controlling for selection bias, regression to the mean, and temporal changes (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) and should be employed whenever possible (Rubin, 1974). However, simple randomisation, whereby all cases in the sample are randomly assigned to treatment or control conditions, may lead to imbalance between groups in certain conditions (Ariel & Farrington, 2010; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Further, a large sample size or broad eligibility conditions may lead to a heterogeneous pool of participants thus increasing the variability in the data. This allows more ‘noise’, which makes any treatment effect difficult to detect (Ariel & Farrington, 2010:437). Therefore, measures can be implemented to avoid reaching biased conclusions (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2003; Ariel & Farrington, 2010).

To strengthen its results and ensure balance, this multisite RCT followed a randomised block design described in detail by Ariel & Farrington (2010; Banks, McHugo, Williams, Drake & Shinn, 2002; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2003; 2008). The target sample was 800 men recruited from eight English prisons with a target of 116 men each. Should the achieved sample sizes be small in some prisons, simple random assignment whereby men were assigned regardless of institution, could result in some prisons having men in only one experimental group (Ariel & Farrington, 2010; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Therefore, each prison was treated as a separate RCT (a block) with individual prison’s cases randomly allocated within the block.

FINAL ANALYSES

Employing a block randomising design and treating each prison as a separate RCT enabled prison-by-prison analyses as well as a meta-analysis of all prisons (Sherman: personal communication). Each RCT would act as a replication of the other to increase our confidence in the findings and a ‘forest graph’ plotting all results would show the pattern of outcomes (Sherman, 2003; Sherman & Strang, 2004a). Although the effect of the STP in any single prison may be small and not reach statistical significance, "if most of the space within the confidence intervals in most of the [RCTs] falls on one side or other of the line between benefits and harms, then the chances of that pattern being due to chance itself go down substantially" (Sherman, 2003:15).

VALIDITY

This experiment’s population of interest is male prisoners on a waiting-list for the STP. Inferences cannot be made to the general prison population as not all fulfil that criterion. Nevertheless, many prisons do not deliver this intervention and may have potentially eligible inmates (for the STP) were it available to them. Therefore, the RCT is generalisable beyond participating prisons. Furthermore, the RCT may suggest that the STP is unsuitable for some types of prisoner, this will be relevant to offender management (Sherman & Strang, 2004a).

This RCT was always to be analysed on an 'intention-to-treat' (ITT) basis (Sherman: personal communication). ITT controls for any systematic bias in dropouts and no-shows because all cases are analysed according to their experimental group *regardless of* treatment compliance. This way the policy of the intervention (that is, who is supposed to receive it despite how much they received) is tested rather than measuring its outcome only for those who experienced the full ‘dose’. This likely underestimates any treatment effect but reflects the intervention’s performance in operational conditions.

The STP waiting-lists included prisoners, placed by offender managers, who could be ambivalent towards the course and refuse to participate in it if randomly assigned to do so.⁸³ Such cases may be unidentifiable before randomisation and will be included in final analyses. Their inclusion ensures that any underlying systematic difference they may have,

⁸³ This happened in one prison (see Chapter 7).

will not bias findings (Colledge, Collier & Brands, 1999; Friendship, Beech & Browne, 2002; Hollis & Campbell, 1999; Sherman & Strang, 2004a; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008).

Additionally, if it emerged that some eligible men had a strong preference to complete the STP, I excluded them. Whereas RCTs reliably control unknown or unobserved prognostic factors (Piantadosi, 2005) participants' strong preferences can introduce bias (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). However, as mentioned above, designs can be adjusted to improve validity (Shadish et al., 2002; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) and inclusion and exclusion criteria can increase or decrease the experiment's validity (Piantadosi, 2005). Excluding people whose characteristics might prevent their compliance with the allocated treatment/control condition is thus acceptable (Piantadosi, 2005; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Although increasing the exclusion criteria risks reducing external validity it can prevent attrition and crossover caused by non-compliance with treatment as assigned (Shadish et al., 2002; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008).

Excluding men who really wished to complete a ST course may mean that the treatment group comprised more men who were ambivalent towards the course than those wanting to complete it. Equally, the control group may have comprised more men who were averse to the intervention. Nevertheless, although likely an underestimate, the effect size will be a measure of the STP's *effectiveness* in real-life conditions (Sherman & Strang 2004; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Therefore a 'forest graph' derived from final analyses is expected to be particularly illustrative.

Preparations

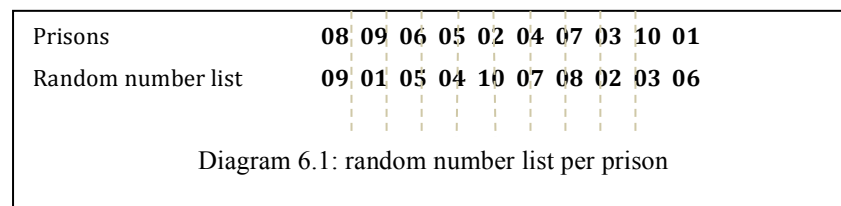
The most suitable method of random assignment available in 2009 was a computer generated random number sequence converted to experimental conditions and subsequently concealed in an opaque envelope. I was inexperienced and, in my enthusiasm, failed to separately block each prison's sequence.⁸⁴ As soon as my error was discovered (Sherman: personal communication) I generated new random number sequences for each prison. This provided the basis for the prison-by-prison analyses (Banks et al., 2002; Sherman & Strang, 2004a; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008), meta-

⁸⁴ I include this detail for transparency because I reused the envelopes and kept them as a hardcopy backup system. They have been unsealed and resealed with each opening recorded across the seal.

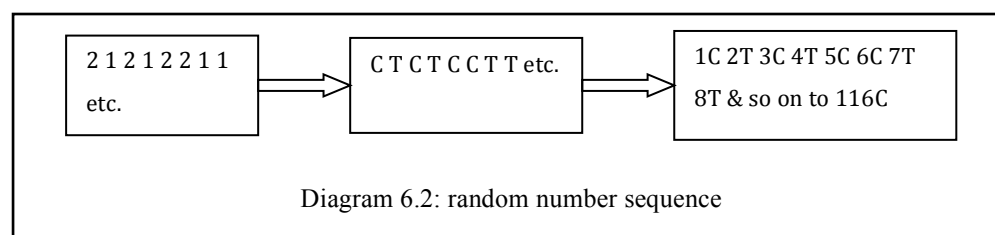
analysis of the pooled sample (Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Straw & Herrell, 2008), and a 'forest graph' (Sherman, 2003; Sherman & Strang, 2004a; see also Shapland et al., 2008).⁸⁵

The number sequence

I generated ten batches of random number lists using a freely available website [<http://stattrek.com/Tables/Random.aspx>]. I was using two parallel groups for the RCT therefore specified two numbers, 1 and 2 with duplicates allowed. Next, I allocated a number to each experimental condition so that 1 = T and 2 = C. Using the 'find' facility of Microsoft Word I converted 1s to Ts and 2s to Cs thus producing a random sequence of the letters T and C. I assigned each list a number from 1-10 and each prison a number from 1-7. Next I generated two random sequences of the numerals 1-10 and placed them one above the other. I matched the two numbers together so that Prison 5 received list 4, Prison 1 received list 6 and so on. Numerals 8, 9, and 10 were void.⁸⁶ See diagram 6.1.



Finally, I went through each batch and added adjacent consecutive numbers from 1- 116 to each T or C. See diagram 6.2.



I printed the sheets, cut them into individual pieces containing number and condition, and placed each slip of paper into its corresponding envelope. These were sealed, signed, the date noted across the seal, and replaced in a box. The box containing 1,000 envelopes was

⁸⁵ See Shapland and colleagues' for use of a forest plot of non-significant site-specific results (2008:27).

⁸⁶ Prison 8 was assigned list 9 when it joined the RCT.

then locked in a secure cupboard at the Institute of Criminology (IoC) awaiting the first cases.

The Cambridge Randomiser

By June 2011 a new computer programme, the Cambridge Randomiser (CR), had been developed (Ariel et al, 2012). The programme provided simple, secure, contemporaneous random assignment especially suited to this RCT. An advantage was the ability to randomise any number of cases at any one time. This avoided the potential for imbalance between experimental groups that could occur when using pre-prepared number sequences. For instance, at Prison 2 when using the sealed envelope sequence, a batch of ten men was assigned as follows; three treatment, seven control. At this prison the final sample rendered this imbalance irrelevant but, had the sample been small, it could have introduced bias.

The CR was used even when batches comprised an odd number. The resulting 'extra' case would never cause an imbalance of cases greater than the number of batches at any one prison. Furthermore, as successive batches were randomised the likelihood was that 'extra' cases in odd-numbered batches would cancel each other out (see table 6:2). The flexibility was helpful as recruiting was uneven both between and within prisons. Sometimes batches would exceed 20 men and frequently they would be less than 10.

The CR was completely tamper-proof and provided instant back-up by Emailing all random allocations to my Cambridge Email account.

Although the random number sequences and envelopes became superfluous, I retained them because they provided a hardcopy fail-safe record of every individual's allocation (explained below).

Codenames

In 2009 I compiled a list of men's names (N=880) to supply an anonymous identifier for each RCT participant. Using the eight most common English surnames I added five first names for every letter of the alphabet from A-Z excluding the letters Q, U, X, and Y. Each name was placed in the left-hand column of a two-column grid with an adjacent

blank cell. Later, the CR required a four digit case number so I added a blank cell to the left of each code name. This three-column grid was stored until recruiting began. See diagram 6.3.

Case number	Anonymous name	Real name
1001	Adam Smith	Joe Bloggs
1002	Andrew Smith	John Doe
?	Alexander Smith	?
?	Albert Smith	?
?	Alfred Smith	?

Diagram 6.3: example of anonymising grid

Procedure – in the prisons

Chaplains and ST coordinators (occasionally offender managers) identified eligible prisoners from their STP waiting list. The usual referral methods for the STP were self-referral, recommendation by sentence planners or another officer or staff member. Referrals were normally a response to a prisoner's perceived need to complete 'victim work'. I had envisaged that each research site would recruit large batches that could be randomly assigned in smaller batches as required. The Chaplain or ST coordinator would notify me when a batch of men had consented and that they possessed a signed consent form. I would hold the names until randomisation was required and notify the Chaplain of the allocations. The Chaplain would then inform the men.

The treatment group would complete a ST course in the usual way. Controls would not complete a ST course, they would continue their sentence as usual except to answer a before/after psychometric questionnaire (see Chapter 3) as close as possible to simultaneously with the treatment group (first and final sessions of the ST course). I had no contact with research participants apart from observing ST sessions or being at research presentations.

The first two batches were large. Prison 1's batch was assigned to two forthcoming ST courses but Prison 2's was disposed in small numbers over 11 months. These two prisons, together with Prison 5, had their first batches randomly assigned using the sealed envelopes. All cases thereafter were randomly allocated using the CR (including the remainder of Prison 2's large batch).

The original protocol was that research presentations could be held at Chaplains' convenience with cases being randomly assigned shortly before a forthcoming ST course. The number of random assignments would depend on how many research participants could be accommodated on the course. For example, if 50 men consented at one recruiting presentation they could be randomly allocated in smaller batches as places on ST courses became available. Thus, hypothetically, if five places were available, I would randomly assign ten cases from the 50 so that five treatment group men would fill the available places; the other five would be their controls. The remaining 40 men would wait until the next ST course places became available. Those closest to release would be randomised first until the whole batch had been allocated.

The unstable prison population rendered this impractical. Cases were transferred or released before they could be randomly assigned and imbalance between treatment and control cases was introduced at Prison 2 (see Chapter 7). Consequently, the experiment became a 'trickle-batch' pipeline (MacKenzie, 2012) whereby cases were recruited over time in small batches, from irregularly held recruiting sessions, and complete batches were randomly assigned.

Chaplains recruited men as each ST course approached which meant that they had to organise a research presentation as well as planning for forthcoming ST courses and we had to decide when in the pipeline to randomise. I consulted all the Chaplains and ST coordinators (MacKenzie, 2012) and we decided on a maximum of two weeks before the start date of the forthcoming ST course. This allowed time to inform all the prisoners (including non-research participants) who were offered places. Two weeks were necessary because people who were only in the prison for one or two days per week usually did this. Nevertheless, I sometimes received a list of names within forty-eight hours of an imminent ST course.

The modified protocol led to Chaplains and ST coordinators having to exercise guesswork when they held research presentations. They had to assess how many research places were available on the course and extrapolate from that how many eligible men to invite to each presentation. Then they had to add a few more men in case of non-attendance. Although a specific number of places on ST courses was allocated to research participants, the batch size was dependent on how many men attended the research presentation and consented to participate in the experiment. For example, if 10 places were available on the next ST course and 30 men were invited to the research presentation but only five attended, watched the DVD, and agreed to take part, a maximum of three treatment places would be required. The seven reserved places that would not then be filled by RCT participants had to be given to non-eligible men on the waiting list (or those who did not attend the research presentation and who would not be included in the RCT). Before any of this could be done their availability and willingness to attend a ST course had to be checked. It is to Chaplains' and ST coordinators' credit and their enthusiasm for the study that more than 20 batches were produced.

Procedure – at the Institute of Criminology

When prisoners volunteered for the experiment, they signed a consent form (see appendix 4), which was retained in the Chaplaincy. The names were then sent to me as an Email attachment using a table that I had prepared (or the consent form was faxed to the IoC) (see Chapter 4). For the first three batches I used the prepared, sealed envelopes; for all batches thereafter I used the CR (Ariel et al., 2012).

Participants were assigned a case number and codename. Initially, case numbers were consecutive numbers from 1-116 at each prison. The CR required a four digit case number so I converted the existing numbers. Each new case number commenced with a prison identifier numeral and I added one or two zeros to the numbers 1-116 as necessary so that the result comprised four digits (see diagram 6.4).

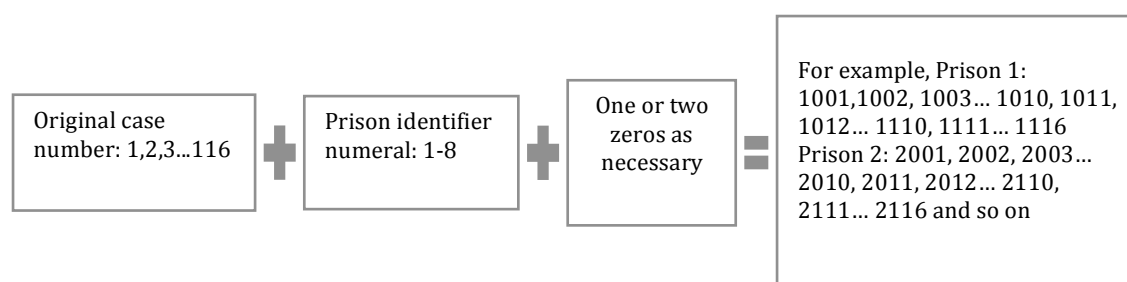
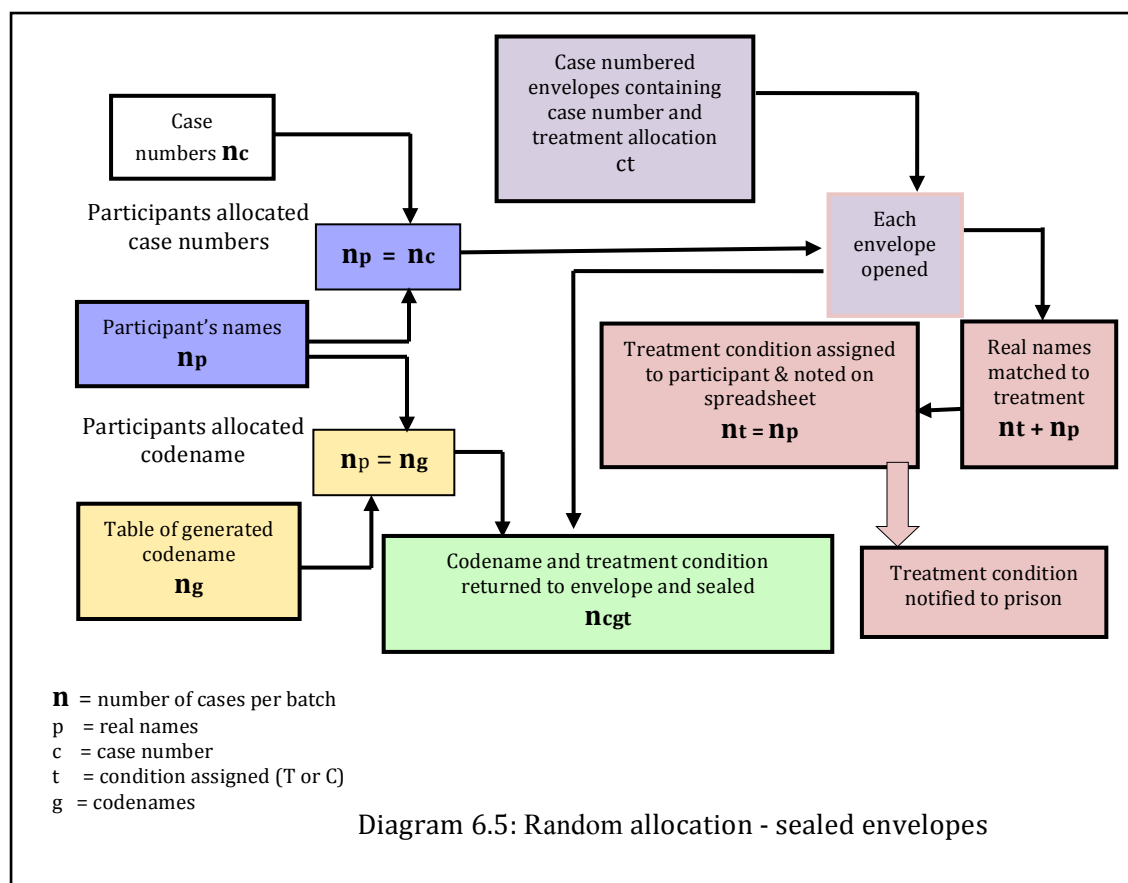


Diagram 6.4: producing new case numbers

I used two protocols for random assignment, each is represented in the two diagrams below. Diagram 6.5 represents the sealed envelope procedure and diagram 6.6 the CR.

In all cases, as names were received men were allocated the next consecutive case number appropriate to his prison together with the next codename from the anonymising grid. I printed two lists of the codenames given to each batch. One included real names, the other did not and was cut up for use later (see below).

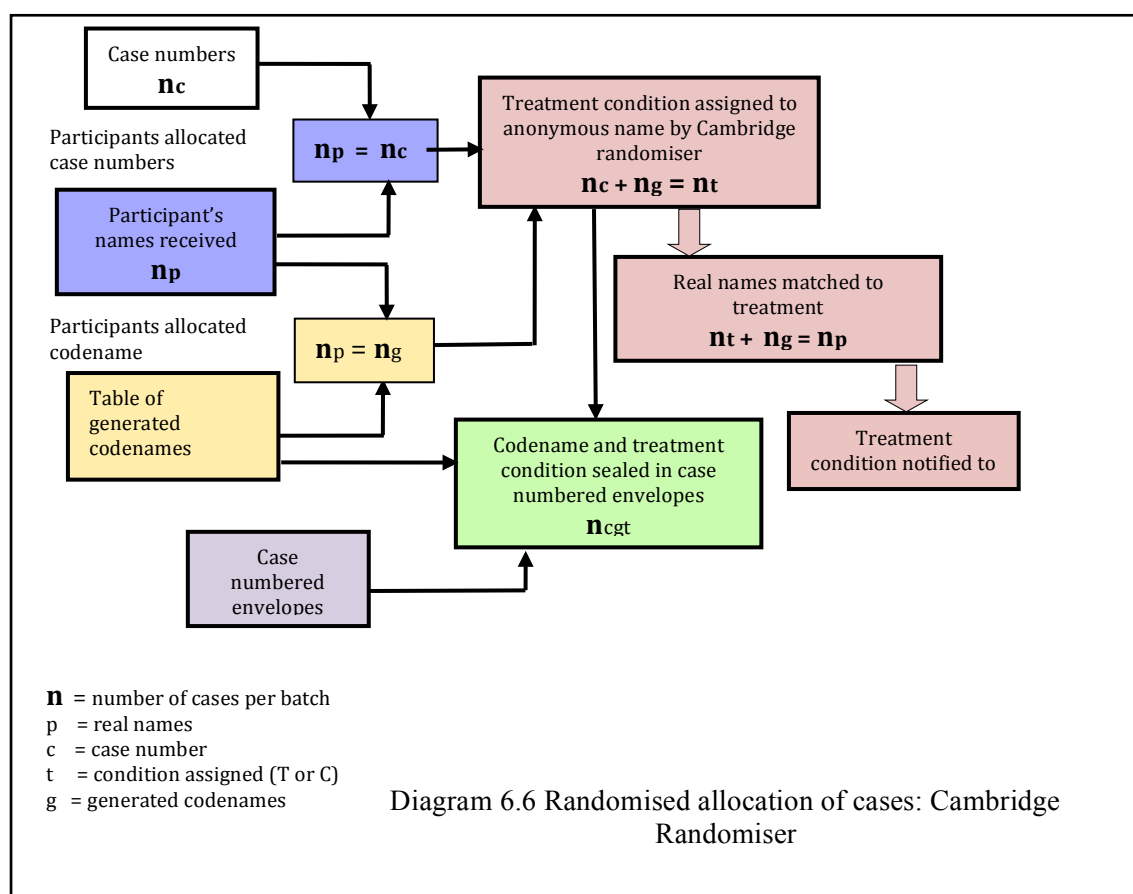
When using envelopes I matched each case number to the corresponding envelope and opened it to reveal the experimental condition. I checked that the case number, the number on the outside of the envelope, and the number on the enclosed slip of paper denoting the treatment condition all matched. I then entered the treatment condition on the spreadsheet for that prison and on the intact printout of names and codenames. I produced a second spreadsheet by copying the original and substituting the real names with their codenames (all other data remained unaltered). The slip of paper bearing the case number and experimental condition together with the cut up codename were placed in the envelope. I resealed the envelope and wrote the codename, the experimental condition, and the date across the seal. The envelope was returned to the box.



The CR (Ariel et al., 2012) meant that experimental groups were decided contemporaneously. The process was simple. I assigned a unique case number and codename and printed two copies as before. Next, using a secure computer, I opened the CR programme. The Sycamore Tree Experiment was already entered into the programme and I opened the relevant page. The page had a ‘live’ box into which I entered the number of cases for randomising and pressed ‘send’. The programme immediately returned another page with the correct number of cases each having a further four ‘live’ boxes requiring data. Into each box I entered the individual’s case number, codename, date of birth, and expected release date.⁸⁷

Once completed I pressed ‘send’ and the random allocations were returned instantly. A confirmation Email was sent to my inbox. I noted the experimental condition on the hardcopy anonymising chart, and entered it into the relevant prison spreadsheet. As before, I put each cut up, printed codename in the envelope marked with the correct case number, resealed it, wrote the codename and treatment across the seal, and dated it.

⁸⁷ See Ariel et al. (2012) appendix C for screenshot)



For both methods I retained the hardcopy section of the anonymising chart containing codenames matched to real names with the treatment condition marked. These documents are the only hardcopy documents linking each case with his codename. All hardcopy documents were placed into locked, secure storage and envelopes were stored in a separate, secure area.

When random assignment was completed I entered the experimental conditions into the prison's spreadsheet. All treatment group men were highlighted for ease of recognition. Case numbers were not included on this document. It was then password protected and returned to the appropriate prison as an Email attachment. Finally, every case was entered into a master RCT spreadsheet. I also maintained individual prison spreadsheets. All these documents were password protected with the password known only to me and not written down. They were stored in the electronic archive at the IoC with a backup copy stored on a high-security flash-drive kept in a locked, secure area.

Third cohort

For various reasons some cases were never randomly assigned (see Chapter 7). To my knowledge no man wished to withdraw from the RCT so I decided to keep any unassigned men as a third cohort (McDougall et al., 2009a; 2009b; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). This would provide additional data on how they progressed through their sentences when compared to RCT participants. I gave each individual a codename in the same way as the randomised cases but altered the case numbers to make them distinctive. I assigned each of them the next consecutive case number but changed the second digit from zero to nine (only case numbers in excess of 100 had a second digit that was not a zero and I did not anticipate having that many unrandomised participants). Thus, 1001 became 1901, 2043 became 2943 and so on.

Research presentations

Attendance

From data supplied by the prisons many more eligible men were identified on the STP waiting-list than attended research presentations. This gap seemed to reflect the Chaplains' success in encouraging men to attend research presentations.

All eligible men were invited to the research presentations by letter. Such procedures were normal practice in all prisons. Some Chaplains said that they were unsure how to word the invitations so, as differentials in response rates developed, I asked the ST coordinator in Prison 5 (who at that time had the highest number of cases) for a copy of their invitation letter. I drafted an invitation myself and sent that, together with Prison 5's invitation, to all the Chaplains and ST coordinators who thought it would be helpful.

Despite inconsistent attendance, research presentations were successful overall as an average of 83.1% of attendees agreed to participate. As each prison had adopted its own method of inviting men (Petersilia, 1989) it was difficult to pinpoint why this difference occurred (between 95% and 38%).

Research presentation protocol was as follows: the assembled men were asked to watch the DVD that I supplied (see appendix 9) and given a sheet of 'frequently asked questions' (msw5). These fully explained the RCT. All attendees were given a certificate of thanks signed by the Chaplain (msw4) whether they agreed to participate in the experiment or

not. Those who agreed then signed a consent form (msw2). This required them to provide their name, date of birth, prison number, address before custody, and confirm their willingness to join the RCT and allow access to their criminal record. There was also a clause providing for their data to be used for secondary research and educational purposes. This clause was intended to allow the RCT sample to be cross matched in future work encompassing restorative justice or the STP. For Chaplains' guidance I provided a step-by-step guide for the research presentation and a protocol for all the forms I had compiled (who they were given to, when, and where retained).

Several men expressed concern about supplying their address before custody as they were worried that they might be contacted after their release. They were assured that no post-release contact was planned and that, should it be required, it would be arranged prior to their release and would only happen with their further consent. These details were intended to assist with data cleaning. To my knowledge no men refused to sign the consent form because of its contents. I agreed that men need not supply their address and could answer "no" to that question. Otherwise, if men answered "no" to any question they were not accepted for the RCT (see Chapter 7).

Timing

I realised that organising prisoners' time out of their cells was a complicated process. Details of any proposed movements had to be notified and logged in advance. Several Chaplains told me that they felt constrained by the prison regime in finding suitable times for holding research presentations.

Each time a man left his cell a 'movement slip' and an escort to and from his destination were required. Prisoners were allowed out of their cells for 'purposeful activity' such as "education and training courses; employment; induction; resettlement and rehabilitation activities; sports and PE; religious activities and visits" (Solomon, 2004:11). However, one Chaplain, whose research presentations were badly attended, did not categorise them within this definition. Further, he appeared unwilling to disrupt any of these activities by holding simultaneous research presentations. Therefore, he consistently scheduled his presentations for times when prisoners had 'association'.⁸⁸ 'Association' was the main

⁸⁸ 'Association' is a time when prisoners are allowed out of their cells to mix with each other.

social activity that prisoners had and, as it was within the prison timetable, no further justification was needed for men to be out of their cells. The Chaplain had thought to minimise administration and disruption by utilising ‘association’ time for research presentations. This forced prisoners to choose between attending the chapel for something unknown or socialising. The figures spoke for themselves. I suggested avoiding these clashes which improved numbers a little.

All prisoners moving around had to be escorted by at least one officer. As some prisons covered very large areas and all were divided into separate, discrete sectors accessed by a locked door and/or gate, moving anywhere was slow. For example, one ST tutor told me that he had spent four hours visiting men in their cells to check that they still wanted to attend a ST course.⁸⁹

Recruiting rates and patterns

Recruiting was uneven. Once Chaplains began holding research presentations prior to forthcoming ST courses, some prisons recruited cases at most opportunities but several prisons hardly recruited any. The first batch was recruited at Prison 1 on 2nd February 2011. Eleven further batches were recruited from only three of the other six prisons during 2011. I telephoned and never failed to encourage Chaplains but there was always a valid reason for not holding research presentations, usually lack of time or annual leave. I suggested that Chaplains worked in conjunction with their Offender Management Units to identify eligible men, some Chaplains said that they already did and some began to.

I consulted with Prison Fellowship England and Wales (PFEW) and we decided to invite more prisons to be research sites (Boruch, 1997; Roman et al. 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). I contacted Chaplains at three prisons where STPs were held four or more times *per annum*. One Chaplain was very keen to join the RCT and I visited the prison to meet him and the Offender Manager on 15th March 2012. That became Prison 8. (The Chaplain at the second prison said that they were too busy to accommodate the experiment. At the third prison the Chaplain explained that they had just agreed to participate in a different research programme and so declined to participate.) In October 2012 Prison 8 contributed their first cases.

⁸⁹ These were not men involved with the RCT.

In December 2012 (after 22 months) Prison 1 completed their target of 116 randomly assigned men. Other prisons had had varying sample sizes. Figure 6.1 illustrates the number of research presentations and ST courses held in each prison.⁹⁰ The columns representing research presentations are superimposed over the columns for ST courses.

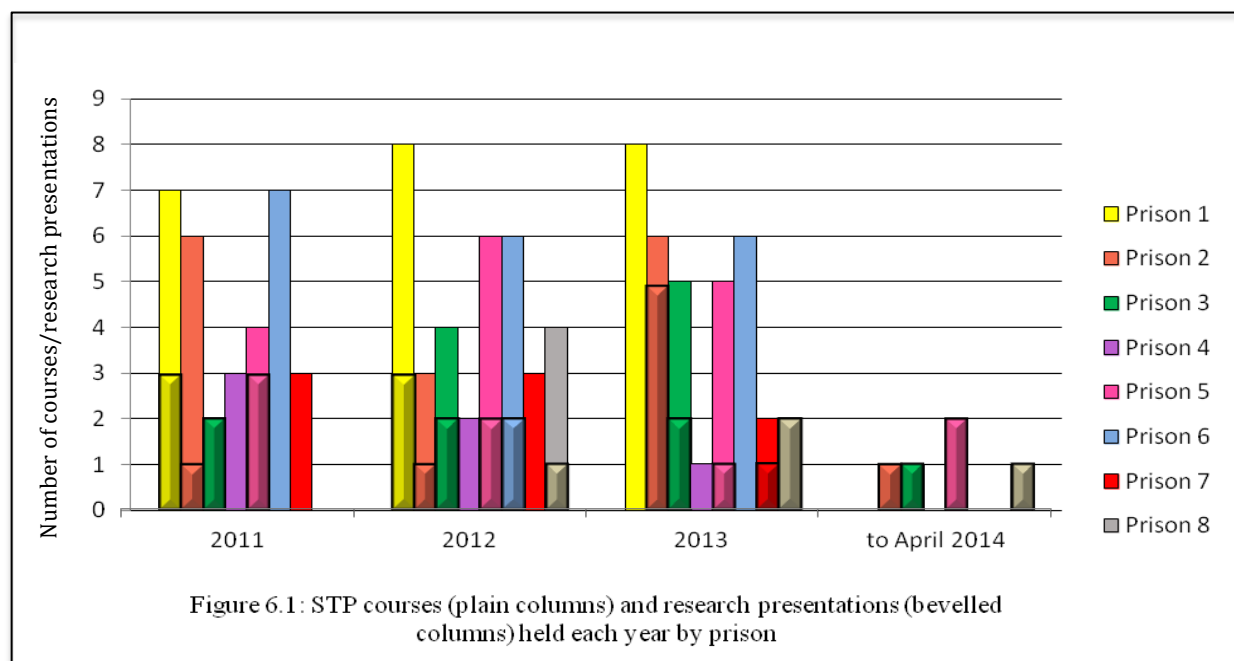


Figure 6.2 shows random assignment for each batch by month and illustrates the ebbs and flows in recruiting. Prison 2 was the only prison to recruit one large batch and allocate small numbers to several ST courses over time. For that prison random assignment using sealed envelopes was carried out on the 16th March 2011 and used for the two following ST courses as the Chaplain was initially unwilling to change the allocations. Subsequently I insisted that the new system was compulsory, and small batches from the original sample were individually randomised using the CR. Prison 1 disposed three large batches to more than one ST course but these were to two courses running almost in parallel. All other prisons disposed batches to a single ST course soon after random assignment.

⁹⁰ Prison 8 was not a part of the RCT in 2011.

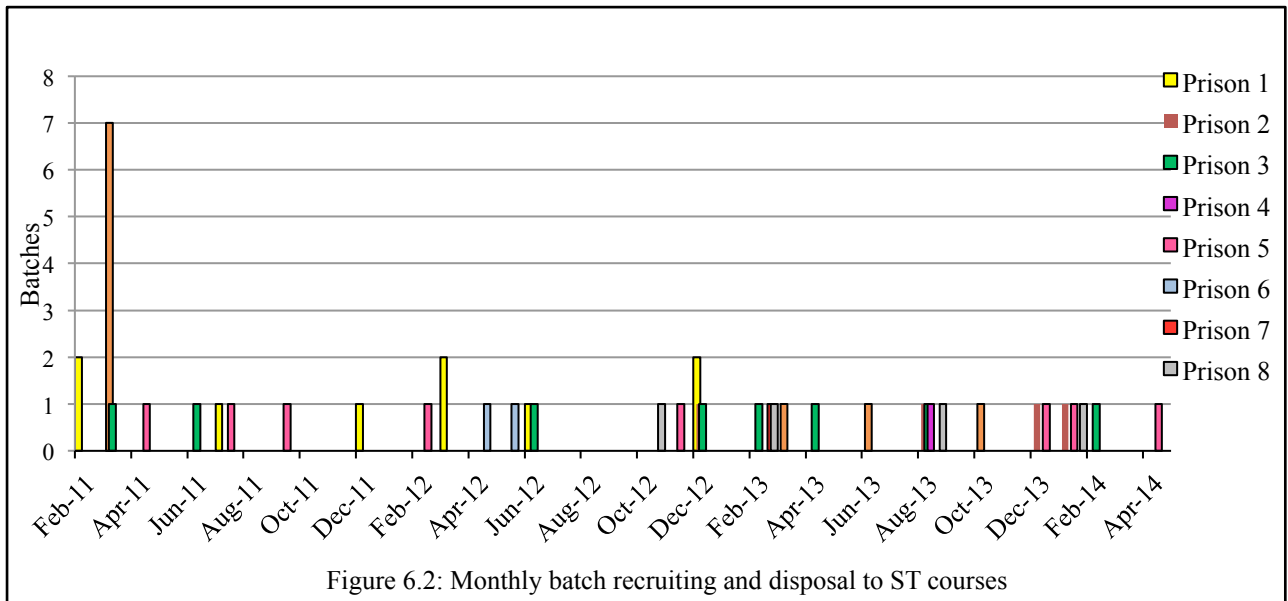


Figure 6.2: Monthly batch recruiting and disposal to ST courses

Table 6.1 presents the disposal of cases by date from recruiting to random assignment. The date of random assignment and number of ST courses each batch was disposed to is shown.

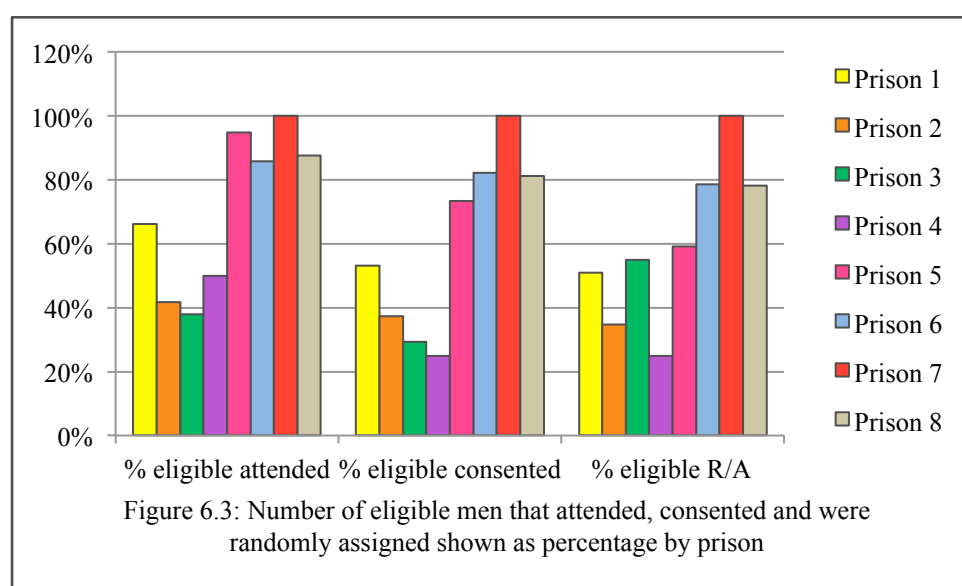
Random Allocations by date								
Prison	Date large batch recruited	Date RA	Disposal to ST courses	Prison	Date large batch recruited	Date RA	Disposal to ST courses	
Prison 1	N/A	2.2.11	2	Prison 3	N/A	0	1	
		7.7.11	1			21.6.11	1	
		21.12.11	1			9.6.12	1	
		16.3.12	2			15.12.12	1	
		16.6.12	1			13.2.13	1	
		27.12.12	2			22.4.13	1	
Prison 2	N/A	14.3.11.	16.3.11	3	Prison 5	N/A	26.8.13	1
		14.3.11.	4.8.11	1			4.2.14	1
		14.3.11.	19.9.11	1			26.8.13	0
		14.3.11.	27.10.11	2			21.4.11	1
		15.12.12	1	11.7.11			1	
		11.3.13	1	8.9.11			0	
		19.6.13	1	20.2.12			1	
		24.8.13	1	5.11.12			1	
		28.10.13	1	5.12.13			0	
		14.12.13	1	16.1.14			1	
31.1.14	1	10.4.14	1					
				Prison 6		7.4.12	1	
				Prison 7		29.5.12	1	
				Prison 8		9.2.13	1	
					12.10.12	1		
					2.2.13	1		
						24.8.13	1	
						2.1.14	1	

Table 6.1: showing each batch RA

Prison 4 held one recruiting presentation and one man consented. However, unexpected difficulties with the volunteers due to deliver the ST course meant it was postponed beyond his release date. I knew Prison 4 was likely to have low numbers of eligible men because this was a category B prison with no ‘local’ capacity.⁹¹ Therefore these prisoners had longer remaining sentence and fewer met the release date criterion. However, they had expected to have some eligible men. Three eligible men were identified in 2011 but the ST coordinator decided that they were not suitable for a ST course because of safety considerations (McDougall et al., 2009a; 2009b).⁹²

Recruiting to random assignment

Once eligible men were identified from the STP waiting-list a personally addressed invitation was sent to them on the wings. The take-up rate for these invitations varied between prisons. Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of eligible men who attended presentations, consented, and were randomly assigned in each prison; 100% is the number of eligible men identified in the waiting list.

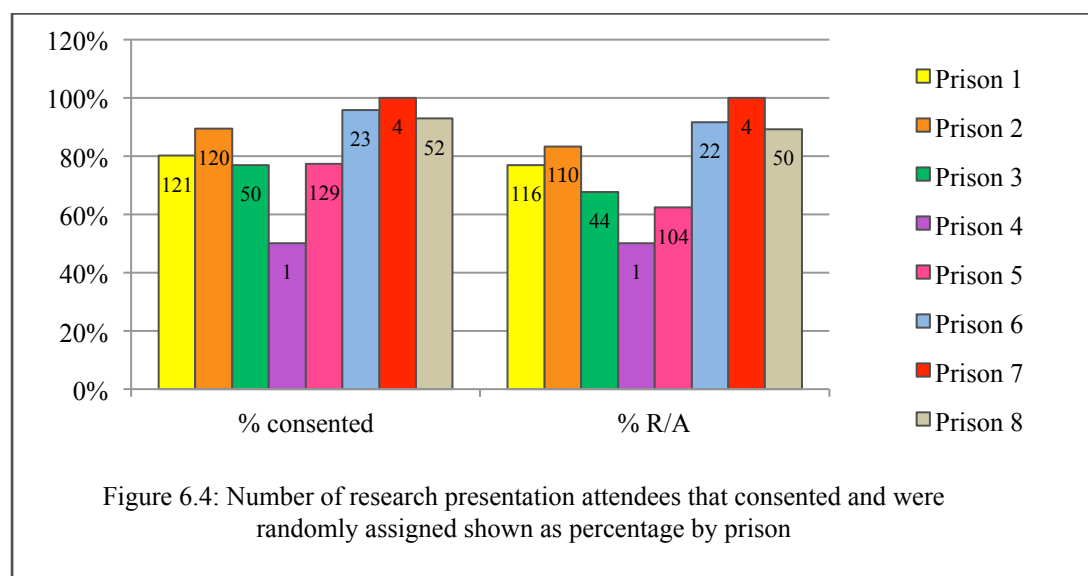


Despite the uneven numbers of research presentations and sometimes low attendance, most prisons had high percentages of attendees that consented to join the RCT. Not all Chaplains or ST coordinators supplied the numbers of eligible men that were not invited

⁹¹ Prisons with a ‘local’ capacity can accommodate prisoners with a lower than B classification if they come from a local sentencing court. These will usually be prisoners with shorter sentences.

⁹² The ST coordinator said that they did not get on with other men scheduled for the next ST course and she did not want to mix them in situations where she had to consider ST volunteers’ safety.

to the presentation, neither did they always supply the number of invitations they had issued. However, I was confident that they followed the protocol of inviting eligible men prioritised by release date. Most assured me that they invited all the eligible men that they had identified. Figure 6.4 presents the men who attended a research presentation and agreed to participate in the RCT. Consenters and randomly assigned cases are plotted as a percentage with actual numbers added; 100% is the number of attendees.



Contrary to some literature (Boruch, 1997; Clark & Cornish, 1972; Farrington, 1983; Petersilia, 1989; Rawson et al., 2002; Roman et al., 2012; Silverman, 1977 & 1997 cited in Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008; Strang, 2012; Weisburd, 2003) several Chaplains were relieved by the process of random assignment as they no longer had to select men from the waiting list for limited ST course places (Kilburn, 2012; Petersilia, 1989). (The general oversubscription meant that Chaplains usually had to select men. Many found this onerous and unpleasant as prisoners who did not get a place would often never get one before release).

Table 6.2 presents the random assignment for every participant. At Prison 2 the eight cases that are shown as non-randomised were lost from the first batch through ‘churn’.⁹³ At Prison 3 the entire first batch was unrandomised because all the men were missing

⁹³ See Chapter 7 for ‘churn’.

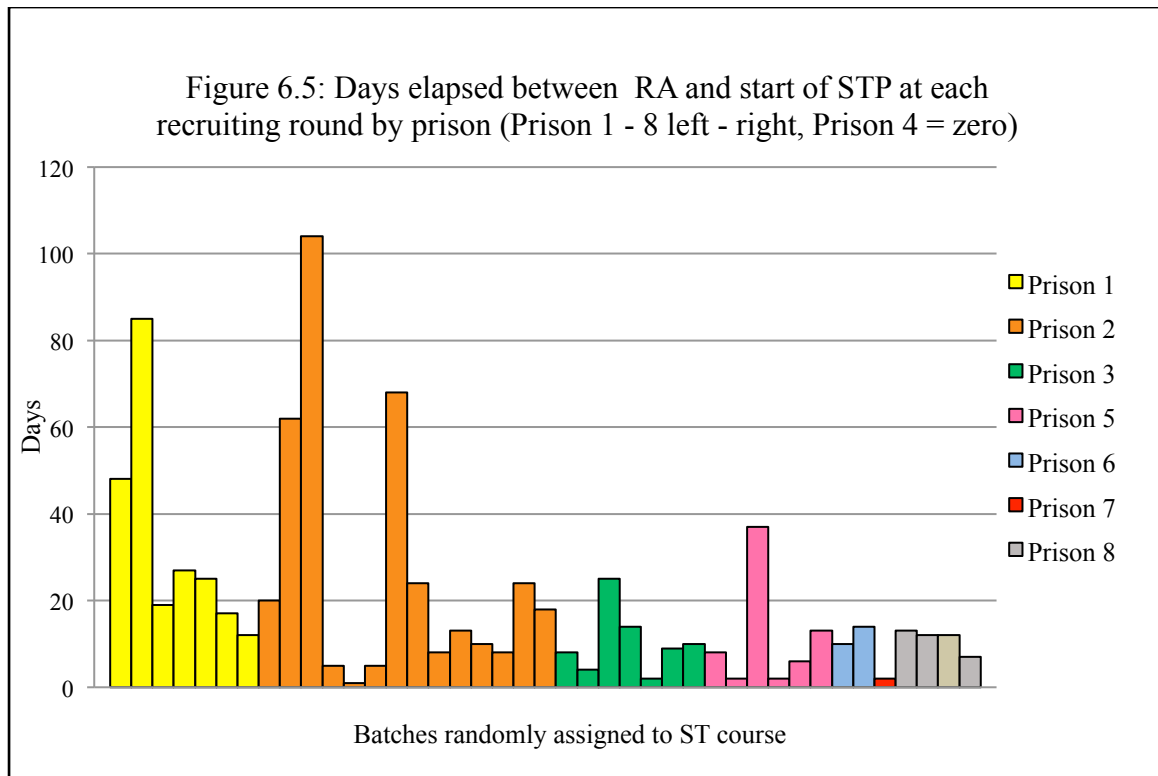
from the prison by the time of the forthcoming course. All other unrandomised cases were so assigned because of misunderstandings (see Chapter 7).

Prison	Research presentation	R A	R A sent to prison	R A given to prisoners	Start date of STP	RA details	Days RA - STP
Prison 1	1.2.11.	2.2.11.	2.2.11	3.3.11.	24.2.11	8T 7C	22
					22.3.11	9T 8C	48
		7.7.11.	7.7.11		26.7.11	8T 7C	19
		21.12.11.	21.12.11		17.1.12	8T 8C	27
		16.3.12.	16.3.12		10.4.12	6T 6C 4NR	25
		16.6.12.	16.6.12		3.7.12	10T 10C 1NR	17
	27.12.12.	27.12.12		8.1.13	10T 11C	12	
Prison 2	8.3.11.	14.3.11.	16.3.11		5.4.11	1T 2C	22
		14.3.11.	16.3.11	12.5.11	17.5.11	3T 7C 1NR	64
		14.3.11.	16.3.11	24.6.11	28.6.11	1T 2C 1NR	106
		4.8.11.	4.8.11		9.8.11	3T 1C 1NR	5
		19.9.11.	19.9.11		20.9.11	4T 4C 2NR	1
		27.10.11.	27.10.11		1.11.11	1T 1C 3NR	5
		27.10.11.	27.10.11		3.1.12	2T 2C	68
		15.12.12.	15.12.12		8.1.13	6T 6C	24
		11.3.13.	11.3.13		26.3.13	3T 4C	15
		19.6.13.	19.6.13		2.7.13	8T 7C	13
		24.8.13	24.8.13		3.9.13	6T 6C 4NR	10
		28.10.13	28.10.13		5.11.13	7T 7C	8
	14.12.13	14.12.13		7.1.14	7T 7C	24	
	31.1.14	31.1.14		18.2.14	2T 1C	18	
Prison 3	16.3.11.	NR			Course cancelled	6NR	
	14.6.11.	21.6.11	21.6.11		29.6.11	4T 4C	8
		9.6.12	9.6.12		13.6.12	3T 3C	4
		15.12.12	15.12.12		9.1.13	6T 7C	25
	11.2.13.	13.2.13	13.2.13		27.2.13	1T 1C	14
		22.4.13	22.4.13		24.4.13	1T	2
		26.8.13	26.8.13		4.9.13	4T 4C	9
	4.2.14	4.2.14		12.2.14	3T 3C	8	
Prison 4		26.8.13	26.8.13		Course cancelled	1T	
Prison 5	21.4.11.	26.4.11	26.4.11	29.4.11.	4.5.11	13T 17C	8
		11.7.11	11.7.11	12.7.12.	13.7.11	16T 16C	2
		NR			14.9.11	11NR	
		20.2.12	20.2.12	21.2.12.	22.2.12	4T 4C	2
		5.11.12	5.11.12	6.11.12.	7.11.12	6T 6C	2
		NR			5.12.13	11NR	
		16.1.14	17.1.14		22.1.14	13T 12C	5
	10.4.14	10.4.14		23.4.14	5T 5C	8	
Prison 6		7.4.12	7.4.12		17.4.12	5T 6C	10
		29.5.12	29.5.12		12.6.12	5T 6C 1NR	14
Prison 7		9.2.13	9.2.13		15.2.13	2T 2C	2
Prison 8		12.10.12	12.10.12		25.10.12	6T 5C	13
		2.2.13	2.2.13		21.2.13	6T 5C	19
		24.8.13	24.8.13		5.9.13	7T 7C 2NR	12
		2.1.14	2.1.14		9.1.14	7T 7C	7

Table 6.2: Random Assignment

Once men had consented they were eager to learn whether they had a place on the next ST course or not. Using the sealed envelope method of random assignment caused some difficulties for Chaplains because I randomly assigned all the men from the first two batches in Prisons 1 and 2 and informed the Chaplains of the treatment allocations. This was a mistake. Where there were fewer places available on the next ST course than there were men assigned to treatment, and only a few of them would be allocated a place, the Chaplains had to withhold the allocation from the men. This meant either telling the men that they were not allowed to know for the time being or lying to them and telling them that the Chaplains themselves did not know. Chaplains did not wish to be put in this position. The Chaplain at Prison 1 readily agreed that he should have no knowledge of random assignment until he had to inform the participants. The Chaplain at Prison 2 was less accommodating insisting that, administratively, it was more efficient for the random allocations to be known by Chaplaincy staff so that they could allocate places without further reference to me except to confirm which men had been dealt with as allocated (see below). This was resolved when I began to use the CR as no random allocations could be known in advance. In total 76 cases were randomly assigned using sealed envelopes: Prison 1 (N=32), Prison 2 (N=14), Prison 5 (N=30).

As far as possible, men were not notified of their treatment condition until close to the forthcoming ST course. However, there were occasions when Chaplains or ST coordinators required random assignment allocations more than two weeks in advance of the next ST course. For example, one ST coordinator held the research presentation and sent the names of cases before she went on holiday so that, on her return shortly before the next ST course start date, she could complete the necessary administration. On other occasions random assignment was done during the Christmas period and, because prison regimes were substantially altered during that time and ST courses were due to start very early in the New Year, extra time was required. On none of these occasions was there any non-compliance as a result of this extended time lapse. Figure 6.5 illustrates days elapsed between random allocation and the start date of the forthcoming STP.



Pipeline

Between February 2011 and May 2014 a trickle-flow pipeline produced 42 batches of men from 38 research presentations across eight prisons. A total of 510 men consented to participate of whom 465 were randomly assigned with 92% compliance. Some research sites recruited more than others and the recruiting effort was greatest during the first 18 months (see Chapter 5). ST courses were a regular part of Chaplaincy responsibilities and Chaplains did their best to accommodate the RCT. However, the experiment was running when there were some unusual external events.

The first year of recruiting coincided with intense pressure on prison capacity. This was caused by high incarceration levels imposed on rioters involved in civil disturbances in English cities during 2011. One Governor described it as a ‘pressure wave’ radiating out from the cities concerned. This was the period of most non-compliance attributable to HDC releases and transfers.

External threats

The pipeline was vulnerable to budget restrictions as ST courses across the prison estate were cut. With low case production the only option was to extend the recruiting period

(Boruch, 1997; Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012). Whilst this was undesirable it was not going to be fatal so long as treatment remained available. Changing the eligibility criteria or increasing recruitment were not feasible (Roman et al., 2012) as the target population comprised men with determinate sentences who were awaiting a STP and a place on a course had to be available. We knew that the experiment would take several years but the longer it took, the harder it was to keep practitioners' enthusiasm high, and the more vulnerable it became to changes of staff and work practices (Asscher et al., 2007; Petersilia, 1989; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012) (see Chapter 5). For example, Prison 1 had completed their sample by early 2013 but the ST coordinator undertook to continue supplying cases. Then a new Governor cut forthcoming ST courses by 50%. Some hope remained of more cases but both Chaplain and ST coordinator left so, between December 2012 and May 2015, the most productive prison supplied no further cases.

At Prison 2 there were similar problems but the solution was clearly demonstrated. A new, paid ST coordinator was tasked with supplying cases and the unexpected Godsend of funding provided the necessary treatment availability. Within six months the sample increased by 62% (N=42 to N=68) and, by May 2014, 111 men had been randomly assigned.

Prison 7 had seen problems with staff turnover causing some resistance to the research design. Finally, they held their first research presentation early in 2013. However, in late 2012 the operators, a private company, lost the contract to run the prison and it passed into the public sector (HMPS) for the first time in the prison's history. The changeover was due to happen in July 2013 and the offender manager said that, until the new contract and working practices were finalised and the practical implications of the RCT known, they would be unable to book any further ST courses or support the experiment.

Release dates

There are several dates pertaining to release in the PNOMIS database. The first is the end of sentence date when a prisoner must be released. All the other dates are not mandatory. They comprise the licence date, usually at the end of one third of a prisoner's sentence term, and the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) date, when a prisoner becomes eligible for early release and has an electronic tag fitted. There is a licence expiry date which usually

corresponds to the end of sentence date. During a period of licence the prisoner may not be in custody. Not all prisoners are considered eligible for HDC release and not all prisoners will be released on their licence date. For example, I noticed that several research participants were released after their possible HDC release date but before their licence date. Responding to the slight uncertainty I asked all Chaplains and ST coordinators to provide potential HDC release dates when they sent me the names of new cases.

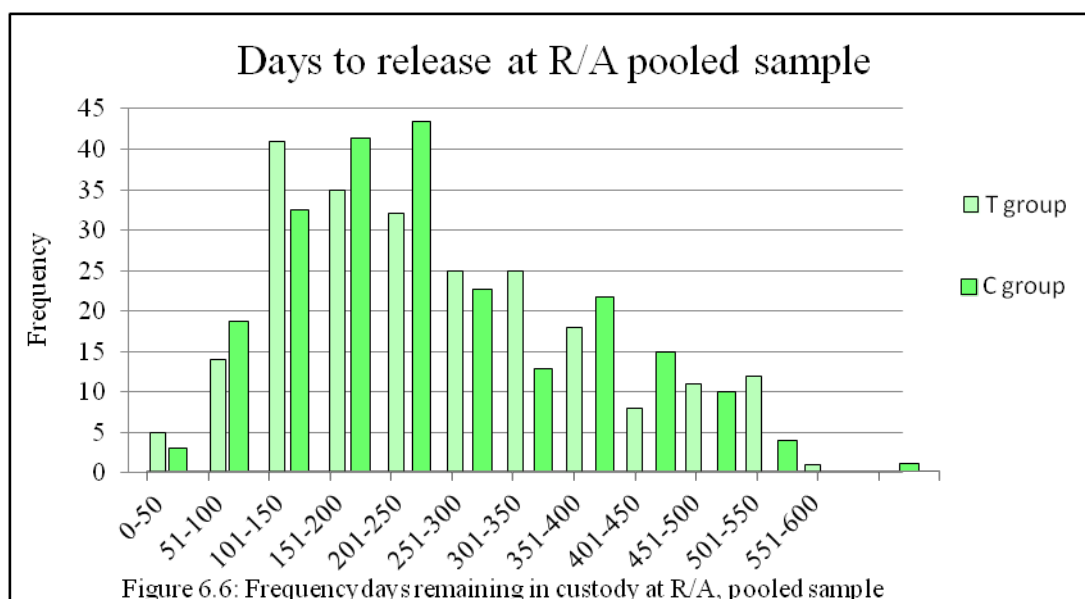
II. Baseline comparisons

Only two variables were available to compute baseline comparisons; mean age and mean length of remaining custody. Additionally, PFEW did not have confirmed STP results beyond September 2014.⁹⁴

Both t Test and Cohen's d tests showed that the treatment and control groups were not different in these two variables at the time of random assignment.

Figure 6.6 presents the frequencies for mean days remaining in custody for the pooled sample. Time is calculated in days from the time of random assignment to expected release date. The curve is positively skewed with the highest values clustering around the mean (T group (N=225) M=256.48, SD=130.34; C group (N=231) M=250.03, SD=132.00). The skewness reflects the eligibility criterion of between 20 weeks and 18 months left to serve as men with the earliest release dates were prioritised.

⁹⁴ I searched PFEW records for all prisons in England and Wales where ST courses had been delivered between February 2011 and January 2015. OCN certificates are awarded to prisoners who pass the course; the PFEW STP internal verifier confirms tutors' results (see Chapter 3). In January 2015 no results beyond September 2014 were confirmed. For compliance details see Chapter 7.



Tables 6.4 and 6.5 present the details of the ‘Days left in custody’ variable for the pooled sample and for individual prisons.⁹⁵ The minimum value of 15 days occurred when a man from Prison 1 was released earlier than expected. Lower values than the minimum eligibility criterion of 120 days to release all relate to the earliest batches recruited in Prisons 1, 2, 3, and 5 before that criterion was included.

	Days left in custody at R/A							
	T group	M(SD)	range	C group	M(SD)	range	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
All prisons	N = 225	256.48(130.34)	15-561	N = 231	250.03(132.00)	33-535	.600	0.09

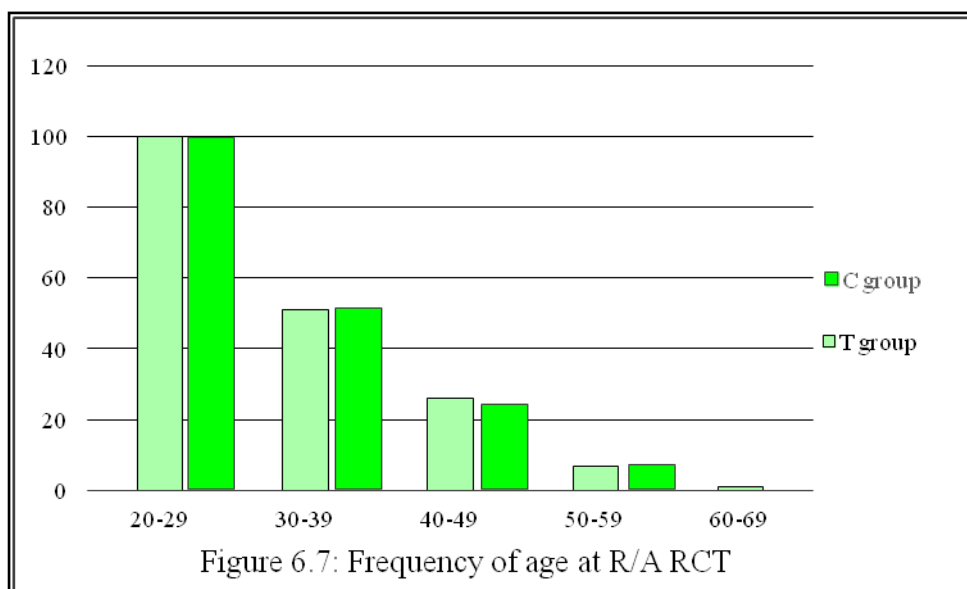
Table 6.4

⁹⁵ Prison 4 supplied one man for random assignment; he was assigned to treatment but two days afterwards the ST course was postponed. He was released before the course was reinstated and is not included in any analyses.

Days left in custody at R/A								
	T group	M(SD)	range	C group	M(SD)	range	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Prison 1	N = 59	245.56(104.11)	15-548	N = 57	248.88(112.51)	65-452	.872	0.03
Prison 2	N = 52	243.71(141.87)	48-538	N = 55	235.53(119.15)	33-493	.747	0.23
Prison 3	N = 22	243.50(149.80)	91-530	N = 22	265.50(222.10)	48-510	.702	0.45
Prison 5	N = 54	239.80(129.97)	49-561	N = 59	240.17(117.30)	73-509	.987	0.21
Prison 6	N = 10	333.10(96.05)	206-522	N = 12	285.50(126.88)	64-477	.329	0.56
Prison 7	N = 2	221.50(98.29)	152-291	N = 2	217.00(46.67)	184-250	.959	0.06
Prison 8	N = 26	325.69(137.25)	116-527	N = 24	281.08(140.53)	65-535	.265	0.29

Table 6.5

Figure 6.7 presents the frequencies for mean age of the pooled sample. Age is calculated in years at the time of random assignment. The frequencies are positively skewed with the highest values just below the mean (T group $M=31.03$, $SD=8.47$; C group $M=30.78$, $SD=8.11$). This is unsurprising and reflects the age distribution in HMPS prisons at June 2013 where almost half of adult male inmates were aged between 25 and 39 years ($N=38,643$ or 46%) (Berman & Dar, 2013).



Tables 6.6 and 6.7 present the details of the 'Age' variable for the pooled sample and for individual prisons.

Age at R/A								
	T group	M(SD)	range	C group	M(SD)	range	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
All prisons	N = 225	31.03(8.47)	21.3-65.5	N = 231	30.78(8.52)	21.3-65.6	.811	0.09

Table 6.6

Age at R/A								
	T group	M(SD)	range	C group	M(SD)	range	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Prison 1	N = 59	31.24(8.93)	22.1-56.3	N = 57	29.35(6.60)	21.6-48.0	.196	0.23
Prison 2	N = 52	32.47(9.34)	21.6-65.6	N = 55	30.69(8.09)	21.8-52.8	.292	0.22
Prison 3	N = 22	30.84(8.91)	21.8-55.4	N = 22	33.14(10.93)	21.6-57.5	.448	-0.23
Prison 5	N = 54	28.16(6.78)	21.3-48.5	N = 59	35.70(7.11)	21.3-48.0	.560	0.20
Prison 6	N = 10	34.10(6.71)	24.3-45.9	N = 12	36.84(11.53)	21.3-54.4	0.515	-0.28
Prison 7	N = 2	28.47(0.59)	28.0-28.9	N = 2	35.70(14.75)	25.3-46.1	.560	24.88
Prison 8	N = 26	32.31(8.09)	22.4-50.0	N = 24	33.64(10.41)	21.7-61.1	.615	-0.14

Table 6.7

Challenges

Despite the practitioners' acceptance of the RCT design there were challenges. For example, in August 2011 a man assigned to the control group contacted the Chaplain at Prison 3 asking to withdraw from the experiment. His sentence manager from the OMU was pressurising him to complete a STP. The Chaplain telephoned me for advice. I reassured him that it was proper to resist this pressure if the man wanted to remain within the experiment and finish his sentence without completing a STP. Apparently he wanted to remain in the control group but was worried about his sentence manager's pressure. I asked whether he could be accommodated on the next course but the Chaplain said not as all places were filled. Additionally, I ascertained that his release date fell before the following ST course was due so he was unlikely to complete a course before his release. The man therefore remained in the experiment as a control. These circumstances

reinforced the integrity of the decision to keep the man in the experiment and the overall ethics of the methodology.⁹⁶

Sometimes ST courses were postponed. This was usually when there were insufficient volunteers to deliver them. Some prisons had a pool of volunteers, which included more than one tutor, but other prisons had the same people for each ST course. Once the Governor had approved the number of ST courses to be held for the forthcoming year they were timetabled by the Chaplain in liaison with PFEW. Tutors were not always a continuous part of this process. As tutors were responsible for organising the attendance of enough group facilitators, a victim, and any community guests as well as the paperwork for each course, they were not always ready in time for the scheduled ST course start date. When these postponements happened unexpectedly they increased the time between random assignment and the start of the next ST course.

I knew when courses were expected to start as I kept a list of each prison's STP schedule. However, I had not asked Chaplains to give me advanced notice of their intended research presentations. This was because each Chaplain fitted the presentation into their own prison regime and there was no standard protocol. An unfortunate consequence occurred when I went on holiday in September 2011. Two prisons recruited a batch of RCT participants and sent the names during my absence. Upon my return I randomised one batch in time for the ST course but was too late for the other prison. In the latter case all those men became a part of the third cohort. It was a mistake to have no knowledge of when research presentations would be held so, late in 2011, I asked Chaplains to inform me of their proposed dates. We missed no further opportunities to randomise cases.

During 2011 Prison 2 only held one research presentation before the Chaplain left. Following the original protocol, the new Chaplain (who was an in-house replacement) never assigned more than a few places on any ST course to RCT cases. As their batch comprised 42 cases, it took 11 months before all were randomly assigned. Therefore eight men were either released or transferred before they could be randomly assigned and a further four were non-compliant (see Chapter 7). None had asked to withdraw from the experiment and so I assigned all of the unrandomised men to the third cohort.

⁹⁶ No ST courses were possible at Prison 3 until June 2012 because there was no venue and because there were insufficient volunteers. By this time the prisoner concerned had been released.

Towards the end of 2011 I was informed that the Chaplain at Prison 2 was taking extended leave and wished to withdraw the prison from the experiment. I persuaded the Chaplain not to withdraw but, as there was no ST coordinator, there would be nobody within the Chaplaincy to administer any further ST courses until the vacancy was filled or the Chaplain returned. Consequently, although there would be no further ST courses for the foreseeable future, there would be no missed opportunities for recruiting cases. PFEW employed a ST coordinator at Prison 2 who, once all the formalities had been completed, held a further seven recruiting presentations taking the prison total to 111 randomly assigned cases.

Pinpointing exact release dates could be a challenge (Chandler et al., 2009; Roman et al., 2012) and did lead to non-compliance (see Chapter 7). Chaplains complained that they had no advance warning of early releases. The eligibility criterion relating to release date was meant to refer to the earliest date at which a prisoner could be released. Some prisoners with a determinate release date (at which time they must be released) also had a Home Detention Curfew (HDC) release date. The HDC date referred to an earlier date at which they *could* be released but not the date at which they *would* be released. Until March 2012 I had only experienced HDC dates affecting single individuals. However, Prison 1 held a research presentation which included several prisoners whose determinate release dates were beyond the eligibility criterion but whose HDC dates were within it. I was unsure whether to perform the random allocation including them and erred on the side of caution by only randomising men I was confident were eligible. As soon as possible, I consulted Professor Sherman who confirmed that we should use the earliest possible release date. However, this confirmation was too late for Prison 1's cases to be randomly assigned and I included them in the third cohort.

III. Conclusion

Once the concept of an untreated control group was accepted, the process of random assignment itself was always straightforward. It was the *recruiting* of cases which was most affected by operational concerns and which resulted in a lower than expected number of men invited to research presentations. Nevertheless, a satisfactory sample was randomly assigned (N=465). Where consenting men were not randomised I maintained a third cohort of cases as a comparison group.

Counterintuitively, holding more research presentations close to forthcoming ST courses worked better than less. Once the recruiting protocol concerned discrete batches only, it was necessary to negotiate the optimum point for random assignment.

Conducting blocked random assignment by trickle-flow recruiting was the only practical method of recruiting cases owing to the nature of the intervention being tested. This study demonstrates that it is possible to maintain the pipeline and produce cases but not without the extraordinarily willing cooperation of the front-line practitioners involved. The real challenge was accessing potential cases through research presentations. This was a multisite series of experiments and each prison had varying degrees of success in supplying cases. Placing a researcher at each site would likely have produced a larger sample more quickly but would have added substantially to the costs of the experiment.

In terms of random assignment, this experiment is well implemented with overall compliance of 92%. At the time of writing all men have been released and, although unconfirmed, PFEW STP records show 86% (N=198) men started a ST course and 98% (N=229) controls did not.

Chapter 7

Treatment Integrity

Random assignment is only the first step in maintaining the integrity of the experimental design. The next vital step is keeping the experimental and control treatments qualitatively different in practice.

(Petersilia, 1989:448)

In contrast to performing the random assignment and establishing its timing, managing treatment integrity entailed preparation, ongoing oversight, and involved the wider prison estate. The unstable prison population led to research participants' transfers and they had to be traced whenever possible. When men were transferred the destination prisons were never research sites. I had to inform staff at the receiving prison that a transferred prisoner was a part of the RCT because his sentence plan could conflict with his experimental condition. Chaplains were always my first point of contact.

In this chapter I first describe the prison environment and its I. threats to treatment integrity. This is followed by II. compliance with treatment as assigned, and measures taken to maximise it. Finally, III. I report that good treatment integrity was maintained in this experiment.

I. Threats to treatment integrity

At the very start of planning this experiment I was alerted to the problem of transfers, euphemistically described by Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) as 'churn'. From the outset men in both experimental groups were affected; one prisoner was transferred when he was halfway through a ST course. Although there was an electronic alert facility whereby an individual's record could be marked 'HOLD', this was often overridden by operational or security issues.

Chaplaincies were reactive and not proactive in communicating with prisoners, so were normally unaware of prisoners' movements. Therefore, as prisoners were moved without notice and without regard for 'alerts', I had to do my best to protect participants'

treatment as assigned. Ideally, Chaplains or ST coordinators would know that a man had been moved but if he was a control he would have no further contact with them. Therefore, unless they tried to contact him, it was unlikely they would know he was gone. During the first year of recruiting controls were supposed to complete Crime Pics II (CPII) questionnaires so absences were noticed. When CPII ended routine contact with controls ceased. Men in the treatment group were missed straightaway when they did not attend a ST session.

Summarising, there were two main problems; first, research participants could be moved without notice and Chaplains could be unaware of this; second, if Chaplains did discover prisoners were missing, they may not be able to trace them.

I always knew that a device to prevent controls completing ST courses in different prisons was necessary. This was because they were more likely to confound their experimental condition as they had to finish their sentence without completing a STP. Conversely, men assigned to treatment would be placed on a ST course close to the point of randomising. Therefore, no matter how long their remaining sentence, they would not confound their condition by not starting a ST course. There was no restriction on men attending other interventions except one that involved meeting a victim. This type of intervention was extremely rare within the prison estate and the most widespread was the STP. Moreover, rehabilitative interventions could be expensive and men who had already fulfilled the requirement for 'victim work' (those in the treatment group) were unlikely to be offered a similar intervention. If treatment cases missed a STP in the research site, completing one elsewhere would be fulfilling their treatment condition.

My original solution had been to create a form intended for inclusion in controls' paper records (msw6). When I learned that treatment group men had an equal chance of non-compliance, I adapted the form to provide a version for them (msw6b) (see appendix 4). The supporting authority would be a Governor-grade officer's or the Chaplain's signature. Chaplains were to send the appropriate version to their Offender Management Unit (OMU) in every case.

There was a similar form for controls (msw3) but it had a different function. It addressed the risk-averse response to RCT methodology (see Chapter 4) and was intended to shield

controls from compulsion to complete a STP. Known as the 'no detriment' form, it was substantially different from the msw6 and msw6b in that no research jargon was used, it employed HMPS jargon. Controls were given a copy of the 'no detriment' form but were not supposed to see the msw6 and msw6b forms.

Using forms was straightforward but I relied on offender managers being informed of an individual's part in the RCT and adhering to the condition assigned. Whilst this was not without obstacles in the research sites (see Chapter 6), in prisons without knowledge of the RCT maintaining treatment integrity was dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of the Chaplain and OMU.

Notwithstanding the effects of 'churn' and the hurdles caused by Chaplaincies' reactive mode, it was an advantage that the RCT operated through Chaplaincies. They were directly involved with the oversight of the STP and were used to filling sudden vacancies. Furthermore, the small, well-integrated staff meant that all were aware of the RCT and most were familiar with the STP (even though they were not involved in with administering it), the candidates for it, and the current waiting-list.

The most significant disadvantage was that Chaplains and their staff had limited access to the PNOMIS database, which exacerbated the effect of transfers and early releases. Once a prisoner left the prison the Chaplain could not access his record. Consequently, if a research participant was found to have left the prison he had to be traced through the OMU.⁹⁷ This was time-consuming. Effectively, men could leave the prison and the Chaplaincy would only find out if 'no trace' was returned in response to a record search. At the outset, when large batches were recruited, losses were noticed quickly because the Chaplain sought to dispose cases to successive ST courses (see Chapter 6 and below). Later, discovery was less certain.

Whenever Chaplains telephoned to say that men had been transferred, I asked them to send the appropriate transfer form (msw6 or msw6b) directly to the destination prison and telephoned the Chaplain there myself. Only one destination prison did not offer ST courses at that time. For the treatment group, transfers to prisons where no STP was

⁹⁷ Not all OMU staff had wider access to PNOMIS either.

available meant non-compliance. Equally, if the new prison offered ST courses it was necessary to prevent controls completing one. I knew that, should men in either group be transferred a subsequent time, non-compliance could result. I had to rely on the authority of the transfer forms to preserve treatment integrity unless I could trace a prisoner and contact the relevant Chaplain. Recruiting smaller batches close to the start of ST courses resolved matters in the short-term. Long-term issues remained because we were blind to prisoner movements (see below).

Threats to treatment integrity: known non-compliance

Treatment clashes

Although PFEW stipulated that no other prison activity should clash with prisoners' participation in STP courses, two confounded cases were attributable to a clash of interventions. One involved a transfer, the other occurred within the same establishment. At Prison 1 a treatment group case was transferred. I telephoned the Chaplain and the prison psychologist at the destination prison to alert them to his treatment condition. The prison did not offer the STP so the man could not attend a ST course. However, he had been transferred to a therapeutic wing where he could remain for up to two years. Although he would be expected to undertake 'victim work' this would not include meeting a victim. Treatment within that wing addressed issues surrounding addiction and substance abuse.

The other clash occurred at Prison 8 when a treatment case attended the first session of his ST course but was removed and placed on a RAPt programme. This is an intensive course for prisoners who have been substance abusers and was felt to be more appropriate for him at that time.

Systemic non-compliance

There were two systemic causes of non-compliance, transfers and Home Detention Curfew (HDC) releases. The treatment group was most affected because the ST course is oversubscribed in most prisons and not offered universally; therefore transferred men usually lost their place. Most cases were lost from Prison 2, when disposal of the first batch was slow (see Chapter 6), and Prison 3 when a ST course was delayed. I responded by adapting the protocol and asked Chaplains to recruit only enough men for forthcoming

ST courses; this reduced losses. As the STP was not completed at any prescribed or consistent time in a prisoner's sentence and we were blind to prisoner movements, violations of treatment as assigned were possible.

TRANSFERS – TREATMENT GROUP

Three men in the treatment group were transferred from Prison 2 before they could complete a ST course. Two men were in the first batch of 42 cases. One of them, transferred soon after recruiting, was randomised using sealed envelopes; the second, transferred in October 2011, was assigned using the Cambridge Randomiser (Ariel et al., 2012) (see Chapter 6). That initial batch was disposed to several ST courses and only one treatment case was placed on the course immediately following recruitment. As the ST coordinator was preparing for the next course six weeks later she noticed that two cases had left the prison. She contacted the OMU and found that one man had been transferred and another had been HDC released (see below). I telephoned the Chaplain at the receiving prison to explain this situation and he undertook to ensure that the man complied with the RCT. When Prison 2's Chaplain told me in October of the second transfer I repeated the process. The receiving Chaplain assured me that the man would comply.⁹⁸

In 2013 the third case, who had completed three sessions of a ST course, was transferred without notice. I contacted the destination prison and explained the situation to the Chaplain. Coincidentally there was a ST course in progress. We discussed the merit of having the prisoner start a completely new course or complete a half run course with men he did not know. The Chaplain preferred to maintain the impetus of the sessions already attended and assigned the man to the concurrent course. Thus he was compliant with treatment as assigned.

TRANSFERS – CONTROL GROUP

To my knowledge, three controls were transferred, one from Prison 2 and two from Prison 5. The man from Prison 2 went to a prison where I knew the STP was offered. I immediately contacted the receiving Chaplain who told me the man was awaiting a ST

⁹⁸ I telephoned the Chaplain later and he confirmed that both prisoners had completed ST courses.

course. I explained that he was a control who should not receive the programme. The Chaplain agreed to remove the man from their waiting-list.⁹⁹

In August 2011 I was informed that two controls at Prison 5 had left the prison. This was some time after their transfer and I could not trace them.

Although none of those cases started a ST course, when I checked PFEW records in January 2015, I discovered that four other controls had completed ST courses. Two had been transferred without my knowledge and two had completed courses in the research prison (see below).

EARLY RELEASE

Release dates were not always straightforward (see Chapter 6). Prisoners eligible for HDC release did not automatically *get* released. Initially I asked Chaplains to supply expected release dates and some did not seem to take HDC into account. Furthermore, the relevant dates shown in PNOMIS were not completely reliable but did indicate that men may be released earlier than expected.

Three prisons between them lost a total of seven cases through early release; three from the treatment group and four controls. Prisons 1 and 2 each had treatment group men released on HDC. At Prison 3 a treatment group man had disappeared from the prison by the time his ST course began. The ST coordinator could not trace him or find any record of his transfer so presumed he had been released. These three cases were non-compliant. The four controls released early were from Prison 1 (N=2) and Prison 2 (N=2). Their release should not have affected the RCT's internal validity as they did not attend any ST course.

To minimise these losses as much as possible, I added an eligibility criterion to the protocol; that men should have a minimum of 20 weeks left to serve from the anticipated start date of the ST course. I also requested that Chaplains and ST coordinators supply HDC eligibility dates (effective from June 2011). These measures reduced, but did not prevent, non-compliance.

⁹⁹ The man did not complete a ST course.

Participant non-compliance

Unexpected non-compliance occurred at Prison 1. Six men from the treatment group in the first batch refused to attend the next ST course. They did not ask to withdraw from the RCT but, despite the admonition of the Chaplain, did not wish to complete a STP.¹⁰⁰ The Chaplain said that he had not followed his usual practice of checking that men on the STP waiting-list still wanted to attend a course before he sent research invitations to the eligible men that he had identified. Usually only men who replied to his reminder would have been considered for a STP place.

The Chaplain told me that time pressure before the start of the relevant course plus the extra time required for the research presentation meant that eligible men were invited to the presentation before they had indicated their willingness to complete a STP. He believed that these men were trying to use the RCT methodology to avoid attending a course that they had no desire to complete. If assigned to the control group they would not have been required to complete a ST course and would have received the ‘no detriment’ form which gave a legitimate reason for not completing a recommended intervention. The ‘no detriment’ form would have masked their unwillingness to complete the ‘victim work’ element of their sentence plan.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the STP is not compulsory and PFEW requires that all participants are volunteers. The Chaplain ensured that all research invitations thereafter went to men who were willing to undertake the STP and that their willingness was confirmed at the presentation.

For this RCT any prisoner with a *strong* preference was advised not to participate (see Chapter 6). I recommended all Chaplains tell prisoners who ardently wished to complete a STP not to sign the consent form as a similar situation to that described above could arise. If men randomly assigned to the control group wished to complete a STP there was little that could be done to prevent it if they were transferred and did not declare their participation in the RCT (see below). Treatment integrity in this situation was dependent on the paper forms in men’s records. Even though, as a control, he would have been given

¹⁰⁰ The Chaplain said that their refusal would be noted in their sentence plans. It was normal practice to record non-compliance with recommended treatments and this procedure was unaffected by the RCT.

¹⁰¹ Sentence plans are designed to minimise and manage an offender’s level of risk (see Chapter 4). Offenders demonstrate their desire to address their offending behaviour by complying with recommendations in their sentence plan. The Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) system aims to ensure that prisoners who are compliant and cooperative have more privileges. As one Chaplain told me, “They would do left-handed cartwheels if we asked them to.”

a ‘no detriment’ form, a man wishing to confound his allocation would be unlikely to produce it. I had no measures available for ongoing sentence monitoring as this required global access to the PNOMIS database (see Chapter 8) or a prison officer with access performing regular searches on my behalf.

Threats to treatment integrity: unknown non-compliance

*Restorative justice initiative*¹⁰²

In June 2012 a potential threat to treatment integrity arose through a government policy involving restorative justice (RJ). There was a large, financial investment in training RJ conference facilitators (Newby, 2011) to provide victims with the means to meet their offender through a RJ conference. I discovered that STP ‘graduates’ would be targeted as candidates for conferences. A Governor had told me some months earlier that Prison 3 was involved in the pilot for the scheme and assured me that ‘graduates’ from their other victim awareness course would be the source of offenders. However, probation officers I met indicated that this was probably not the case.

The RJ initiative (and the government’s investment in it) was to train prison and probation staff as RJ conference facilitators and thereby increase RJ activity in criminal justice. The training schemes were rolled out across the whole of England and Wales. If STP ‘graduates’ were targeted for RJ meetings with their offenders then it was probable that RCT cases would be offered a RJ conference.¹⁰³ I relied on my agreement with the Governors and Chaplains at each research site preventing RCT participants being offered a RJ conference as it was a condition that they did not engage in interventions where they would meet a victim of crime. Whilst I had some control over cases’ time in custody I had none once they were released. (The RJ initiative included non-custodial offenders).

The pilot and the facilitators’ training was being monitored and evaluated by academics at another institution. To protect the experiment’s treatment integrity I contacted them. My concern was to identify any RCT cases in their data. They would have the names of all offenders (nationwide) who were offered or undertook a meeting with their own victim. I

¹⁰² The NOMS RJ Capacity Building Project. The final report was due in July 2014.

¹⁰³ I had seen prisoners express a desire to meet their own victim as a result of learning about RJ. One of the prisoners at a research presentation I attended was keen to meet his victim and saw the STP as preparation for that. I was therefore convinced that research participants would be willing to meet their own victims if an offer was made.

was assured that ‘my’ men would fall within their remit and that they would be identifiable. I would be unable to prevent such meetings once men had been released so I proposed a series of new variables for the RCT: ‘offered RJ’, ‘accepted RJ’, or ‘undertook RJ’. These variables suggested a related hypothesis; that the STP enhanced/did not enhance an offender’s interaction with RJ and may/may not dispose him to be a good candidate for a RJ conference.

The interface between these two research projects, the RJ evaluation and the RCT, caused an ethical dilemma surrounding the anonymity of RCT participants. Although men signed a consent form that provided for secondary research use, there was concern that this would not be appropriate unless men were involved in both evaluations. We resolved the issue by planning meetings when verbal comparisons between the two datasets could be made.¹⁰⁴

Ethics – a note

Three men were transferred from Prison 2 because they had gained category D status. Category D prisoners have the lowest security classification and can be detained in open conditions. For prisoners this means the possibility of working outside prison premises and more freedom of movement. Apart from release, category D classification is the goal of all prisoners. It was impossible to predict when a classification change might occur. It would have been unethical to object to the three cases being transferred when their status was lowered.

Non-randomised cohort

Some consenting prisoners were never randomly assigned. There were several reasons for this. Two were attributable to ‘churn’ and unclear release dates and one was miscommunication.

At Prison 2 a batch of 42 men volunteered for the RCT but their disposal to ST courses took months to accomplish. The Chaplain held no further research presentations throughout that period preferring to allocate small numbers of men to ST courses (see Chapter 6). Therefore, as successive ST courses drew near and the next small batch was

¹⁰⁴ Meeting dates had not been set by June 2015.

randomly assigned (taken in date order of release) some men from the original batch had been transferred or released. None of these men had asked to withdraw from the RCT so I kept them as a non-randomised cohort for comparison and separate analysis (McDougall et al., 2009a; 2009b). There was a total of eight cases.

At Prison 3 the entire first batch of six research participants disappeared within a period of two weeks. One was transferred and one released but the ST coordinator and Chaplain could not trace the other four men. None had been randomly assigned so I added the names to the non-randomised cohort.

In early 2012 I received a batch of cases from Prison 1. Many cases had two different release dates, the earliest of the two was the HDC release date (see Chapter 6). As I was unsure whether to randomise based on HDC dates alone, all cases with determinate dates outside 18months away were added to the non-randomised cohort.

Miscommunication on my part added another batch to this cohort. I had not asked Chaplains to notify me when they intended to hold their research presentations. Unfortunately Prison 2 and Prison 5 each sent me a batch whilst I was on holiday (see above). Thenceforward, I asked Chaplains to notify me of their intended presentations and, similarly, I notified them of any occasions when I would be unable to randomise cases.

This cohort increased again when a new ST coordinator at Prison 5 invited men already undertaking a ST course to participate in the RCT. He misunderstood the protocols and, because recruiting had been administered by a uniformed officer (who was on leave) and the Chaplain had not been involved, I had not met the coordinator to clarify the recruiting process satisfactorily.

The unrandomised cohort comprised all the above-mentioned men plus one man from Prison 6 whose earliest release date was outside the eligibility criterion (N=45).

II. Random assignment to release

Compliance

To maximise treatment group compliance randomisation was done as close as possible to the start of forthcoming ST courses (see Chapter 6). As shown in Figure 7.1 the duration of remaining sentence at random assignment was broadly similar in all prisons (M=253 days). Figure 7.2 presents the days between the start date of the ST course and release. Means are the combined number of days' sentence remaining divided by the number in each batch.

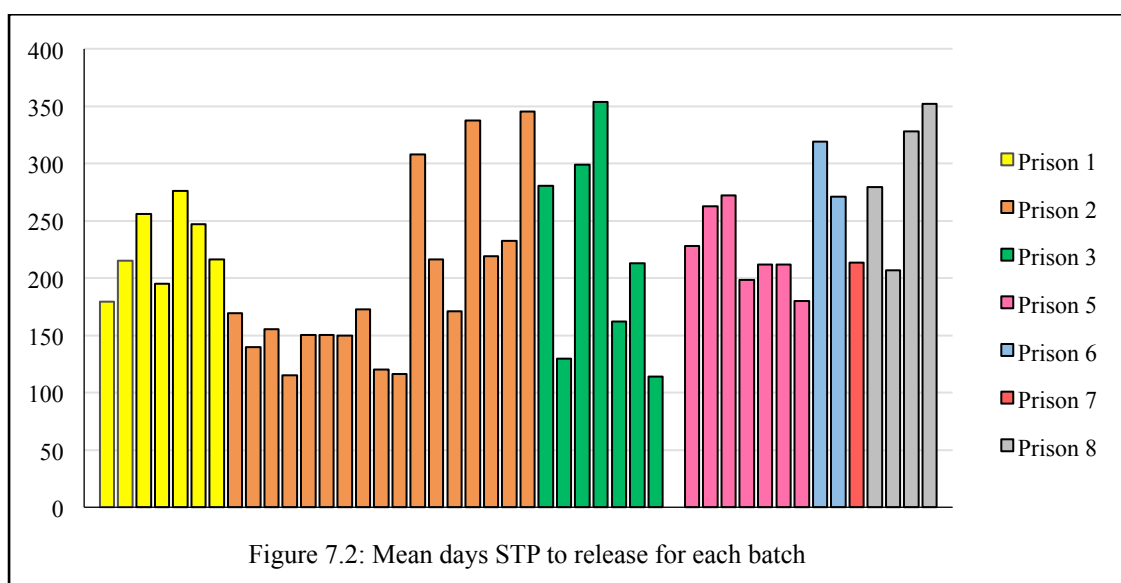
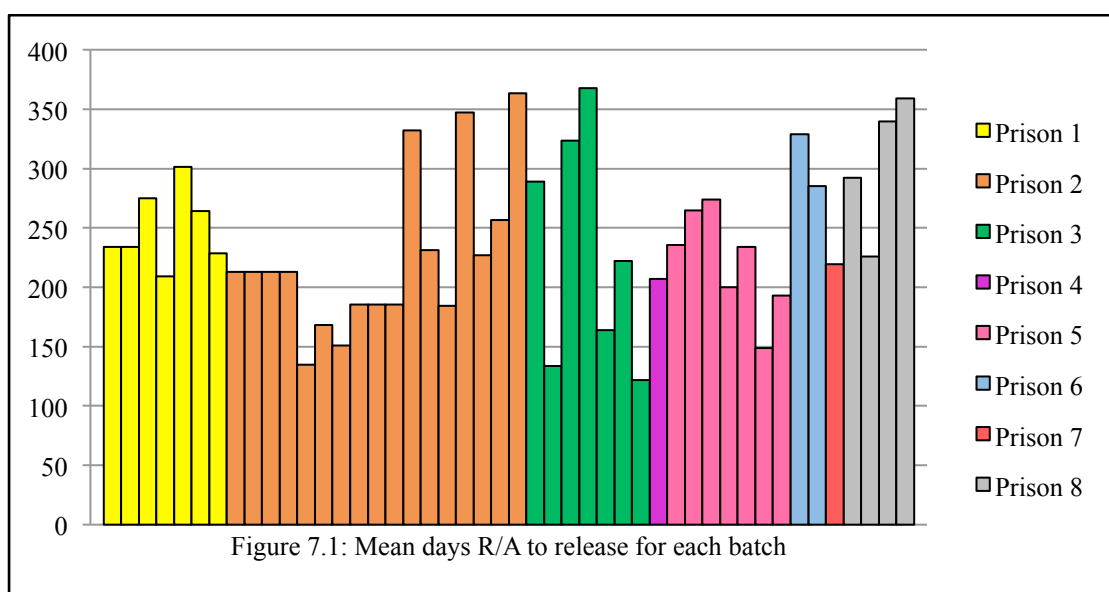
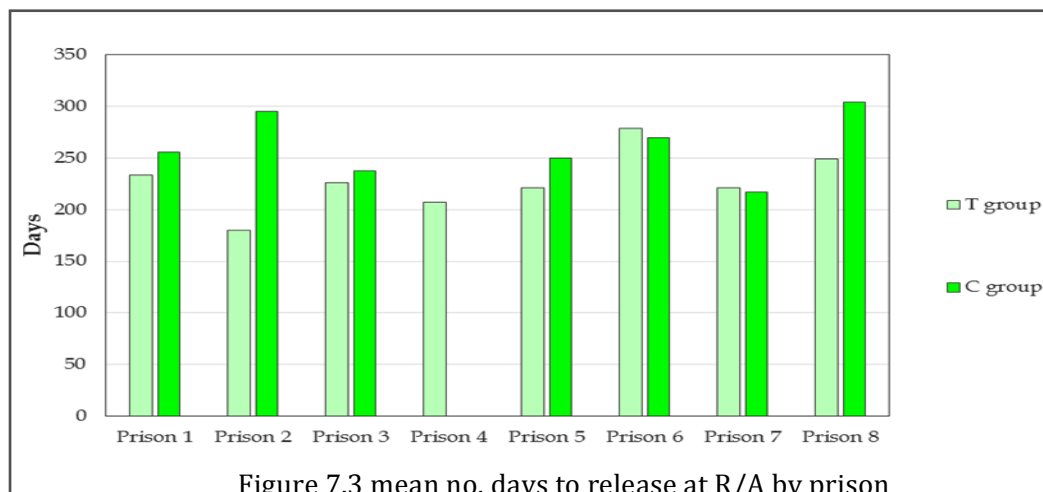


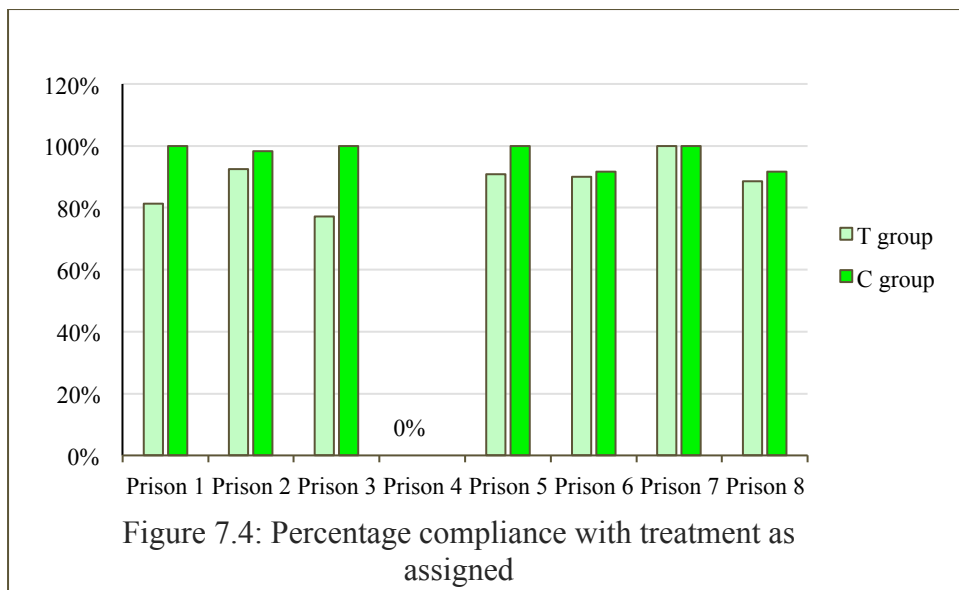
Figure 7.3 presents the mean remaining sentence at each prison for treatment and control groups.



To my knowledge 30 men assigned to treatment had not complied. However, it became apparent that some dropouts or non-completers had been omitted from course registers and some of these men (N=11) may have begun a course. Four men assigned to the control group had completed a ST course prior to release (see below). Figure 7.4 presents the percentage compliance by prison and table 7.1 shows the breakdown of compliance by prison and, where known, separates systemic losses from individual refusals and potential non-completers. Where men are known to have started a course they are counted as compliant.

Three men assigned to treatment from Prison 2 completed ST courses elsewhere, as did one man from Prison 3. However, they were compliant with treatment condition as three men completed a whole ST course in the new prison and one man finished sessions 4, 5, and 6 in the prison to which he was sent. Although these four cases were different from all other treatment cases (where treatment was completed) they were compliant.

Furthermore, the mobility situation reflects normal operational conditions relating to transfers but my intervention ensured the transferees completed STPs where otherwise they may not.



	T assigned	T complied	T released	T transferred	T not possible	T refused	T non-completer	C assigned	C complied	C non-complied	C non-complied own prison	C non-complied new prison	Attrition	%T compliance	%C compliance
Prison 1	59	48	1	2		6	2	57	57				1C	81%	100%
Prison 2	54	50	1				3	57	56	1		1	2T 2C	95%	98%
Prison 3	22	17	1				4	22	22					84%	100%
Prison 4	1				1									0%	
Prison 5	57	49					5	60	60				3T 1C	86%	100%
Prison 6	10	9					1	12	11	1		1		90%	92%
Prison 7	2	2						2	2					100%	100%
Prison 8	26	23		1	1		1	24	22	2	2			84%	88%

Table 7.1 Compliance to May 2015

Confirmed PFEW records showed that a total of 17 compliant men failed the ST course; one dropped out from Prison 1, one from Prison 3, five from Prison 5, one from Prison 7, one was transferred from Prison 1, and three from Prison 5 missed one or more sessions; The tutors’ registers for the remaining five men had not been retained therefore the reason for failure was unexplained at the time of writing. The consenting man at Prison 4 was unable to complete a course because there were last minute problems with the volunteer team and the course was postponed.

Prisons 1 and 2 experienced participant refusal and only Prison 7 had no overall losses from a tiny sample. A new ST coordinator whom I did not meet took over at Prison 5

leading to initial confusion about RCT eligibility protocols. Three ineligible men (according to PFEW criteria) were invited to participate and consented. When the mistake was realised the men were withdrawn from the ST course by the Chaplain. I deleted them from the RCT. At Prison 2 one man changed his mind and withdrew from the RCT.

The pooled sample showed good overall compliance with 86% men assigned to treatment starting a course and 98% controls not starting a course, see Figure 7.5.

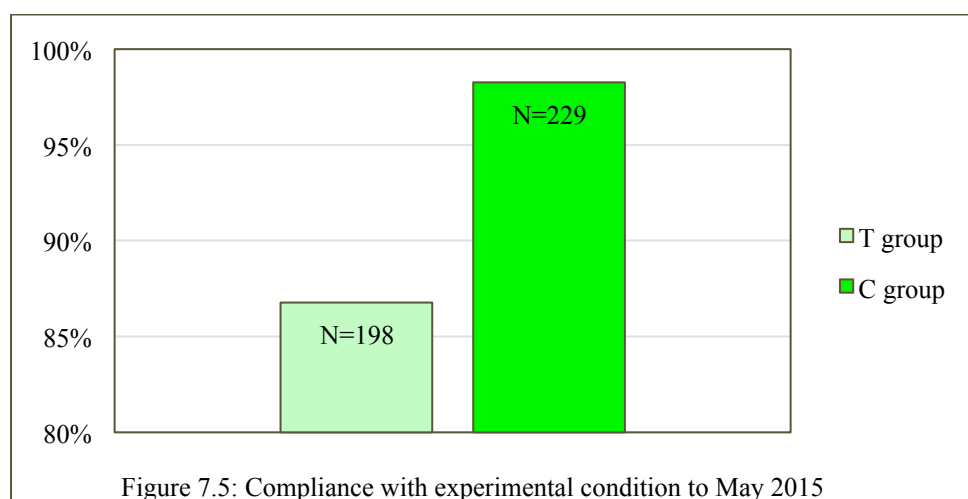


Figure 7.5: Compliance with experimental condition to May 2015

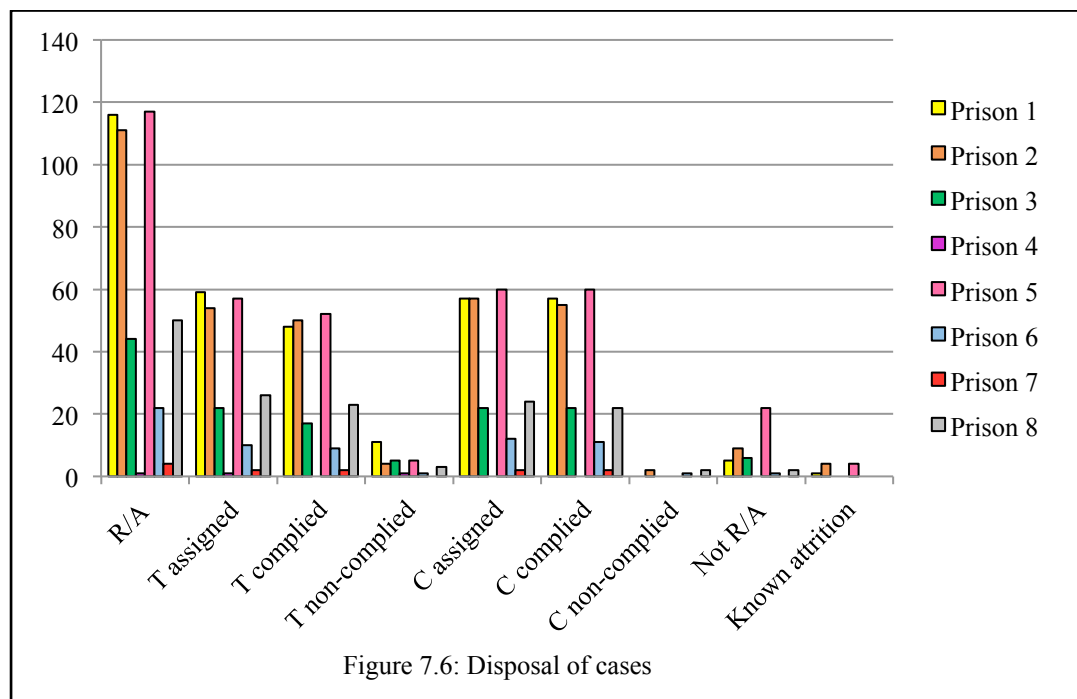
Case disposal

Table 7.2 shows the number of batches each prison recruited, the date of the last random assignment, and the percentage of the target randomly assigned. It includes full details of invitations sent, attendance, and individual disposals.

	No. batches	Last R/A	invitations	attended	consented	RA	% target RA	STP	STP done	STP not done	Control assigned	Control not complied	Cases not RA	Known attrition
Prison 1	6	27.12.12	228	173	121	116	100%	59	48	11	57	0	5	1C
Prison 2	8	31.1.14	244	130	120	111	95.7%	54	50	4	57	2	9	2T 2C
Prison 3	8	4.2.14	171	65	50	44	37.9%	22	17	5	22	0	6	
Prison 4	1	26.8.13	4	2	1	1	0.9%	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Prison 5	8	10.4.14	168	160	139	117	100.9%	57	49	8	60	0	22	3T 1C
Prison 6	2	29.5.12	28	24	23	22	19%	10	9	1	12	1	1	
Prison 7	1	9.2.13	4	4	4	4	3.4%	2	2	0	2	0	0	
Prison 8	4	2.1.14	78	56	52	50	43.1%	26	23	3	24	2	2	
Total	37		925	614	510	465	50.0%	231	198	33	234	5	45	5T 4C

Table 7.2 Research presentations and disposal of cases

Figure 7.6 illustrates all disposals.



By July 2015 all men had been released but no prison had a large proportion of their sample released for two years. Table 7.3 shows the mean number of days for each batch to progress from random assignment to release. It includes the date of the ST course to which cases were randomly allocated and the mean number of days between the start date and release. The fifth column shows the prison mean of days from random assignment to release and the last column shows the prison mean from STP to release. The first batch in Prison 2 was exceptional as the 42 cases recruited on 14th March 2011 were randomly assigned separately over a period of 11 months (see above).

	no. in batch	RA date	RA to release by batch	Prison Mean RA	STP date	STP to release by batch	Prison Mean STP
Prison 1	32	2.2.11	234	234	24.2.11	215	222
					22.3.11	179	
	15	7.7.11	275		26.7.11	256	
	16	21.12.11	209		17.1.12	195	
	12	16.3.12	301		10.4.12	276	
	20	16.6.12	264		3.7.12	247	
	21	27.12.12	229		8.1.13	217	
Prison 2	3	14.3.11	213	237	5.4.11	169	217
	10				17.5.11	156	
	3				28.6.11	115	
	4	4.8.11	135		9.8.11	151	
	8	19.9.11	151		20.9.11	150	
	2	27.10.11	186		1.11.11	173	
	4		186		3.1.12	120	
	12	15.12.12	332		8.1.13	308	
	7	11.3.13	231		26.3.13	216	
	15	19.6.13	184		2.7.13	171	
	12	24.8.13	347		3.9.13	337	
	14	28.10.13	227		5.11.13	219	
	17	14.12.13	257		7.1.14	233	
	Prison 3	8	21.6.11		289	244	
6		9.6.12	134	13.6.12	130		
13		15.12.12	324	9.1.13	299		
2		13.2.13	368	27.2.13	511		
1		22.4.13	164	1.5.13	162		
8		26.8.13	313	4.9.13	309		
6		4.2.14	122	12.2.14	132		
Prison 4	1	26.8.13	207		4.9.13		
Prison 5	30	26.4.11	236	236	4.5.11	228	230
	32	11.7.11	265		13.7.11	263	
	8	20.2.12	274		22.2.12	272	
	12	5.11.12	200		7.11.12	198	
	22	16.1.14	195		22.1.14	212	
	10	10.4.14	193		23.4.14	180	
Prison 6	11	7.4.12	329	307	17.4.12	319	295
	11	29.5.12	285		12.6.12	271	
Prison 7	4	9.2.13	219	219	15.2.13	213	213
Prison 8	11	12.10.12	292	310	25.10.12	279	297
	11	2.2.13	226		21.2.13	207	
	14	24.8.13	340		5.9.13	328	
	14	2.1.14	359		9.1.14	352	

Table 7.3: Mean number of days elapsed from random assignment to release and from first date of treatment to release by prison

III. Measuring treatment integrity

I last checked PFEW records in January 2015 when 19 men remained in custody; 13 treatment group and six controls. All 13 men in the treatment group had completed a ST course. The remaining six controls had not completed ST courses but there was a small

chance that they might. Once full PNOMIS data are available all participants' records will be searched together with a recheck of PFEW records to confirm all compliance figures.

PFEW

All measurements relating to the STP, its dose, the marking of workbooks, and awarding of pass certificates, were dealt with by PFEW. Tutors were not told who, if any, of the men in their courses was a research case.¹⁰⁵ All treatment integrity measurements relating to the treatment group; whether a man attended, how many sessions he attended, and whether he passed or failed, were collected routinely by PFEW tutors and retained at PFEW's head office. In January 2015 I collected the confirmed results for all ST courses that had been delivered in all prisons in the estate between February 2011 and September 2014.

I searched for all RCT participants' names as any *control group* names found in PFEW records indicated that a man had received a ST course when he should not have done. Conversely, any missing *treatment group* names indicated that a man had not completed a ST course. However, some tutors did not include negative values when completing their post-course administration. Sometimes if men dropped out they were not counted as starting the course. Dropouts could be distinguished from non-starters if tutors forwarded their registers (as they should) but, unfortunately, not all registers had been retained at PFEW head office.

As mentioned above I found four controls had completed a ST course; two in different prisons from their originating prison, two in the same prison. I attributed the latter case to the ST coordinator not fully grasping the protocol. He seemed to think that we were no longer interested in controls once they had been assigned. The two other men were examples of the transfer forms (msw6 and msw6b) not being sent, being lost, or ignored. Each man failed to use his msw3 'no detriment' form.

¹⁰⁵ In three prisons tutors were also the ST coordinators. Therefore, they may have delivered ST courses that included RCT participants that were known to them. However, workbooks and assessments are moderated by external moderators and course results are not material to final outcomes.

When consent forms were finally received three men had not given permission for criminal history searches. These men were included in adjudication analyses but eliminated from all post-release evaluation. One man provided an ambiguous consent form where he had crossed the 'yes' from the yes/no option. He may have meant the mark as a tick indicating consent or an elimination meaning no consent. One man had not consented. I treated them both as refusals missed by the Chaplains. These circumstances illustrated my dependence on accurate data from Chaplaincies.

PNOMIS

The PNOMIS database holds the electronic record of every prisoner. PNOMIS should confirm treatment integrity as interventions completed by prisoners are supposed to be recorded and stored in it. Research participants were not prevented access to any programme or intervention except those that involved meeting a crime victim. Details of all interventions completed by RCT cases will be retrieved and checked to confirm data supplied by Chaplains, ST coordinators and PFEW.¹⁰⁶

Summary

All results will be analysed on an 'intention to treat' basis (Colledge et al., 1999; Friendship et al., 2002; Hollis & Campbell, 1999; Sherman & Strang, 2004a; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). In June 2015 (unconfirmed) data showed that treatment integrity was high with 92% of cases treated as assigned and only nine cases lost. Non-compliance rates between the treatment and control groups were unbalanced as more treatment cases failed to start a ST course than controls completed courses that they should not have done. This will tend to underestimate any treatment effects (see Chapter 6).

The main causes of non-compliance were the unstable prison population and some individuals from Prison 1. At Prison 2 the effect of prison 'churn' was exacerbated by the protracted dispersal of the first batch recruited. Most non-compliance issues were met by requesting Chaplains to hold research presentations close to forthcoming ST courses and to confirm beforehand that men still wished to complete a STP.

¹⁰⁶ At the time of writing data sharing is agreed but staff shortage at NOMS has delayed providing them.

In both managing and measuring treatment integrity I had to rely on other people to provide information (Leff & Mulkern, 2002; Rawson et al., 2002; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012). When research participants were transferred I was dependent on paper forms being completed according to the protocol for proactive compliance. Otherwise I had to rely on Chaplaincy staff knowing that an RCT participant had left the prison and trace him retrospectively.

The accuracy of all stored data also depended the people who input them. However, random assignment meant that all potential error should be evenly distributed across both groups (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). A disadvantage of relying on retrospective data collection was that confounding was possible before I knew of it. In other words, I was unable to prevent treatment integrity being compromised unless I had advance warning. Had searches been possible contemporaneously I would have been less reliant on Chaplains and ST coordinators who themselves did not always have up-to-date details.

Conclusion

This RCT has good treatment compliance, in excess of the 60% level that often produces positive results (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Therefore it will be a valid test of the STP.

Chapter 8

Measuring Outcomes

An ideal outcome measure will be sensitive to important effects, reliable, in that it will return the same findings when participants are re-measured in the same circumstances, and valid, in that the outcome instrument will give us an accurate assessment of the actual outcome we wish to measure.

(Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008:147)

This thesis' primary task is to provide a detailed description of the intervention being evaluated and the implementation process required to conduct an RCT in English prisons. Although a well established, single-entity intervention that was oversubscribed seemed ideally suited for testing using an RCT, I underestimated the time necessary to prepare and implement a criminological experiment. Furthermore, using reconvictions after two years at risk as outcomes means that final results are particularly vulnerable to delays.

Reconvictions were always to be the primary outcome measure for programme effects. There was some evidence that the STP produced significant, positive, post-intervention changes to offenders' attitudes (Feasey et al., 2005; Feasey & Williams, 2009) but these findings were derived from before/after studies that are considered by some to be a weak methodology (Sherman et al. 1998; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Moreover, because prison conduct is an important challenge, I proposed to use adjudications as a pre-release outcome measure. Outcome measures had to be comparable as I did not expect each prison to have significant results and proposed to construct a 'forest graph' which should reveal any cumulative, but individually non-significant, effect (see Chapter 6).

In this chapter I describe the process that enabled the collection of reconviction and post-intervention adjudication data. All these data were stored in two, large, live databases, the Police National Computer (PNC) and Prison National Offender Management Information System (PNOMIS). All data were subject to the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003 and accessing them was difficult. Although these endeavours were done concurrently with establishing and managing the RCT, I describe them separately; first accessing I. the PNC

and II. PNOMIS. Final analyses are not possible until 2017 when all participants will have been released for two years. However, some interim results III. showing that participating in the STP has some benefit are reported next. I begin by describing the context and preparation involved.

Reconvictions as outcome

Although reconvictions cannot be relied upon as an absolute measure of offending (Friendship et al., 2001; Merrington & Stanley, 2007), they should not be ignored (Lloyd et al. 1994). Furthermore, random assignment distributes any limitations evenly between experimental groups (Farrington, 2003b; Shadish et al., 2002). Reconvictions were ideal outcome measures as they would be collected, stored, maintained, and supplied by an independent third party, the police and, in the case of adjudications, Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) (Boutron, Moher, Altman, Schulz & Ravaud, 2008; Sherman, 2010; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Nevertheless, accurate details of release, such as the date and any conditions applied, are necessary to make them meaningful.

The theoretical rationale for the STP falls within the restorative justice paradigm and I also planned to test the mechanics of change through systematic observations using interaction ritual chains theory (Collins, 2004), which has been associated with restorative justice (Rossner, 2011) (see Chapter 3). Other outcomes are available for research such as measures of cognitive change (MacKenzie et al., 2007), which can add depth to the dichotomy offended yes/no? Additionally, one can measure atmosphere and environmental conditions (McDougall et al., 2009a). Practically, however, administering the battery of questionnaires required for these outcomes was beyond the scope of this RCT.¹⁰⁷

Criminal histories and demographic data were central as I planned to compare pre-and post-treatment offending behaviour in light of known criminogenic factors. Additionally, detailed criminal histories would provide a much richer dataset (Cook et al., 2002; Cook et al., 2012). Although not directly concerned with the primary outcomes, demographic data were important in attempting to answer the *how*, *why*, or *for whom* questions often

¹⁰⁷ I considered interviewing a subgroup of participants (even preparing questionnaires). Additionally, men's reaction to being asked to supply their address (see Chapter 6) meant that they may have declined to participate in the RCT if there was any possibility of post-release follow-up.

raised by critics (and supporters) of RCT methodology (see, for example, Gondolf, 2008; Hedderman, 2004; Hollin, 2008; MacKenzie, 2012; Paluck, 2010; Sampson, 2010).

In 2007 I was told by a Home Office statistician that the words ‘criminal history’ must be specifically included in any consent offenders gave. I also learnt that permission to use data for ‘secondary purposes’ should make them available for other studies to which they may be relevant and important. Therefore, both phrases were included in the consent form, which was scrutinised by the NOMS National Research Council (NRC) when I applied to conduct the RCT.

These clauses permitted access to data necessary for two further outcome measures; first, to contrast any future offending with past behaviour to compare seriousness; second, to see whether findings suggested that the STP was more effective for any particular offence-type. My seriousness categories were; ‘more serious’, ‘less serious’, ‘same seriousness’ using tariffs and maximum permitted sentences as the measures (MacKinnell, Poletti & Holmes, 2010). Knowing research participants’ past offence types would be helpful for cost/benefit calculations using published Home Office costings.

The STP is not aimed at any particular type of offender though Prison Fellowship England and Wales (PFEW) consider it especially suitable for prisoners with no direct victim. Therefore, gathering offending data offered an opportunity to test for positive and negative effects related to offence type and whether there was any differential effect for men with no direct victim. This would add to our knowledge of restorative justice (RJ) where evidence already suggests it is more effective for violent offenders (Sherman, Strang & Woods, 2000; Sherman & Strang, 2007). Interim results look promising.

Collecting these data myself was essential: any alternative would have required resources from the police and HMPS, which were unlikely to be offered.

I. PNC

Local approaches

I began the official process of accessing PNC data on 19th July 2010 when I received an application form from the Police Information Assessment Process (PIAP). This had been

preceded by telephone conversations as well as an informal approach to Cambridgeshire Constabulary on my behalf by Professor Sherman. I intended to perform searches myself using a PNC terminal at a local police station.¹⁰⁸

The Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire and local chief superintendent had given verbal permission for local access. Nevertheless, I pursued the application with the PIAP to ensure that I had proper authorisation. Following more telephone conversations with PIAP personnel, I submitted the application at the end of August 2010, accompanied by copies of the Email exchanges granting my permission to use a local PNC terminal. I also supplied the University of Cambridge's data protection identification number and data protection officer's details. The board meeting at which my application was considered took place on 14th September 2010. On 7th October I was notified that PIAP permission was unnecessary and that I should continue to pursue local PNC access since this was already approved.

On 6th December 2010 I went to a local police station to meet the police officer responsible for arranging my PNC use. I took copies of the NRC approval, my HMPS security clearance, the application to PIAP, and the RCT consent form. At the officer's request I subsequently sent the original Emails containing my HMPS security clearances, the original research proposal to NRC, and a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of Cambridge and Prison Fellowship England and Wales (PFEW). Our discussions were positive and I was promised a place on the next training session for PNC users scheduled for February 2011. It was not to be.

By March 2011 I had not heard from Cambridgeshire Constabulary. I attempted to check that my PNC training was still on schedule but heard nothing for two months. Coincidentally, I met a senior officer from Cambridgeshire Constabulary at a conference on 1st June. I explained the situation and she agreed to investigate.

On 13th July 2011 I met a different police officer. The sergeant who was going to organise my PNC training had been transferred. I discovered that the Chief Constable had retired. The Deputy Chief Constable and local senior officers supported my PNC access

¹⁰⁸ I was familiar with searching PNC records, having carried out many searches when I was a serving police officer several years earlier.

but the force was adopting a new computer system that I would not be allowed to use. The ensuing discussion centred on a police officer executing searches and how this could be managed within the provisions of the Data Protection Act. The officer had contacted PIAP before we met.

I encountered a non-altruistic attitude towards the RCT as I was required to demonstrate any specific benefit the findings from the RCT would provide for Cambridgeshire Constabulary. None of the research sites were within the force area and I had no knowledge of any research participants' likely geographical connection to Cambridgeshire. Therefore, I emphasised the general benefit to society if the RCT provided evidence of a rehabilitative effect remarking that the STP was available to offenders within the force area.

I began the application process again following discussions with PIAP, submitting a renewed request on 25th July 2011 almost a year after the original. I updated the local police officer of my progress and actions. This application was to be considered by PIAP on 24th August 2011. On 5th September an Email arrived telling me that my application had not been discussed by the PIAP board because it remained a local matter. I was told that wherever the searches were made, I would not be permitted to do them myself. Finally, on 26th March 2012 I received Cambridge Constabulary's verdict; I would not be allowed by any means to access any PNC data locally.

National approach

Following this disappointment, I took a national approach. I reviewed the issues with Professor Sherman and other Ph.D. colleagues and discovered that a bulk search facility was available for PNC searches. I was introduced to senior personnel at the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Criminal Records Office (CRO), based in Hampshire, at the end of March 2012. I explained progress to date and outlined the data I would require. CRO personnel pointed out that any data inaccuracies would be system-wide and, so long as I prepared my search terms, data retrieval would be as good as I could do myself. On 24th May 2012 I went to Winchester, where the PNC was based, for further discussion.

The meeting went well but there were other issues concerning security. I discovered that each police force ‘owns’ the data it inputs into the PNC, exchanging it with outside bodies is not always straightforward and is strictly protected. (This partially explained Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s concerns with the RCT participants not being connected to them.)

All further communications with ACPO, CRO were conducted via Email and finalising the arrangements for PNC searches took a year until June 2013. There were questions of data security and I needed access to secure Email if that was the approved data exchange method. ACPO, CRO proposed to supply all search results in hardcopy for me to collect personally or to use my secure HMPS Email account (see below). In June 2013 the Institute of Criminology (IoC) provided Ph.D. students with a secure Email account using the Criminal Justice Secure Email service (CJSM). The security level satisfied ACPO, CRO and I opened an account so that all data could be exchanged electronically.

Each RCT case had an anonymous identifier (his case number) so that results could be sent to me anonymously. I had to provide a scanned copy of every signed consent form and, where possible, every RCT participant’s PNC number (see below). Each search batch would be no greater than 100 men. I anticipated that search requests would be at six-month intervals. I prepared two spreadsheets, one showing the data required from the PNC, one listing the search terms I would supply. I sent these to ACPO, CRO; the data were the source of the variables to be used in later analyses.

I had to provide PNC numbers which had to be retrieved from PNOMIS so there was more delay. Chaplains and ST coordinators had not sent PNC numbers. Moreover, prisoners’ records did not always include their PNC number. I had every case’s prison identification number but these were not all PNOMIS identifiers (see below). PNOMIS numbers were not recorded in the PNC so could not be used as a search term.

It transpired that not all Chaplains had followed the protocol to send signed consent forms to PFEW head office.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, I collected all available forms and asked Chaplains to

¹⁰⁹ This arrangement sounds careless and imprecise but it was very difficult for ST coordinators and Chaplains to ensure that tutors took the consent forms at the end of any ST course. Most prisons ‘close’ at 5pm and all civilian staff and volunteers had to leave the prison at that time. Tutors collated all the paperwork, ensured prisoners were collected by prison officers, and arranged to have all group facilitators, the victim, and any community guests safely escorted out of

find the missing ones. Meanwhile, by October 2014, I had all but three individuals' PNC number. However, the police were under severe budgetary strain and had no resources to conduct PNC searches. This was resolved when the Jerry Lee Centre for Experimental Criminology through Professor Sherman agreed to reimburse their costs of £5,000. The missing consent forms were still a barrier to 100% retrieval of PNC data until, in March 2015, having checked their legal status, Hampshire police waived the requirement for sight of consent forms.

Even though some RCT participants remained in custody, possessing reconviction data was an important step and would be helpful in checking data accuracy. Unfortunately, my easily searched spreadsheets were not used and I received scanned copies of all PNC printouts. At the time of writing I had no accurate release details from PNOMIS (such as whether men were electronically tagged) to make reconviction data meaningful.

II. PNOMIS

The prison estate in England and Wales communicates via its own intranet, a secure service, called Quantum. A user ID is required to login. Within Quantum is the PNOMIS database, a live system holding prisoners' records and through which their movements within the prison estate are logged. PNOMIS became 'live' across the estate as I was implementing the RCT replacing the earlier Local Inmate Database System (LIDS). PNOMIS enabled a lifelong, unique identification number (NOMS number) to be assigned to prisoners whichever prison they were in and whenever they returned to one of HMPS's prisons. Under the LIDS system prison identity numbers were assigned at each establishment and for each period of incarceration.

I applied for Quantum and PNOMIS access early in 2011, completed my training, and was granted access on 27th April 2011. This coincided with recruiting the first research participants. Quantum was only accessible from prison premises so practising my training was sporadic. Prison Governors 'owned' the data in their prisons in the same way as

the prison. Moreover, Chaplains and ST coordinators were not always present because Chaplains could be elsewhere in the prison and ST coordinators may not be working on the day that ST sessions took place. As tutors were not directly involved with the RCT they would not necessarily know that consent forms were awaiting their collection. Tutors could not have consent forms before ST courses finished because they had to be securely stored and could only be sent back to PFEW with the rest of the course bundle. These circumstances combined to make what had seemed a sensible and secure arrangement somewhat complicated.

police forces 'owned' theirs so they had to authorise my access to 'their' data. Prison datasets were divided into 'cases' and users were only permitted to access information necessary for their role within the prison. For example, Chaplains and ST coordinators could not always gain access to the same 'cases' as each other. Additionally, once a prisoner had left the prison his record could only be accessed by officers with special authorisation, such as offender managers. It was the receiving Governor's responsibility to grant access to that prisoner's PNOMIS record as he now 'owned' it.

Chaplains sent me limited details of each RCT case because they were only intended to identify them and confirm their eligibility on release date. Chaplains did not provide any demographic details or data for other variables. These data were stored on PNOMIS and I intended to collect them during my prison visits. With access granted early in the RCT, I expected data retrieval would be straightforward but it was not.

PNOMIS was designed to confine searches to users' authorised areas only so the system would return a 'no trace' response if a prisoner had been released or transferred. Thus, if a man I was searching for was not on the premises of the prison where I had the Governor's permission to access records, information was not available. As the RCT was based in eight prisons, I needed eight authorisations to access Governors' data. Some Governors were reluctant to allow direct access offering the acceptable alternative of supplying the details I requested.

Searches were impossible whilst I was on prison premises for other purposes because computer terminals were not always free. Also, none of the research sites were close to the IoC (the nearest was 60miles away) so collecting data was expensive in travel and time terms. Retrieving PNOMIS data more locally was the solution.

On 16th February 2012 I contacted the Chaplain at a prison closer to Cambridge. I outlined the RCT methodology and the reason that I wanted access to PNOMIS at his prison. I said that I would retrieve data myself, that I already had a Quantum user ID and permission to access PNOMIS. I forwarded copies of my NRC permission, the original, individual Governor's authorisation for PNOMIS access, and my security clearance Emails explaining that I needed global access to PNOMIS because I had to track research cases when they were transferred. I emphasised the importance of accurate release details;

for instance, whether participants were electronically tagged or subject to supervision. The Chaplain was very positive and would let me know his Governor's decision. However, there was a complication caused by misunderstanding the term 'global'.

Global access

My use of the term 'global' referred to PNOMIS records for the entire prison estate (see below). However, because PNOMIS records were parcelled into discrete sections and the Quantum system was managed by individual prison IT managers, 'global' access had a local meaning. This referred to the 'global' circulation at a single prison. At one prison I had been granted 'global' access. This access comprised Email lists intended for all on-site staff which were irrelevant to the RCT. For example, I received information on daily prisoner movements and staff yoga classes. I tried unsuccessfully several times to stop this. Every change of user access had to be done from a location within the intranet, authorised by the Governor and, subsequently, implemented by the local IT manager. As I was not on prison premises long enough, nor consistently enough, I could not get my name withdrawn from these circulation lists.¹¹⁰

Email communication was complicated because the people who could resolve the issue were unfamiliar with me and the RCT and they generally tried to contact me via my HMPS Email address. Owing to the limited storage capacity I had and the little opportunity I had to clear my inbox (it had to be done on HMPS premises) my inbox filled to capacity within days and rejected all further Emails. Although I knew this was happening, I could not contact the necessary people unless I was on prison premises and they could not contact me unless they used my university Email address. When I had telephone conversations with Quantum managers or local IT managers I was frequently baffled by jargon.¹¹¹ The acronyms and prison service terminology used were impenetrable to someone unfamiliar with HMPS argot. People tried to be helpful but I was resolutely retained on the local, global circulation list.

¹¹⁰ The IT manager could not do anything without prior authorisation from the Governor. Therefore I had to contact the Governor, or his secretary, before I contacted the IT manager and they were rarely available on the same day in that order.

¹¹¹ Quantum managers were not local IT managers and did not grant access to the system. My experience was that they resolved problems arising from issues such as forgotten passwords. They had an overview of user access but all authorisations were dealt with locally. Therefore, they could not override decisions (such as receiving Emails from the circulation list) authorised by a Governor.

Local office

Following several months' communication with the local prison's Chaplain, I was allowed to use a room as an 'office'. On 10th January 2013 I went to the prison, met the Chaplain, and was introduced to the civilian staff who oversaw bookings for the room. The provision was superb; I had exclusive use of their IT Training Suite. This room was outside the secure area so I could come and go unescorted and without restriction. As well as a PNOMIS computer terminal, there was a direct line telephone which I could use. I scheduled 12 visits over four weeks. The only condition imposed was that the room had to be vacated at 5pm when civilian staff left and the sector was locked.

I began collecting RCT participants' PNOMIS data. All the uniformed and civilian staff were patient, helpful, and friendly as I became familiar with PNOMIS's idiosyncrasies. The IT manager was invaluable in unravelling the mysteries of true, 'global' access. Additionally, I was able to have my mobile telephone and computer with me.

Access to data

PNOMIS IN USE

I arrived to begin data collection on 16th January 2013 having been told that my 'global' access was arranged. This was when I realised that 'global' had another meaning. No RCT cases were imprisoned at that prison and my PNOMIS 'global' access had been set up as though they were. Further, the Quantum system logged me in as though I was at Prison 6 (where I had local 'global' access) not the prison I was sitting in. As I attempted my first searches, I discovered that the 'global' access I had been granted was to the 'office' prison's local data and PNOMIS caseload, not the whole prison estate as I expected. I spent the rest of that day in face-to-face and telephone conversations with the IT manager as we attempted to clarify my needs and arrange true 'global' access.

It took two days to return my Quantum account to one of the research prisons and remove it from the 'office' prison. I resumed data retrieval. I continued to receive 'global' Emails from Prison 6 but I could no longer access their caseload. It was lost when my Quantum login details were changed. I could search PNOMIS for Prisons 1, 2, and 3 cases where my access was already arranged. This represented over 150 individuals. Simultaneously, I

continued my dialogue with the IT manager as she pursued the PNOMIS global access on my behalf.

Many men had already been released and, although I had their name, prison number, and date of birth, my searches retrieved a 'no trace' response. Records of any research participant at a prison where the Governor had not granted access were not available to me.

My thoughts concerning data accuracy were confirmed. A record was returned for a prisoner whose details I did not recognise. I contacted the Chaplain at the research site and we established that I had been sent the wrong NOMS number. Letter Y had been substituted for a V. (All NOMS prison numbers are: letter, number, number, number, number, letter, letter; that is, A3456BC).

Visits to the 'office' prison were productive and I collected demographic and offence-type data for many RCT participants. However, I could not collect complete details as I had no access to some areas of their prison's caseload. Additionally, some details were missing and some were extremely confusing such as significant dates. For example, some prisoners seemed to have been sentenced to several terms of imprisonment at different times but each term coincided with the current period of incarceration. This situation arose because a man may have been convicted of several unconnected offences at different courts (or the same court at different times) resulting in a period of imprisonment commencing before all cases had been tried. He would have returned to court from prison for the hearing of other offences. Each period of imprisonment was listed on his PNOMIS record but, without familiarity with HMPS jargon and the relevant acronym (such as LED (licence expiry date) or SED (sentence expiry date)), it was difficult to decipher which dates were relevant to the RCT. Furthermore, some terms of imprisonment appeared to have expired but the man was still detained and I was unable to deduce a reason for this from the records available to me.

My speed increased but progress was only possible at PNOMIS's pace, which was extremely slow. I had been shown how to collect bulk data for some variables and how to collect summaries of an individual's prison record. Bulk searches involved inputting the prison code, choosing the correct category and subcategory from a list, and receiving the

response. These searches returned details of that prison's entire prison population at that date. I then had to scroll through the list checking for RCT participants. The quickest way to do this was to save the list and Email it to myself as a protected attachment. It was then available for me to check later when I was away from prison premises.¹¹² Bulk searches were not available for all variables so I also searched individual's records.

Individuals' summarised records could be retrieved using their NOMS number as the search term. Many returned a 'no trace' result, others partial results, and a few complete results.¹¹³ Searches took so long that I timed them. Each 'no trace' result took between 12 and 15 seconds. All other searches, regardless of whether partial or complete, took approximately 2½ minutes.

None of the summarised searches yielded all the data I required so I checked individuals' PNOMIS live record. This allowed broader search terms as one could input prison number, name, date of birth, or a combination into the search page. This system was much slower as every page was accessed separately, acronyms were used, some details were not available to me, and it employed a series of drop-down menus that were not always clear. Furthermore, changing the page display followed a protocol which took a while to master.

INFORMATION ASSURANCE

During this time the IT manager pursued my application for global access. I completed an application form that she submitted. The RCT went beyond the level of individual Governors. On 24th January 2013 I received an Email from the IT manager together with an Email trail including the people involved in deciding my level of access. I would not be granted global access "no matter [who] writes in requesting it". This was an oblique reference to the CEO of NOMS's support for the RCT plus that of the NOMS intervention commissioners. I was at an impasse but the IT manager suggested I contact the PNOMIS Information Assurance to discuss matters as they had made the 'no' decision.

¹¹² My time in prison premises was most efficiently used in retrieving data from PNOMIS. Cleaning and sorting data was most efficiently done at the IoC where I had 24-hour access to a secure computer.

¹¹³ The search system informs the enquirer if the full record is available.

I telephoned Information Assurance and was given the name of someone from the Change and Information Communication Technology Directorate (CICT) who could help. On 11th February 2013 I contacted this person who already knew the background circumstances. Personal access to the records of every prisoner in the prison estate would not be granted as it was allowed to very few prison service personnel in very restricted circumstances. This safeguarded data against unauthorised release to inappropriate people, for example the press. Additionally, restricting access helped to prevent PNOMIS from becoming too slow; it was “liable to clog up [as the] search engines for finding other information is [*sic*] long” (source: Email communication).

There were concerns with the permissions covered by the consent form (msw2). Although prisoners had permitted access to their criminal histories, this permission did not *explicitly* include demographic details like marital status. Nevertheless, there was a genuine desire to resolve issues and assist the RCT. It would be discussed within the Department and a decision made about how data would be provided. I submitted another application for a ‘new report’.

This process involved completing an official application form, a ‘business case’, and supplying details of the data I requested. Guided by literature I tried to anticipate the likely important variables such as risk assessment score (McDougall, 2009b) or prison visits (Duwe & Clark, 2011) and prepared a spreadsheet including every variable relating to a prisoner’s time in custody that I proposed to use categorising each variable as; 1=vital; 2=very important; and 3=important and relevant. Each variable had an argument validating its inclusion. The overall justification was that qualitative data can help us understand *how* a programme works, shed new light on quantitative findings, (Hollin, 2008; MacKenzie, 2012; Paluck, 2010) and “[create] a large, well documented database that can be used to address questions beyond those that were the original focus of the initiative” (Cook et al., 2002:43). I submitted the application on 20th February 2013 for it to be discussed on 4th March 2013.

On 7th May 2013 I received an Email informing me that I would shortly be contacted by a NOMS analyst from the NOMS Live Service Reporting Department. I eventually signed a 'data sharing' agreement that was ratified by the NOMS legal department in July

2014. This assured me that all the data I had requested would be supplied with permission for 20 years' retention. Nevertheless, I would have to wait for data to be provided.

III. Interim results

Data collection

I had two available variables for all study participants, age and expected remaining sentence (see Chapter 6). Additionally, I had data from systematic observations of STP sessions but at the time of writing I had no outcome data with which to correlate them. Collecting other quantitative or qualitative data requiring interviews or administering questionnaires was beyond the scope of this RCT. By May 2015 I had only received participants' PNC numbers and minimal information on adjudications—date reported and whether proved—from NOMS. I knew individuals' total adjudication score but these were not meaningful without full sentence-length details.¹¹⁴

Between February 2011 and March 2012 Crime Pics II (CPII) questionnaires were routinely included in the STP (see Chapters 3 & 4). Controls were also required to complete them. All completed questionnaires were sent to PFEW head office, analysed, and the scores retained for me. In February 2015 I completed some unfinished analyses and collected all CPII data. Before and after responses were available for 77 individuals from the 2011 to 2012 cohort. Participant unavailability, or lack of time or manpower, was most commonly given as reason for the low response rate.

In November 2014 I became aware of a Ministry of Justice (MoJ) department set up in April 2013, the Justice Data Lab (JDL). Its rationale was to provide “a key mechanism to improve research and evaluation capability for organisations delivering offender services by allowing access to high-quality re-offending data” (JDL, 2014:9). I still had no reconviction or detailed PNOMIS data so I enquired with the JDL whether they could provide RCT participants' one-year reconviction outcomes for those released by December 2012.

The JDL agreed and I prepared a dataset comprising all cases released before 1st January 2013 (N=194 randomly assigned; N=25 nonrandomised). I discovered several errors in

¹¹⁴ I knew the expected release dates but had no idea when participants' sentences had begun.

the original data sent by the prisons and contacted the relevant Offender Management Units for corrections (these were mostly typographical errors in NOMS numbers). I sent the cleaned dataset to the JDL in December 2014; they expected to provide results by April 2015. This seemed the most promising source of interim outcomes.

Data analysis

JUSTICE DATA LAB

The JDL produced a draft analysis in April 2015. However, there had been some miscommunication about their plans to publish a report on my data before I was able to accept their results. I knew that all their reports were anonymous and that they used matching from MoJ administrative records to provide controls. Nevertheless, I expected a one-year reconviction analysis for my treatment and control groups together with matched controls for both. The draft report reduced my sample substantially because, according to their administrative records, the eliminated men had no identifiable custodial sentence at the time they were randomly assigned (the relevant start date that I provided).

I had no idea which men had been dropped which rendered their analyses unacceptable because eliminating men from a randomly assigned sample could introduce serious bias. Following negotiations the JDL agreed not to publish their report on their website (although they continued to hold my dataset) and I agreed not to use their figures.¹¹⁵

ADJUDICATIONS

With the JDL option removed, I renewed attempts to obtain the data promised in the data-sharing agreement mentioned above. As that NOMS department had had a 50% staff reduction and the manager had just returned from secondment elsewhere, all data were still unlikely. I pressed for adjudication details. These were provided in May 2015.

I was supplied with the number of adjudications per individual, the date of the reported infraction, the sentence reference, and the finding ‘proved’.¹¹⁶ Without knowing the sentence length or date of incarceration it was impossible to assess the frequency of rule-infringement in relation to duration of time in custody. For example, counting frequency

¹¹⁵ A letter was sent to all prisons in England and Wales from NOMS instructing Governors not to fund any further ST courses as there was no evidence of its benefit in reducing reconvictions. This was a very worrying coincidence as it was sent just after I received the inaccurate JDL draft.

¹¹⁶ The sentence reference should refer to a single period of incarceration.

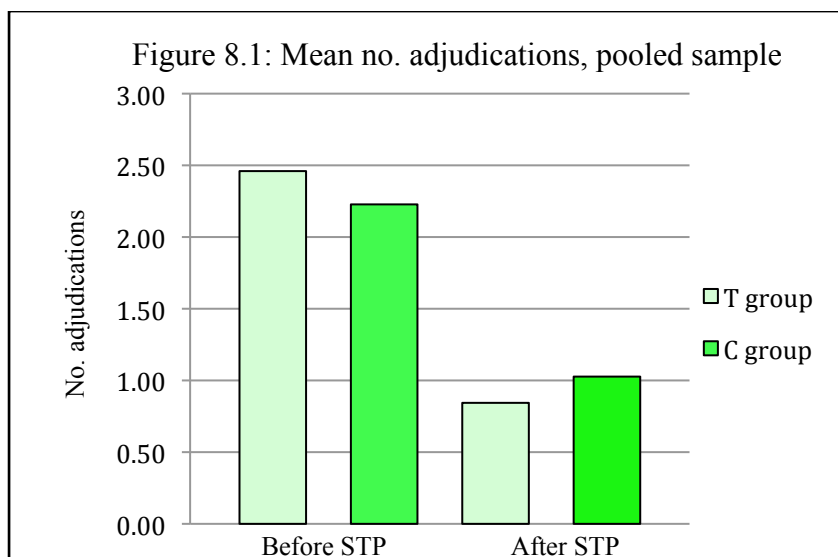
could make a man with two adjudications acquired in the last six months look better behaved than a man with six adjudications acquired in eight years. The first man offended recently, twice in close proximity and the second man could have offended in a variety of ways at any stage in his sentence. The second man may be worse behaved than the first but more data are required to tease out that explanation. Additionally, there is some evidence that prisoners' coping mechanisms and adjustment to incarceration can vary during their sentence consequently affecting their behaviour (Zamble & Porporino, 1990).

The sentence references were confusing as some appeared to continue beyond the release date originally supplied by Chaplains. Some adjudication dates also referred to dates beyond the original expected release. With no accurate release details it was difficult to make sense of these data. However, I was able to calculate the time-to-failure measured from commencement of the ST course to the report; that is, the date of the alleged offence.

ADJUDICATIONS RESULTS

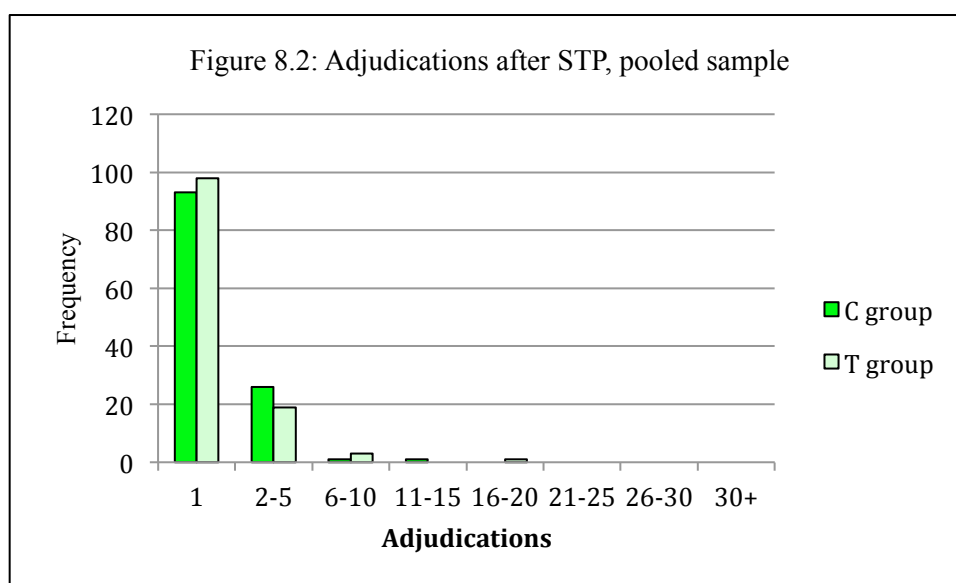
Overall, 207 from 465 randomly assigned men had adjudications recorded (44.5%), 103 men (T group, N=49, C group, N=54) had 246 reports made between them after they commenced ST courses.¹¹⁷ For adjudications acquired after the STP, group means were not significantly different (T group, M=0.984, S.D.=2.21; C group, M=0.959, S.D.=1.70; $d=-0.012$, $p=0.922$). However, the treatment group variance was significantly different ($F=1.68$, $p=0.002$). In other words, the control group was significantly, more consistently badly behaved but total bad behaviour was not meaningfully different. Figure 8.1 plots the mean adjudications before and after the STP.

¹¹⁷ Start date of the T group's ST course was counted as the start date for their corresponding controls and the first date at risk.



It can be seen that the treatment group had more reports before the STP and, although both groups have improved over the same time period, the treatment group has improved more. Nevertheless, some post-treatment report dates do not correspond with expected release dates (although they have the same sentence reference) and the sentence duration pre-treatment is unknown. Until more PNOMIS data are known, I cannot say whether those reports with incompatible dates relate to a reincarceration or whether men were not released as expected.

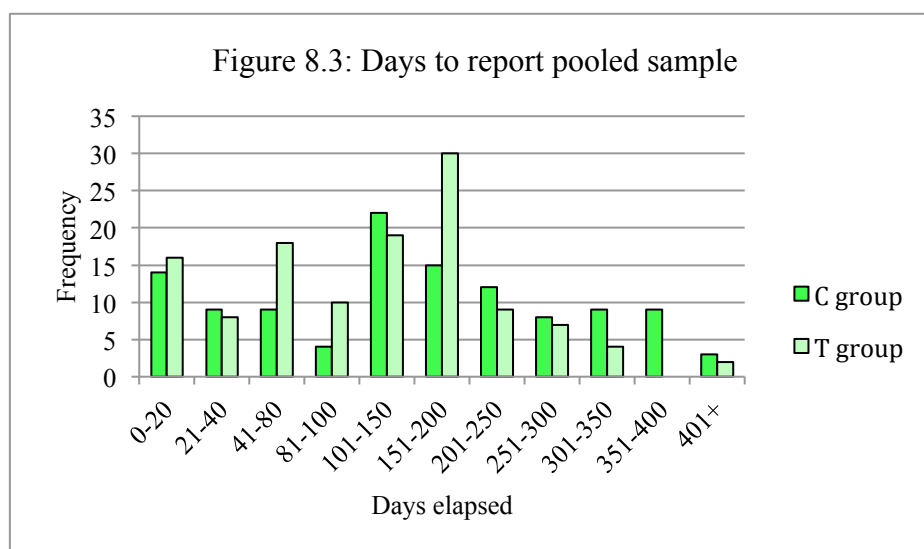
Figure 8.2 demonstrates that most individuals acquired one adjudication with single individuals acquiring multiples.



At this stage we cannot conclude that the STP has no effect on bad behaviour as, although both groups improved, the treatment group appear to have improved more (T group, $M=2.33$, $S.D.=2.78$, $d=0.58$, $p=0.000$; C group, $M=2.10$, $S.D.=4.60$; $d=0.37$, $p=0.004$). This finding is similar to Shapland et al. (2008) when controls had fewer reconvictions than expected. They suggested that there may be a selection effect because their population of interest (offenders willing to participate in restorative justice conferences) was motivated to desist from crime. The same effect may be present here as the target population is men awaiting a ST course who presumably have some motivation to change. Therefore, the RCT will be a good test of the STP when final analyses are completed.

The treatment group was significantly quicker to offend (measured in days), (T group, $M=131.02$, $S.D.=93.457$; C group, $M=168.31$, $S.D.=118.167$; $d=0.164$, $p=0.008$). Most reports were incurred between 151-250 days after the STP (see Figure 8.3). The treatment group did better soon after completing the STP and worse after about eight months suggesting that treatment effects diminish over time.

Given the incomplete data available, I do not report other adjudication details.



CRIME PICS

There was a low response rate to the CPII questionnaires. However, I cautiously present the data. CPII is a psychometric instrument devised to measure attitudes to crime (see Chapter 3). It comprises five scales; G, which measures general attitude to offending; A, anticipation of reoffending; V, victim hurt denial; E, evaluation of crime as worthwhile; and P, perception of current life problems. Scores for scales G to E are designed so that higher numbers indicate attitudes predisposed towards crime and scale P higher scores express more perceived problems; therefore any reduction in score signifies an improvement in attitude or perceived problems.

There were 77 completed before/after CPII questionnaires representing 44% of the total, randomly assigned, 2011-2012 cohort (N=174). Four prisons supplied randomly assigned cases; Prison 1 and Prison 5 provided the largest cohorts and most CPII scores; Prison 1, 62 cases and 37 scores (11T, 26C); Prison 5, 70 cases and 35 scores (18T, 17C); Prisons 2 and 3 provided five scores (3T, 2C) between them from 42 cases. I conducted analyses on the pooled sample.

The only baseline variables available were age and days to release from random assignment and the treatment and control groups were not systematically different (see Figure 8.4).

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of age at random assignment is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.135	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Days to release at random assignment is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.683	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 8.4: baseline characteristics age and days remaining

CPII scales G, A, V, and P scores were not different pre-test but the treatment group was significantly worse on scale E (evaluation of crime as worthwhile) (T group, M=11.66, S.D.=3.249; C group, M=9.31, S.D.=3.771, $p=.005$). Post-test CPII scales G, A, E, and P scores were not different but scale V (victim hurt denial) was significantly different: (T

group, $M=4.25$, $S.D.=1.884$; C group, $M=5.38$, $S.D.=2.443$, $p=.024$). Scale E scores had changed from significantly different to no difference post-test: (T group, $M=9.28$, $S.D.=3.522$; C group, $M=10.32$, $S.D.=3.350$, $p=.232$) (see Figure 8.5).

Treatment group scale V scores had improved ($M=4.88$ to 4.25) whilst the control group was unchanged ($M=5.38$ to 5.38). Therefore, we can say that participating in the STP caused a significant ($p=.024$) difference in attitudes towards victims when compared with the controls (the theoretical result brought about by the encounter between offenders and victims). However, I computed a variable 'magnitude of change' for each scale and, interestingly, there was no significant difference ($p=.379$) between groups post-test on the V scale (see Figure 8.6 and below).

Turning to scale E (crime as worthwhile), post-test scores showed improvement but in a different way. The treatment group was significantly worse ($p=.005$) than the controls pre-test but improved ($M=11.66$ to 9.28) as the controls got worse ($M=9.31$ to 10.22). This is confirmed by the 'magnitude of change' which was significantly different ($p=.000$) between treatment and controls indicating a strong treatment effect in viewing crime as worthwhile (an aim of the STP).

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Crime pics score scale G before STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.079	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Crime pics score scale G after STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.059	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Crime pics score scale A before STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.233	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of Crime pics score scale A after STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.221	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of Crime pics score scale V before STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.354	Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of Crime pics score scale V after STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.024	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of Crime pics score scale E before STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.005	Reject the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of Crime pics score scale E after STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.232	Retain the null hypothesis.
9	The distribution of Crime pics score scale P before STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.286	Retain the null hypothesis.
10	The distribution of Crime pics score scale P after STP is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.422	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 8.5: Crime Pics II scores pre-test, post-test

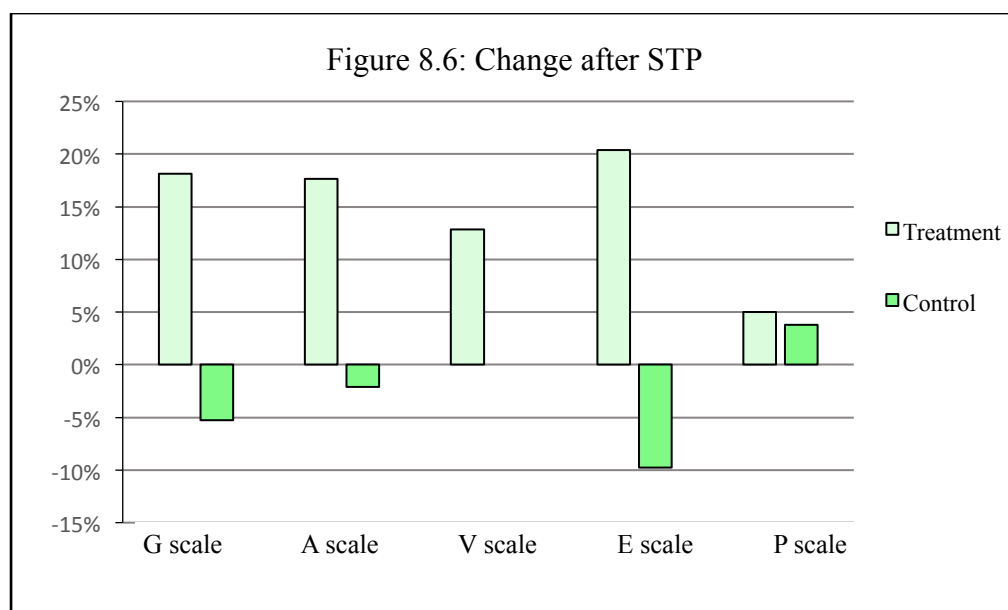


Figure 8.6 plots the ‘magnitude of change’ between pre-and post-test which was also strongly significant for the G scale ($p=.000$) and A scale ($p=.000$) as treated men improved and controls worsened (also see Figure 8.7). The P scale showed no difference between the groups.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Gchange is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Achange is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Vchange is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.379	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of Echange is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of Pchange is the same across categories of assigned to treatment, control or 3rd cohort.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.446	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 8.7: Change after STP

Age was not correlated with any CPII scales although proximity to release was correlated with P scale scores ($r_s=.252$, $p=.025$) suggesting that, as release approached, problem perception grew.

Scale V outcomes are interesting as meeting an unrelated victim of crime is an important component of the STP. As seen above, the control group's attitude towards victims did not change, although their scores on other scales did. However, post-treatment correlations indicate influence on scales G and A as scale G (general attitude to crime) was significantly correlated ($r_s=.268$, $p=.018$) and scale A (anticipation of reoffending) was almost significantly correlated with scale V ($r_s=.223$, $p=.051$). Together with the significant difference between groups ($p=.024$) and non-significant 'magnitude of change' in Figures 8.5 and 8.7, it is possible that this reflects large changes in fewer individuals rather than smaller changes across all individuals. This hypothesis is supported by some tutors' comments who thought that they could distinguish men who were 'ticking the boxes' from those who 'really get it' (Tutor: personal communication) (see Chapter 3).

These data suggest that participating in the STP does produce significant beneficial changes ($p=.024$) in attitudes towards victims. Viewing crime as worthwhile was changed inasmuch as STP participants were significantly worse than controls pre-treatment ($p=.005$) but not different afterwards ($p=.232$). Furthermore, the magnitude of change in anti-social attitudes was significantly different after the STP ($p=.000$).

Controls in this study got worse between tests indicating that participating in the STP may offer some protection from prison effects. This view is strengthened by the absence of change in attitude towards victims, which could denote that prison has no effect on prisoners' perceptions of victims whereas the STP does.

Once all the PNOMIS data and full details of recidivism are available the above results will be revisited to investigate correlation with reoffending. CPII outcomes are from a very small sample and any inferences should be made tentatively.

Conclusion

This RCT was designed to test whether the STP had any effect on prisoners' post-treatment behaviour before and after release. Outcome measures were based on reconvictions and post-intervention behaviour in custody as measured by adjudications. The available data show that the STP caused no harm but potentially produced benefit before prisoners were released.

Additionally, following the literature, I needed data related to prisoners' demographic profiles and imprisonment conditions to help understand the mechanics of any observed changes. No data could be anonymous. Data provision by independent third parties was a strength of the design (Sherman, 2010; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) but data protection was a considerable issue. I was surprised by the bureaucratic response, innocent of the time required for PNOMIS searches, and wholly unaware of fierce data protection processes.

HMPS and the police eventually agreed to provide the data necessary for outcomes to be measured although PNOMIS data are still unavailable. In both organisations the bureaucratic systems designed to protect data worked against access for research purposes such as the RCT. Nevertheless, personal contacts worked to build the trust necessary to complete this final aspect of the coalition. As Strang accurately observes, research "depends immeasurably on the quality of the relationship between those who have the data and those who need it for the purpose of answering important research questions" (2012:212).

Practical considerations mediated the scope of the experiment as I was unable to supplement all official outcomes with data relating to cognitive changes or environmental conditions. Interim results, improved attitudes towards victims and a criminal lifestyle, derived from the small sample of CPII before/after questionnaires and basic adjudication details suggest that participating in the STP has some benefit. The CPII results support earlier findings that attitudes change after completing a STP (Feasey et al., 2005; Feasey & Williams, 2009).

Until the exact sentence and release details are supplied no further meaningful results are possible. When all the variables from the data-sharing agreement with NOMS are provided more detailed analyses should be possible.

Chapter 9

Managing Relationships

[M]aintaining the morale and collaborative spirit of such a challenging undertaking is an often overlooked, underappreciated responsibility that all must share.

(Cook et al., 2002:42)

Strang characterised the management of RCTs as a ‘coalition of temporary interests’ (2012:212). The essence of the coalition is the communication, collaboration, and cooperation between all the interested parties. Others frequently cite these virtues as necessary to successful work (Babor et al., 2002; Cook et al., 2002; Kilburn, 2012; Rog & Randolph, 2002; Roman et al., 2012). I indicated earlier how important my communication with other individuals and organisations was.

In this chapter I describe consolidating communication between the ‘interested parties’. This entailed efforts to enrol cases and maintain the pipeline, finalise the recruiting and eligibility protocols, and gain access to the data necessary for outcome measures. I had to understand the context in which the RCT would operate and foster trust between myself and all the stakeholders (Strang, 2012). This was particularly important with regard to data access (see Chapter 8). This chapter begins with I. the autoethnographic aspects of this RCT. It then presents II. a narrative of my encounters with the coalition partners who helped to execute it concluding with my thanks to them all.

I. Autoethnographic dimensions

I was at the hub of this RCT simply because I was the sole researcher. I was the decision-maker and, to some extent, the pathfinder. But the enterprise involved dozens of other people from different backgrounds, with different worldviews, and different priorities (Rog & Randolph, 2002). Thus, this is not an autoethnographic account because my experience is not the foundation of this thesis (Taber, 2010), however, it cannot be ignored because it was how I learned and is a valid research tool (Jewkes, 2012; Liebling, Price & Elliott, 1999; Sherman & Strang, 2004b; Taber, 2010). The relationships that

were built and the lessons that these relationships taught me were central (Kahneman, 2011).

Taber quotes a conversation between two ethnographic researchers:

[Diamond] states in a conversation with Smith that ‘he stumbled around for quite a while’ (p.46) in his research design. Smith then states, ‘Wait. Let’s stop at the stumbling. [...] You aren’t able to previsualise what it is you are going to do, or what you are going to discover. Isn’t stumbling around integral to the process?’ (pp. 46, 47).

(Taber, 2010:17)

Diamond, an inexperienced academic, knew that he wanted to conduct a study but was unsure how he would proceed. Smith, the experienced researcher, reassured him that the outcome did not have to be predetermined as he could adapt during the journey (Diamond, 2006). Similarly, I knew that I wanted to evaluate the Sycamore Tree Programme (STP) using an RCT but my situation was unique as the research team comprised one member, me. I stumbled and adapted to circumstances as I went.¹¹⁸

However, I was not without life experience and this was how I managed the varied relationships and learned the necessary lessons. I believed that dealing with people was best done face-to-face and, if that was impossible, voice-to-voice by telephone. That way miscommunication or misunderstandings were dealt with quickly and trust could be engendered (Rawson et al., 2002; Roman et al., 2012). For example, an Email I sent was misunderstood by one of the recipients. As soon as I was alerted I telephoned the aggrieved person and allayed all concerns.

During eleven years as a serving police officer I was experienced in dealing with people in all circumstances at all levels. I understood working within a hierarchical environment where routine governs only some of one’s time and crises occur at a moment’s notice. This allowed empathy with front-line prison staff and those, such as civil servants, entrusted with data security. Equally, I had brought up three children. This was a valuable lesson in compromise and balancing competing interests (including my own).

¹¹⁸ Apart from advice and practical assistance from my supervisor, Professor Sherman.

Such experiences are not essential for researchers, but they informed my intuitive and, where necessary, reasoned approach to the people and circumstances I encountered (Kahneman, 2011). My life-experience probably allowed me to project a sense of confidence that I did not feel as I ‘stumbled around’ in experimental research (Kahneman, 2011).

Conversely, a most important skill for researchers is the ability to overcome the frustration caused by setbacks. This does not mean irrational persistence beyond what is possible but focusing on the goal (implementing an experiment) and finding other ways forward. In this case, I switched from a local police approach to the guardians of the PNC (a route I hitherto thought unworkable). Researchers do benefit from the ability to compromise small issues to achieve larger ones. For example, I responded to Chaplains’ opinion that chocolate bar incentives were unworkable and their accurate wisdom that men would respond well without them. On the other hand, the necessity for untreated controls could not be compromised and overcoming resistance required me to identify the correct person to help, develop a powerful argument in support of my case, and be persuasive in presenting it (including taking an RCT specialist, Professor Sherman, alongside).

II. Foundations

I always tried to blend business and informality. For example, the PFEW ST manager and I usually collaborated over a working lunch; when I sought advice from senior academics or met the HMPS psychologist, we incorporated lighter moments into the meetings. However, it was from these meetings that the research proposal and the implementation protocol emerged. More formally, I engaged with PFEW’s trustees and senior management as we sought funding; a relationship partially mediated by the ST manager.

Next I had to establish a working relationship with the people involved in the delivery of the STP (Babor et al., 2002; Cook et al., 2002; Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012). The dynamics changed from mutual collaboration and support in producing a protocol to one where I needed entry into an unfamiliar, highly structured environment. My new purpose was to insert a considerable workload into the daily duties of prison Chaplains and their staff, and they would not be under my control (Kilburn, 2012). As the

RCT progressed and I understood more of the ordered nature of prison regimes I realised just how much I was asking of them (Roman et al., 2012).

Fortunately, most Chaplains and ST coordinators were enthusiastic about the RCT. It was Governors and more senior officers who were reluctant to allow a control group of 'untreated' prisoners. Resolving this issue required resourcefulness; in the context of a meeting that allowed for formal and informal discussion, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Professor Sherman assured Governors that the methodology was ethical.

Conversely, Chaplains, who knew that delivery of the STP was a lottery, felt relieved to have random assignment rather than selecting prisoners for STP places themselves. Chaplains appreciated their invitation to Cambridge where they were able to question Professor Sherman directly. From then on practitioners fully supported the methodology (Babor et al., 2002; Cook et al., 2002; Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012).¹¹⁹

Caseflow

Caseflow was the experiment's most disappointing aspect. Given the Chaplains' original enthusiasm, it was below expectations. This phenomenon is not new (Boruch, 1997; Kilburn, 2012; Rog & Randolph, 2002; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) but was difficult to resolve.

I had conservatively estimated that, during the first year of recruiting, having one quarter (N=5) of all available ST course (N=23) places allocated to research participants would provide 115 treatment group participants matched by an equal number of controls (total N=230) (Rawson et al., 2002). In prisons where recruiting began well, my estimate of one quarter places per course was exceeded but poor recruiting elsewhere meant that the target was not reached. Some consenting men were not randomly assigned (see Chapter 6) but this did not account for the low numbers.

¹¹⁹ There were two exceptions, see Chapters 6 and 7.

After the first year of recruiting 31 ST courses had been delivered. Of these ten went ahead with no attempt to place RCT cases on them. I did not think this was a ‘bad’ effort and so I did not ‘panic’ (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008:155). After all no matter how many research presentations were made, there was no guarantee that prisoners would consent (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). Another reason I was not alarmed was because ST courses were delivered erratically, they tended to cluster, which produced peaks and troughs in the number and frequency of courses. Low numbers of research presentations did not reflect any desire to confound the RCT and sometimes had quite banal causes. For example, one ST coordinator said that she had gone on holiday, forgotten how many cases they had recruited, and thought that they had completed their sample.

Nevertheless, I was not complacent and attempted remedial measures (Boruch, 1997; Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008) by increasing my contact with Chaplains and ST coordinators and expanding the number of research sites. I revisited prisons, met new staff to go through protocols, tried to get Offender Management Units (OMUs) involved, and approached PFEW to increase the number of prisons. A small effect was produced when Prison 6 contributed two batches to the pipeline. We also added Prison 8 as a research site.

People

Front line

Chaplaincies had developed their own STP delivery system (Petersilia, 1989; Roman et al., 2012). I asked them to slot into their often chaotic, though regimented, timetables what could be termed an organisational nightmare (Roman et al., 2012). With hindsight I could see that assembling up to 80 prisoners for a half-hour presentation was a daunting prospect.¹²⁰ As one Chaplain wiped his brow and smiled at me, he said, “I wish I’d never got myself into this.” I seized the opportunity and asked whether it would help if he delegated some tasks. I observed that he was not expected to be personally responsible for every step if there was a suitable alternative such as the OMU.

¹²⁰ One Chaplain invited 89 prisoners and, although not all attended the research presentation, they could have done.

Top-down pressure does not always increase caseflow (Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012) but there were occasions when it produced modest results. For example, Prison 7 had undergone a long interregnum leaving the ST coordinator to administer ST courses alone. But even when I had gone through everything with a new senior officer and the new Chaplain was appointed, there was no improvement in caseflow. Discussing this with the Chaplain, he realised that he must *tell* the coordinator to hold a presentation rather than *ask* him to.

Kilburn advises researchers to expect to establish relationships with and reach out to front-line staff and practitioners (2012). I always planned to work through Chaplaincies but not that they would absorb the additional workload. Some Chaplains had reservations about withholding the STP from prisoners but I never doubted their commitment to the experiment. Using the ‘participatory principle’ from the outset I consulted Chaplains and heeded their advice (Leff & Mulkern, 2002). We collaborated on the research invitations and I provided them with a DVD, which relieved them of most of the explanation of the RCT for prisoners.

I disseminated good practice methods as tactfully as possible and, when caseflow almost stopped, I produced a newsletter (see appendix 7). The first issue included a picture of differential sample sizes with a view to introducing a competitive spirit, boosting morale, and, hence, improving caseflow.

Some practitioners resist random assignment because they believe the intervention being tested is beneficial (Torgerson and Torgerson (2008) or think evaluation is spurious as it may threaten their livelihoods (Strang, 2012). Contravening the literature, Chaplains welcomed random assignment as it removed what they considered the onerous task of selecting which prisoners would be offered the programme. Nevertheless, several found the administrative requirements of the RCT overwhelming especially as their civilian staff was cut. I attempted to boost morale but there was a limit to what I could do to improve caseflow (Strang, 2012).

I did not want to antagonise people by overburdening them with exhortations to action (Rawson et al., 2002; Roman et al., 2012). I had to accept a smaller sample size or an extended timeline, or both (Boruch, 1997; Roman et al., 2012). Ultimately the RCT

fulfilled the ‘rule of thumb’ that 80% of cases came from 20% of sites (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008). I was fortunate that there were no issues of funding because I was able to support myself when the funding stopped in January 2014.

PFEW personnel were not immune to the RCT’s demands. I had to search PFEW records to extract STP data. This caused inconvenience as I spent several days occupying a desk and computer in their office. Here, too, I only experienced cheerful assistance.

External

I am certain that external influences were vital to the RCT. Taber comments in her autoethnographic study of mothers in the military, “those with power are in the position to grant or deny researchers access to certain populations, they can not only shape research, but can also prevent it” (2010:6). I had many conversations with senior people within the police, NOMS, and HMPS. My goal was to convince them that this RCT was relevant with important policy implications. Furthermore, primary outcome measures were within the domain of an institution that had no involvement with the sample population or the STP.

I am convinced that access to prisoners’ records would not have happened without the cooperation and lobbying on my behalf of these individuals. Much of which was unknown to me but emerged as doors opened. For instance, the commissioning guidance published in 2012 where prisons involved in the RCT were *de facto* exempted from advice not to commission new victim empathy interventions:

In the next commissioning round, new investment in victim awareness and empathy work should not be made. Existing net investment should be maintained. [...]

NOMS wishes to see an improved evidence base for victim awareness and victim empathy work. NOMS supports the Sycamore Tree evaluation that is currently underway by Cambridge University and would support any further robust evaluation of victim awareness and empathy work.

(Newby, 2012:5)

Although I was grateful for the support the RCT received, personal communications were time-consuming. This was partly because the corollary to dealing with high-ranking individuals was that they had tight schedules and full timetables.

Conclusion

In common with numerous researchers, I thought the design and context of the RCT would escape many of the recognised pitfalls (Boruch, 1997; Clark & Cornish, 1972; Kilburn, 2012; Roman et al., 2012; Strang, 2012; Torgerson & Torgerson, 2008; Weisburd, 2003). Apart from unpredictable events, such as the global recession or the complete change of management and trustees at PFEW, most challenges related to people's interaction with the RCT. Front-line practitioners exerted most influence on caseflow whilst the external guardians of data exercised control of primary outcome measures. Paradoxically, people who had the power to stop the experiment altogether were the least involved.

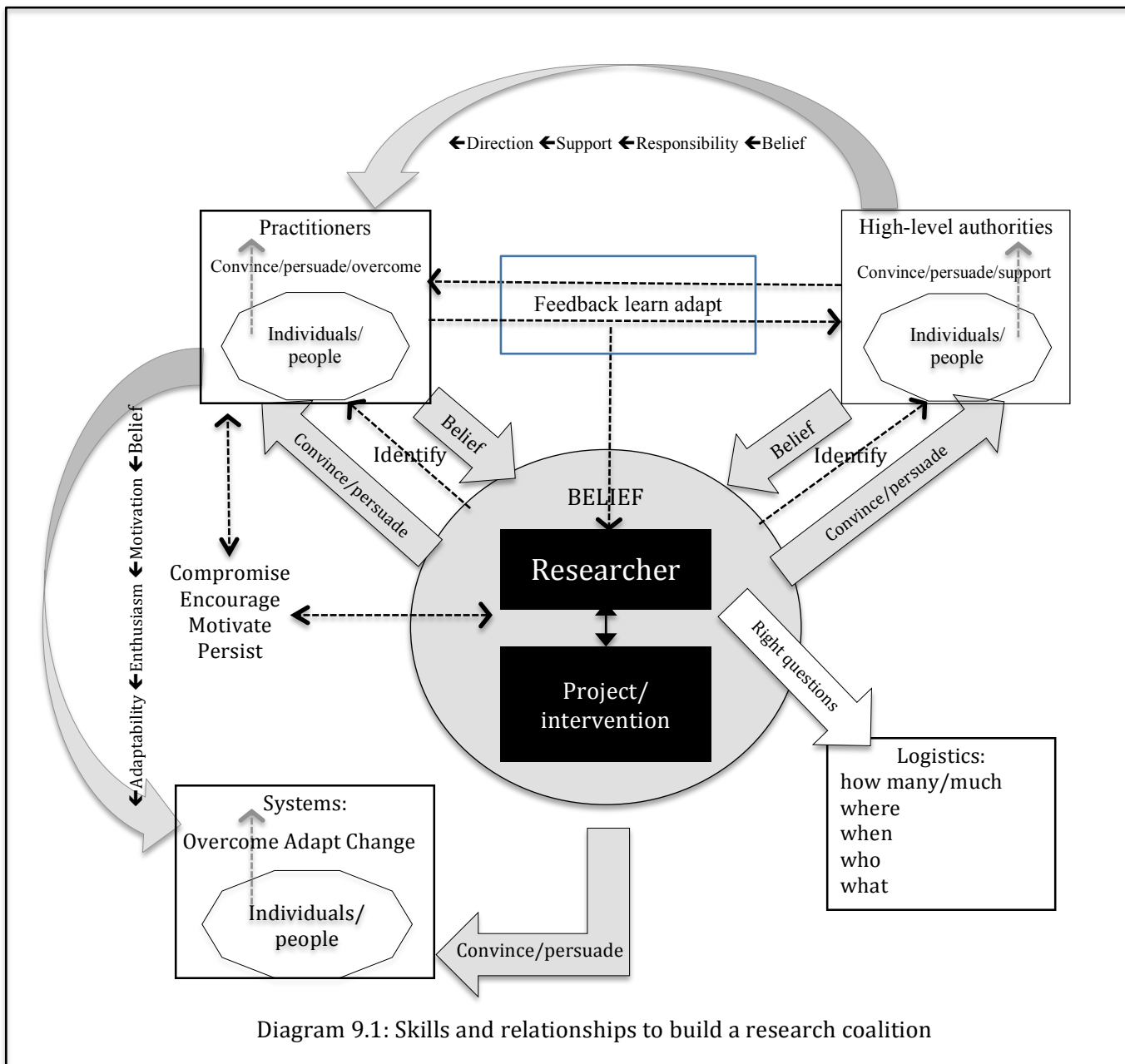
Some of these people were uniformed, quasi-military officers, some high-level civil servants, and some were men and women of faith who believed in the power of the STP to improve prisoners' lives. Managing relationships with all of these people forced me to draw on every power of persuasion I had, to be as positive and appear as convincingly confident as possible, and to be as patient, flexible, and understanding as I could be.

Implementing this RCT involved learning to build a diverse group of largely unconnected people into a coalition capable of 'pulling it off'. Although I was as available as possible people had to believe in the project enough to convince others when necessary and be sufficiently motivated to support the RCT when facing dilemmas or difficulty alone. My task was to help them believe it was worthwhile and, above all, possible. Once they believed, their own motivation and skills carried it forward.

Diagram 9.1 is a visual representation of the relationships and associated skills I believe necessary to implement RCTs in prisons.

I had to be all things to all people. In return, they had to put up with me and the often extraordinary demands I made of them on behalf of the RCT. The people who made the

RCT happen cannot be thanked enough by this researcher who had what Kahneman best sums up as “irrational perseverance” (2011:247).



Chapter 10

A Valid Experiment and Skills for More

It must be pointed out, however, randomization is not a panacea [...] the salient point here is that randomization is most often a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition to deriving valid conclusions from program evaluations [*sic*].

Rezmovic (1979:166)

To date criminological research into rehabilitation seems to have found one certainty, there is no ‘silver bullet’ that will reduce all recidivism. Conversely, promising directions, such as restorative justice, have been identified. Unfortunately, policymakers seem to want certainties and programmes that can be universally delivered. The best way forward is to gather evidence and, in many circumstances, the best causal evidence is obtained from randomised controlled trials (RCT) (for example, Farrington & Welsh, 2005).

The research part of this dissertation is a participant observer’s account of implementing an RCT in Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) and answering the invisible question, ‘can it be done?’ The dissertation answers for itself. It necessarily reflects my own perspective of events, presenting the peaks and troughs involved in implementing an RCT in eight English prisons.¹²¹ I contend that it is well implemented having good compliance with the assigned experimental condition (92%), acceptable attrition (N=9), and equivalence between treatment and control groups on the available variables. It will also build on this foundation when all final analyses are done (two years after the last man was released from prison in July 2015) as we have PNC data for 100% of randomised cases.

Chapter 8 details the proposed outcome measures but these relied entirely on access to two databases maintained by Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS), PNOMIS, and Hampshire Constabulary, PNC. While access has now been formally agreed and some PNOMIS data supplied, data access has been the most frustrating element of implementing this experiment.

¹²¹ It is agreed that no final outcomes are included here.

In this chapter I review the road travelled and note the wisdom of hindsight reflecting on my experience in light of the small extant literature detailing other researchers' insights. They relate to a multi-site evaluation in English prisons, and four U.S. RCTs based, or partially based, in prisons.

The chapter is divided into five sections: I. context, II. planning, III. implementation, IV. data collection, and V. final reflections. I begin by commenting on my steep learning curve. The RCT planning took longer than expected but was relatively straightforward. In common with many other studies the anticipated sample size was not achieved. The starkest contrast was in obtaining outcome data as access appears to be much easier in the U.S.A.

The chapter concludes that the English correctional infrastructure, particularly the executive body, NOMS, should facilitate quantitative research designs that rely on post-release outcomes. Finally, I state this RCT's limitations and suggest further research of the Sycamore Tree Programme (STP). I begin with a brief history of experiments in custodial settings. This dissertation demonstrates that RCTs can be successfully conducted in HMPS.

I. Context

Farrington observes that, as RCTs have the strongest internal validity, one would expect them to be used widely to investigate and evaluate rehabilitative interventions. However, they are not and he continues to outline, and critique, the demise of experimental research in British criminal justice (Farrington, 2003a). Nuttall (2003) attributes the loss of enthusiasm to the influence of Clarke, who thought them unfeasible in custodial settings, at the English Home Office just as the 'nothing works' doctrine swept through rehabilitation thinking.

'Nothing works' emanated from Martinson's (1974) summary of the much larger survey of rehabilitation interventions published later (Lipton, Martinson & Wilks, 1975). That survey reviewed 900 studies published between 1945 and 1967. Of the 900 only 231 were considered interpretable enough to be included and less than 35% of those used random assignment. However, there were problems with included studies' methodological

weakness compounded by heterogeneous measures, attrition, and a dichotomising of outcomes that failed to detect potentially helpful interventions (Rezmovic, 1979). Despite the report from the Panel on Rehabilitative Techniques, which supported experiments (Sechrest et al., 1979) and suggested that some rehabilitation seemed to work for some offenders, RCTs almost ceased.

Published experiments included little detail of the activities required to implement and conduct them or information on the strength and integrity of the intervention under test (Martin, Sechrest & Redner, 1981; Petersilia, 1989). Recently authors have begun to plug this gap and five published studies concern implementing RCTs in prisons (McDougall et al., 2009a; MacKenzie, 2012; Pettus-Davis, Howard, Dunnigan, Scheyett & Roberts-Lewis, 2015; Prendergast et al., 2009; Roman et al., 2012). Their experiences and mine have similar trajectories and noticeable differences. The aim of this RCT was to evaluate the STP. The dearth of literature on *implementation* was evidence in itself that it is a complex enterprise undertaken rarely.

II. Planning

Although I submitted a Ph.D. proposal for evaluating the STP, I did not approach potential funders of the RCT. Prison Fellowship England & Wales (PFEW) were responsible for securing the necessary funding with additional support supplied by the Jerry Lee Centre of Experimental Criminology. Therefore, timescale was considered with reference to potential caseflow. My proposal to the University and the NOMS National Research Council (NRC) required their approval, not their financial support.

Furthermore, this was a doctoral research undertaking and did not involve a research team. Therefore, I was committed to the methodology before fully grasping its intricacies within prisons; such as the need for careful timing of the random assignment within the pipeline to avoid attrition but not interfere with the prisons' smooth running (Boruch, 1997; Gueron, 2002; Roman et al., 2012), or the complications concerning an incentive for potential participants (MacKenzie, 2012).

The STP was a well established intervention comprising a single, in-custody entity, making planning less complex than for programmes involving several components

potentially delivered by different agencies often extending into community contexts (Pettus-Davis et al., 2015; Prendergast et al., 2011; Roman et al., 2012). Although STP delivery by volunteers did affect implementation, that was not foreseen during planning. Random assignment did not allocate individuals to different establishments (MacKenzie, 2012). However, my sample would be tracked after release as long-term, potentially declining, effects were the outcomes of interest. McDougall and colleagues measured a short-term effect, using a battery of psychometric instruments with the control group receiving the intervention later, before being released (2009a). I did not have to plan for complicated timing issues as they did but I did have to develop measures that prevented controls receiving the STP during their remaining sentence.

A common experience was lengthy discussion with practitioners at all levels to ensure the RCT protocol would be protected simultaneously allowing the prisons to function normally. My approach was bottom-up whilst most others began with senior officials. As the Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) programme (McDougall et al., 2009a; 2009b) and the STP were established interventions, both evaluation experiments were planned to impose as little distortion to standard delivery as possible. For example, psychometric tests were left as a part of normal course delivery rather than administering them to all participants prior to random assignment (McDougall et al., 2009a).

Practitioners' concerns about depriving prisoners of a beneficial programme were incorporated into McDougall and colleagues' RCT (2009a). The ETS had been evaluated before but results had been equivocal (McDougall et al., 2009a; 2009b). Nevertheless, practitioners presumed it was beneficial and a short-term evaluation was intended to test this assumption.¹²² They applied a wait-list control process whereby all participants received the ETS course before release. I encountered a similar presumption but the NOMS CEO was convinced that random assignment to an untreated control group was ethical given the equipoise pertaining to the STP and its oversubscription (see Chapter 4). It was an advantage that only aggregated, anonymous, before/after evidence existed with regard to the STP.

Overall, experience showed that convincing individuals the RCT was possible and worthwhile trumped detailed planning as their belief and confidence in the outcome were

¹²² See McCord, 1978, 1981 and Sherman & Harris, 2014 for cautionary tales on short-term results.

vital. Collaboration meant that abstract plans could be adjusted to suit operational (and practitioners’) regimes and I could be confident that random assignment would be protected.

III. Implementation

logistics

Kahneman identifies “two basic conditions for acquiring skill:

- an environment that is sufficiently regular to be predictable
- an opportunity to learn these regularities through prolonged practice

when both these conditions are satisfied, intuitions are likely to be skilled” (2007:240). Of himself and colleagues he said, “Facing a choice, we gave up rationality rather than give up the enterprise” (*ibid*:246).

Kahneman's point is that when undertaking a project we are unlikely to recognise our own shortcomings until our skill develops from immediate feedback thus feeding into our intuitions. Further, as the project's difficulties mount we rarely abandon it. I did recognise my skill deficit but I did not abandon the project.

The fundamental difference between the current study and the literature is that all other projects involved a research team. From the outset, the STP evaluation’s scope was limited to what was possible for a single person to do (notwithstanding the coalition). For example, observing at least two full ST courses was impossible. I considered interviews and self-report follow-up after the participants’ release but, apart from prisoners’ obvious reluctance, this was another example of a ‘bad idea’ that had to be abandoned owing to the problems associated with tracking prisoners. Furthermore, interviewing participants in custody would have added to practitioners’ workloads as I would have had to work through Chaplaincies.

Like McDougall and colleagues (2009), my goal was to disrupt the dynamics of STP delivery as little as possible. Working alone was an advantage here as my observations and experience of the eight prisons’ custodial climate were consistent, not subject to different personal dispositions, and sensitive to changes. For example, I noticed the fluctuating morale levels amongst staff.

Videotaped ST sessions might have enhanced the available data and likely recorded entire courses. However, this would have created further ethical hurdles and removed the ability to experience the atmosphere, which was as important to my study as the regime experience was to MacKenzie's (2012). Moreover, I was on hand to administer and collect facilitators' questionnaires which were partially designed to inform me whether the session I had just observed was typical or not. Furthermore, it is unlikely that more than one camera would have been permitted and so only a single viewing aspect would have been available and not provided the viewing sweep of the whole room that I had in person.

An overwhelming advantage of being the sole researcher was the ability to build relationships with practitioners, which led to their confidence and trust in me and my faith in their desire to support random assignment and comply with protocols. Their belief in the evaluation (and the STP) meant that they were quick to inform me of difficulties and act on my advice. A similar belief and trust was possible with NOMS, and to some degree, police personnel. Additionally, decisions were mine to stand or fall by.

Sample size

All RCTs that I have studied share one characteristic, lower than anticipated sample size (where individuals are cases) but the reasons and the effects are varied. To counteract this I increased recruiting time but the trade-off was diminished practitioners' enthusiasm. Similarly, almost all trickle-flow experiments require extra time.

MacKenzie (2012) increased their timeline and successfully applied for further funding, when that sample was unexpectedly low. The cause was not identifiable but she attributed it partly to lower than expected numbers of eligible offenders and partly to an external trend away from sentencing offenders to boot camps, their study population.

Pettus-Davies et al. (2015) also experienced practitioner fatigue when their caseload was slow but they continued recruiting and took longer to compile their sample. For Roman et al., (2012) the slow recruiting of eligible subjects proved fatal to their RCT. Many factors contributed to its demise but slow recruiting meant delays; strict, complex eligibility criteria to meet the funders' requirements meant identifying participants took longer; and

further funding or increasing the timeline were not options.

McDougall and colleagues (2009a; 2009b) encountered a more unusual problem when they were compelled to form an unrandomised group comprising high priority prisoners who could not be randomly assigned. These prisoners had to comply with sentence or parole requirements and their participation in the ETS course could not be delayed. The effect was that researchers had to dramatically increase the numbers they recruited whilst randomly assigning fewer individuals, thus extending the timeline. Their solution, to form a 3rd cohort, resolved my dilemma of what to do with unexpectedly unrandomised men (see Chapter 4).

Treatment delivery

Unlike some researchers' descriptions of implementing RCTs, my experience of treatment delivery was positive because, the STP was a single entity with a long track-record and delivery was well-practiced. Some treatment group non-compliers were transferred or released but I am confident that I was informed about all refusers and several dropouts. The handwritten and electronic session registers, completed by tutors, should have answered those questions. All tutors were instructed to keep accurate registers and PFEW head office staff to record them. However, old habits die hard and not all non-attendance and dropouts were permanently recorded as, often, places were quickly filled from the waiting list. The well-practiced procedure for place-filling illustrates the frequency of the need.

Prendergast et al. (2009) experienced considerable problems with treatment delivery. Some, such as equipment failure, staff non-cooperation, or early release, concerned the custodial dimension of their treatment and some, such as client dropout/non-attendance, partially caused by inability to contact clients, related to parole. My RCT participants were wary of any follow-up once they were released and this could be a reason for the difficulty Prendergast encountered. A remedy was to adjust the minimum dose level required. They note that the treatment goal was to facilitate ex-prisoners' transition into the community during parole. The dose of their treatment was decided through discussion and consultation but, as a new programme, had not been irrevocably fixed. It was plausibly considered possible that clients had successfully used the service before the

hypothesised required dose had been achieved.

McDougall et al. (2009b) video-recorded ETS sessions, which confirmed the programme had been delivered as expected.¹²³ The experiment conducted by MacKenzie, Bierie & Mitchell (2007) was designed to investigate the effect of different custodial environments on recidivism. Their sample was randomly assigned to either a boot camp (treatment) or prison (control) and they equally monitored both groups. Whilst the treatment group reoffended significantly less than the controls, MacKenzie's data showed no change in participants' criminogenic, cognitive profile. Examining the control group's experience revealed that they had not received the expected programme elements and their criminogenic, cognitive profile had worsened (Mackenzie, 2012; Mackenzie et al., 2007). However, the experiment was unable to discern whether it was the absence of expected treatment or the general prison environment that produced this effect (MacKenzie et al., 2007). It was possible that the treatment, if received, could have overcome the negative impact of prison life.

Although I observed good treatment fidelity, I was aware of lack of treatment availability in all prisons.¹²⁴ During my conversations with Chaplains and ST facilitators it was clear that the prison regime had little respect for programme provision unless it was related to key performance indicators (KPIs). McDougall and colleagues (2009a) encountered similar sentiments.

Prisons seem to be more suitable for evaluating single-entity programmes. This RCT treatment programme was not multifaceted and the eligibility criteria were broad and unambiguous so identifying prisoners for both the STP (standard practice) and the experiment (unambiguous protocol) was clear-cut. The ETS also was not novel comprising straightforward, weekly sessions (although RCT designs involving wait-list controls may be complex). In MacKenzie's (2012) RCT multiple treatment elements were successfully delivered in the boot camp but the prison environment appeared to affect their availability. For Roman and colleagues (2012) complex eligibility criteria meant that identifying cases within the prison crippled their experiment. RCTs recruiting participants

¹²³ A reviewer considered the "strong adherence to the structure appeared to limit the responsiveness to individual and group participants' needs" (McDougall et al., 2009b:15).

¹²⁴ Data from observations are not reported as they cannot be correlated with behavioural outcomes until full PNOMIS data are provided.

within prisons for programmes intended for delivery after release present complex problems of availability, contact, and organisation.

IV. Data collection and analysis

Although I had permission and high-level support to conduct the RCT, data collection was trying (Chapter 8). McDougall et al. (2009a,b), the only other experiment in English prisons considered here, report that during their study demographic and behavioural data were collected. Data relevant to Offender Assessment System (OASys) scores, which relate to assessing offenders' risk and need, were also available. All these data were collected contemporaneously which is very useful to track prisoner movement, ameliorate attrition, and ensure accuracy.

The PNOMIS database, rolled out across HMPS during my study, was a complicated system to navigate and computer access could not be guaranteed. PNOMIS is an operational database designed for processing prisoners as they enter custody, rigorously logging their movements, and assisting with sentence management. Its bulk search capacity is geared towards numbers in custody and compliance with sentence and release conditions. Its overarching management concerns security and individuals have limited access to information. I had many variables of interest and for each variable a new search 'report' had to be created which would retrieve details. I was told by the person doing them that these reports were unique in his experience.

Not all Governors had approved my personal access to the system. Therefore I relied on retrospective data collection, which further extended data access negotiations (see Chapter 8). On the other hand, I had no need to identify eligible men as they were routinely entered on the STP waiting list by Offender Managers and screened by Chaplains and ST coordinators using easily identified criteria.

Prison experiments in the U.S.A. appear to encounter fewer data access problems.¹²⁵

Although Roman et al. (2012) discovered that the database they planned to use included

¹²⁵ It may be that judicial structures are influential. For example, Ahlin (2015) reports on three RCTs within the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, a state organisation with the power to sanction drivers separately from criminal justice. By the time her third RCT was implemented the leadership (a political appointment) had changed and data access was refused. The RCT was abandoned at that point.

ineligible prisoners, they had no difficulties accessing prisoner details and funding was provided to enhance the database for research needs. Additionally, their RCT design included access to police records, prison records, and three other organisations' data concerning health and homelessness.

Prendergast and colleagues (2009) collected baseline data in prisons but their interest was in service use after release. Most data were collected from client interviews and they used a financial incentive to encourage client participation (Prendergast et al., 2011). Although they reported some reincarceration, no details of accessing this information were provided.

Generally, offender data collection looks straightforward in the U.S.A. For example, Pettus-Davis and colleagues report complications when requesting data from a community agency (which were resolved because they had a memorandum of understanding detailing a data-sharing arrangement) but their main difficulty was the resources required to collect them. "In addition to collecting data from the DOC and the community agency, we were required to visit individual courthouses to collect arrest data. *These data are publicly available [...]*" (Pettus-Davis et al., 2015:6). (My emphasis).

Given MacKenzie's detailed description of her experiment's implementation, one would expect data access difficulties to be reported. Instead she states "official records data were collected from prison records and for recidivism" (2012:294).

Validity

The RCT has internal validity with baseline equivalence on the two available variables and well-balanced experimental groups (see Chapter 6). It was implemented in eight prisons; three had samples over 100 and two had over 40 individuals each. Treatment integrity was consistently high, between 88.6% and 100% in seven prisons. The overall mean age of 31 years is representative of the wider prison population. Outcome results will eventually be combined in a meta-analysis and presented in a forest graph. However small the effect may be in each prison, the forest graph will be able "to plot the magnitude and direction of effect sizes in all available tests" (Sherman & Strang, 2004a:578). The

meta-analysis will improve the external validity of each prison's RCT by allowing us to estimate the average effect across them all (*ibid*).

The prisons were mainly category C training prisons although two were category B with 'local' functions. They were generally similar in size with inmate populations around 1,000 adult men; the largest had an operational capacity of 1,424 and the smallest 395 men. Their management regimes accurately represented the prison estate with five publicly run prisons and one prison run by each of the private contractors employed at the time. Although no Category A, Local, or open prisons were included, these categories of prisons do provide the STP. Since the STP is offered to any type of offender (except sex or domestic violence) the waiting-lists in other prison categories are likely to include men similar to research participants. Moreover, prisoners are increasingly being placed on STP waiting-lists by offender managers who use the same criteria for course recommendations throughout the prison estate.

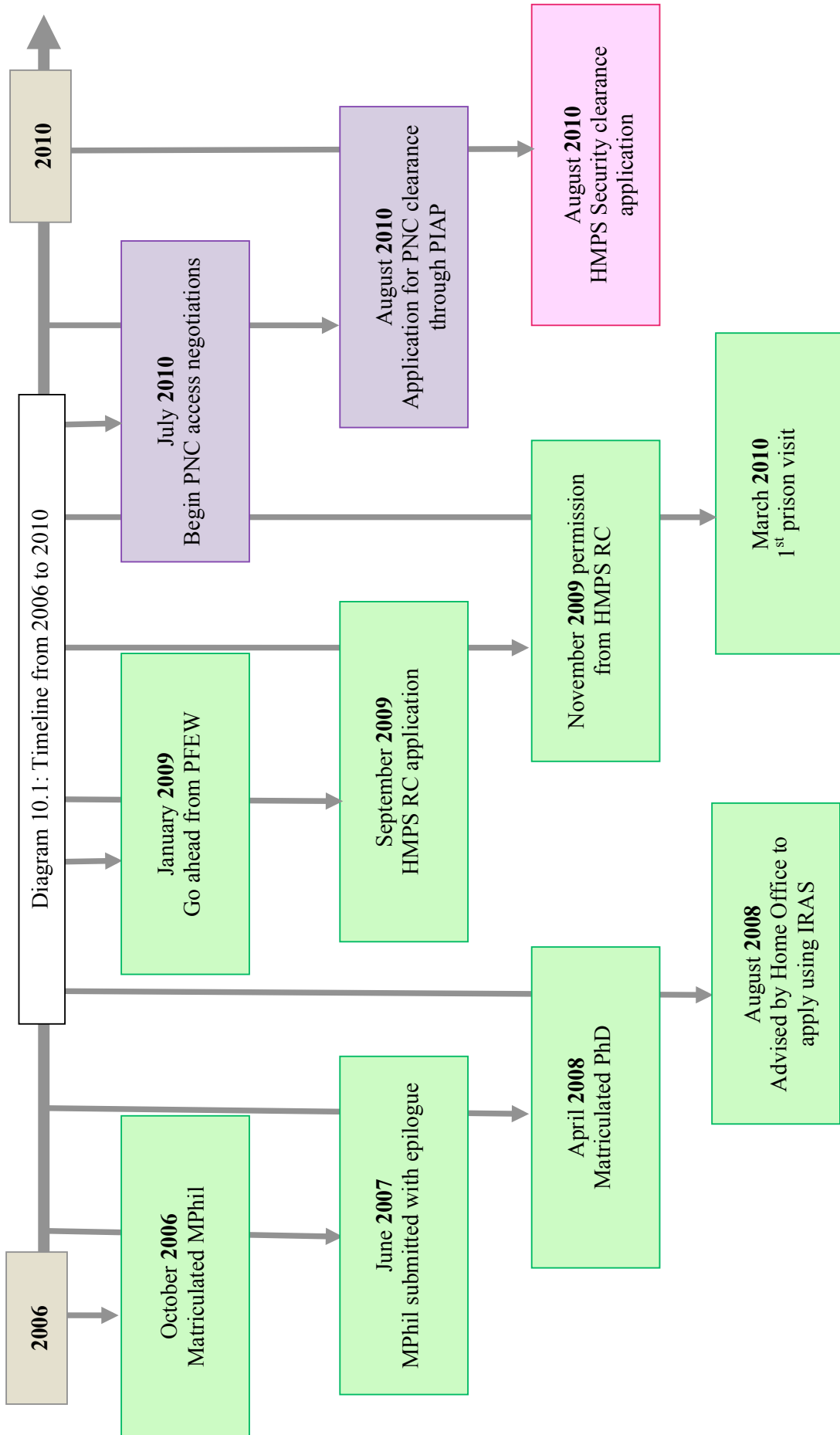
If we infer that prisoners who have applied to complete a STP (whether self-motivated or following advice from sentence planners) are seeking to change their lives, then findings from this RCT should be generalisable to the majority of men on STP waiting-lists.

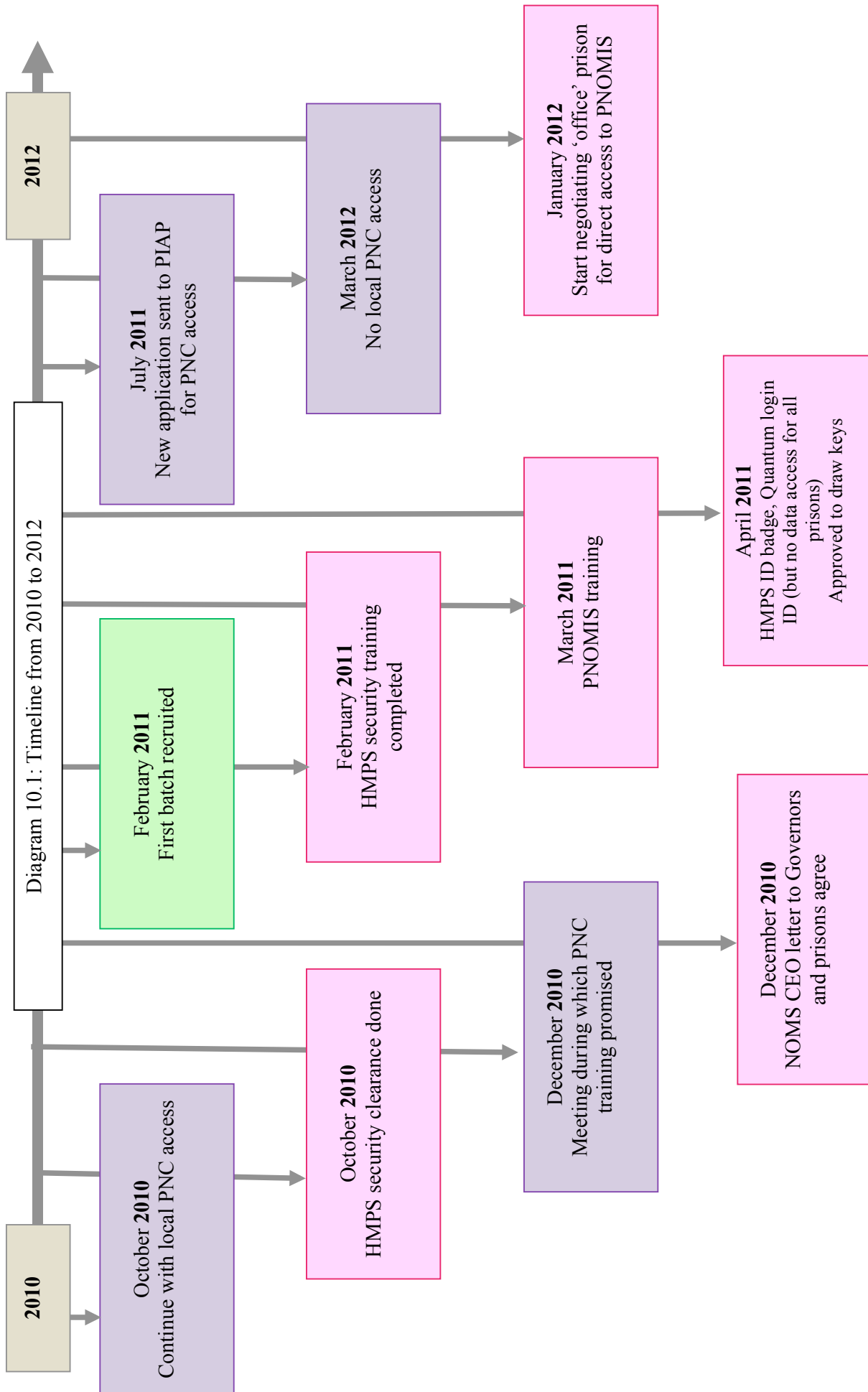
V. Tomorrow's world?

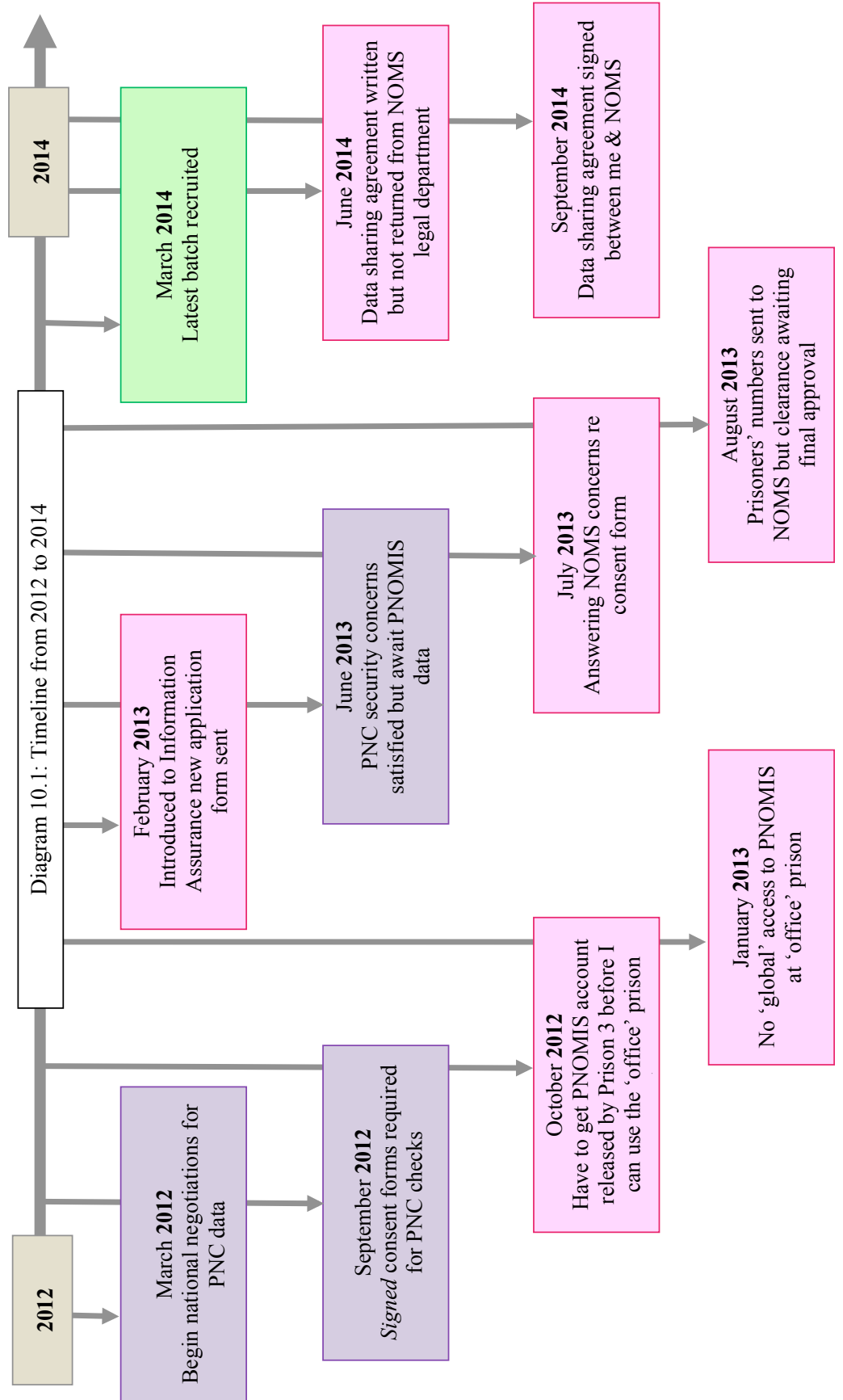
The experiments considered here illustrate the process of implementing RCTs in prisons and the work required of researchers to maintain the integrity of random assignment and produce measurable, meaningful outcomes. They share common experiences such as reduced sample size and dissimilar ones such as linking in-prison recruitment with post-release programmes.

These combined experiences serve a greater purpose, to pave the way for more experiments whenever suitable (Weisburd, 2003). I believe that front-line practitioners understanding the concept of random assignment allowed this RCT to contradict the wider literature as they *welcomed* it for offering them fair allocation of an oversubscribed programme. It confirms the literature that a "long time horizon is essential" (Berk, 2004:9) (see diagram 10.1-3).

I found individuals helpful but constrained by rigid systems that only accommodated research with difficulty. Nevertheless, as Berk (2004) found, and Strang (2012) confirms, establishing mutual trust was critical to this RCT. Once practitioners were confident, they were prepared to push boundaries and defend the RCT with all the extra work it entailed. Conversely, had I had resources such as a larger team, front-line practitioners might have anticipated less extra workload and more prisons might have agreed to participate. I believe it was perceived and actual lack of resources that led to both disappointing recruitment and, consequently, the extended timeline.







The English context

In England and Wales NOMS is the executive body within which HMPS operates and neither organisation is research-friendly *as an entity*. Despite the rhetoric surrounding the need for evidence-based interventions, little help is available to academics that seek to provide evidence (Wilson, 2008). Years of statistical modelling (Cunliffe & Shepherd, 2007; Debidin, 2009; Manheim & Wilkins, 1955 cited by Nuttall, 2003:269; Shepherd & Whiting, 2006) have dulled the desire for evidence based on tracking individuals as no protocol exists for searching live criminal records. Whilst protecting privacy is wholeheartedly accepted, default non-disclosure hinders research designs that require an individual's actual offending patterns to be available.

To improve the implementation of RCTs in prisons NOMS could create a dedicated research department (NOMS-RD) that might comprise practitioners and academics to whom research proposals would be submitted and with whom their feasibility discussed. Once a proposal is approved, all barriers would vanish. Governors could still decide whether to open their prison but ethical concerns about depriving controls of interventions would have been settled by the NOMS-RD.

RCT's main strength is their internal validity; something easily undermined in prisons if participants are not monitored carefully (MacKenzie, 2012; Sampson, 2010). The NOMS-RD could provide a tracking system. If every RCT (or other methodology) participant's record was marked an alert could trigger at the NOMS-RD if they were transferred, re-categorised, or released. The NOMS-RD could then either inform the new prison (or probation department) that the individual was in an RCT and give their experimental condition (that is, treatment or control) and expected intervention, or alert the researcher who could do it.

The NOMS-RD could provide a service to practitioners who were concerned about RCT protocols and, if necessary, overrule potentially confounding decisions made in prisons (as I experienced with a sentence manager in Prison 3).

A NOMS-RD could assist in clarifying misunderstandings as an in-house resource would be more accessible to practitioners than researchers may be. For instance, in this

experiment non-research staff did not grasp the importance of negatives. Chaplains did not always report how many men had not been invited to research presentations and tutors did not always distinguish between dropouts or no-shows.

Communication would be simplified. I frequently spent days trying to speak to the correct person, penetrating a wall of generic Email addresses and jargonistic titles (like Information Assurance). Furthermore, decisions were often obfuscated and remote; for example, the hesitation on providing demographic data without *explicit* prisoners' permission. A single, available, research-savvy department would help researchers eliminate any such ambiguity, potentially before ambiguous situations arose. Additionally, fast exchange of consenters' details and random assignment would be streamlined.

A NOMS-RD would provide a single, informed, starting-point for *all* researchers. My initial approach to the Home Office research department was decidedly unhelpful in directing me to the IRAS (see Chapter 4).¹²⁶ I also tried to meet the Head of Chaplaincy but it was clear that they thought I was attempting to circumvent proper procedures.

I was a new researcher working closely with a practitioner who was familiar with prisons but not research. A NOMS-RD could provide specific expertise about conducting research in English prisons. For example, access to data. Not only could this department authorise access to PNOMIS, they could conduct the necessary searches, create the search tools, and approve the variables. Furthermore, it could initiate all security checks and arrange key-training where required. This would remove additional workloads from front-line prison staff potentially making research protocols more manageable.

The NOMS-RD could be cost-effective with routine prisoner/research-participant location monitoring as a part of its remit. The MoJ is a commissioner of research and should benefit from the services imagined above as they might help reduce the manpower required in individual experiments and render them less vulnerable to budget-threatening circumstances. Research teams are expensive and having such services available for potential funders could mean the difference between securing financing and not.

¹²⁶ I checked the IRAS application website in June 2015 and there is no longer any criminal justice facility. It pertains entirely to the NHS.

Furthermore, more experiments and research would provide more evidence for more effective interventions for more people. Reducing recidivism will save tax-payers' money if they invest wisely in the beginning.

I envisage that any NOMS-RD would be interactive, facilitating all sides and enabling the exchange of practitioner and research expertise. It would also be a resource for policymakers as they could be updated on the current and emerging research position and researchers could be informed of impending policy changes that might affect their work (Kerr et al., 2011). As a national centre for research within prisons and probation it would be a valuable disseminator of knowledge and skill, providing regular two-way communication between themselves and all universities working in prison research (and other research organisations). It might even fulfil MacKenzie's (2013) imagined 'corrective paradigm' mentioned in my introduction.

The current NOMS National Research Council performs the visualised approval and feasibility function but it does not operate in an advisory or communication-exchange capacity nor can it facilitate routine monitoring, data access, or prisoner-tracking.

Recommendations

Overcoming the structural barriers to prison RCTs requires 'irrational perseverance' (Kahneman, 2007). A fundamental belief in the project, the ability to identify and inspire people important to the RCT with that belief, and the confidence that they will support and defend random assignment are foundational to successful implementation. Once high and low-level practitioners buy-in to the coalition they will (often unseen by researchers) overcome rigid systems and operational resistance to see the project through. I think being a solo researcher brought the relationships that were central to this experiment into sharp focus where a research team may have introduced some fog. I summarise the wisdom of hindsight:

- working in multiple prisons diversifies the investment providing the potential for sufficient samples in some, if not all, of them
- arrange for security, training, and familiarisation in advance of recruiting cases

- early on identify and develop communication with gatekeepers as permission at one level may not mean that permission at others will be forthcoming
- consider using standardised research presentation scripts or DVDs
- ascertain your level of data access and develop strategies to ensure effective negotiation for access (for example, justifying variables)
- allow more time than you think because the experiment *will* overrun
- prepare for risk-averse attitudes, prepare to refute them by identifying allies and assembling supporting evidence
- include regular prisoner-location monitoring
- go to the top, but make friends at ground level

This dissertation has mapped the path of implementing a prison experiment.

Policymakers must choose whether to change the system, developed over decades, that works against their stated desire for evidence on which to base their response to the harms of crime and untested offender management. If policymakers created a NOMS-RD as visualised above, they could transform the field of prison experiments.

Limitations of the experiment as a test of the STP

It is difficult to pinpoint why only three of eight prisons produced large samples. In one a uniformed staff member developed efficient methods to cope with the RCT workload. However, STP course delivery (for all prisoners) was solely the Chaplaincy's remit. The second prison had an employed ST coordinator who worked closely with the Chaplain. The coordinator managed the research and STP administration whilst the Chaplain conducted research presentations. The third prison illustrated the difference between practitioners' approach to the demands of the RCT. Recruiting had stopped so a new ST coordinator was employed with instructions to prioritise the RCT. The renewed recruitment rate exceeded that of the original staff and the coordinator managed all the STP administration alongside the demands of the RCT.

The likely common denominator was organisational efficiency and the ability to delegate or share the workload. These three prisons did not uniformly separate RCT and STP administration. Less productive prisons did not share the extra workload between

Chaplains and ST coordinators but this did not account for all slow recruiting (see Chapter 5).

Sample population and methodology

The RCT target population was limited to adult male prisoners with determinate sentences. The programme is also offered to women, young offenders (both genders), and prisoners with indeterminate sentences. Therefore, findings should be generalised to these populations with caution.

Interviews with prisoners were beyond the scope of this RCT but examining the STP from prisoners' points-of-view would be valuable in light of Crime Pics II findings. Outcome measures would have been enhanced by self-report data but men expressed hostility to contact once they were released and this was not pursued.

I devised no measure to detect diffusion or treatment effects transferring between the treatment and control groups. This was a conscious decision based on the experiential nature of the STP. Prisoners learn about RJ but are *encouraged* that they will benefit from looking forward rather than *instructed* in how to behave. Moreover, the emotionally charged meeting with the victim is difficult to 'pass on' to others even though it may leave an indelible mark on those present.¹²⁷

Further research

Final results are not yet available but this RCT has shown that the STP significantly improved adult, male prisoners' attitudes towards victims ($p=0.025$) and significantly increased the magnitude of beneficial changes in their attitude towards crime as a lifestyle ($p=.000$). However, the STP is offered to other types of prisoner in other jurisdictions.

The programme resembles RJ conferences in bringing together (unrelated) victims and offenders and invited members of the public. Tutors informed me that they can identify prisoners who, although they pass the course, seem unaffected by their experience.

¹²⁷ For example, after *experiencing* the account of a murder victim's sibling, I *never again* went to a STP session without paper tissues. I may relate that experience to another but they could not *feel* the experience in the way that I did.

Therefore further research to test the STP for any effect on:

- women
- young offenders
- prisoners with indeterminate sentences
- community-based offenders
- victims who meet unrelated offenders
- acting as a ‘feeder’ for offenders to meet their own victims
- prisoners in other jurisdictions
- tutors’ and group facilitators’ experience (contributing to the literature on volunteers and volunteering)
- testing the validity of tutors’ stated ability to identify prisoners who do not benefit from the STP

would add to our knowledge.

Growing knowledge

This RCT aims to discover whether by blending RJ principles, offenders’ inherent inclination to desist from crime, and any emotional energy present in RJ conferences, the STP reduces recidivism.

The dissertation contributes the first description of the STP to the literature and adds an account of implementing an RCT in prisons. It has produced new findings and confirmed existing knowledge. By presenting a candid account of things done well and not-so-well it provides guidance for other experimental criminologists. I hope it encourages those willing to risk ‘irrational perseverance’ in the rigorous pursuit of evidence for ‘what works’ in rehabilitating offenders. "The important point is not the tests that fail, but replicating and extending the tests that succeed" (Sherman, 2003:27). Therefore, ‘come in, the water’s warm.’

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Crim-PORT 1.0:

Criminological Protocol for Operating Randomized Trials
© 2009 by Lawrence W. Sherman and Heather Strang

INSTRUCTIONS: Please use this form to enter information directly into the WORD document as the protocol for your registration on the Cambridge Criminology Registry of EXperiments in Policing Strategy and Tactics (REX-POST) or the Registry of EXperiments in Correctional Strategy and Tactics (REX-COST).

CONTENTS:

1. Name and Hypotheses
2. Organizational Framework
3. Unit of Analysis
4. Eligibility Criteria
5. Pipeline: Recruitment or Extraction of Cases
6. Timing
7. Random Assignment
8. Treatment and Comparison Elements
9. Measuring and Managing Treatments
10. Measuring Outcomes
11. Analysis Plan
12. Due Date and Dissemination Plan

1. Name and Hypotheses

A. **Name of Experiment** Do offenders discover the harm of their offences? A multi-site randomised controlled trial evaluation of the Sycamore Tree Programme

B. **Principal Investigator (Name)** Margaret Wilson

(Employer) University of Cambridge Doctoral candidate

C. **1st Co-Principal Investigator (Name)** N/A

(Employer) N/A

D. **2d Co-Principal Investigator (Name)** N/A

(Employer) N/A

E. **General Hypothesis:** The Sycamore Tree victim awareness Programme causes less recidivism than no treatment (control) up to 24 months from release from custody.

F. Specific Hypotheses:

1. List all variations of treatment delivery to be tested The Sycamore Tree Programme in eight prisons.
2. List all variations of outcome measures to be tested

Re-arrest
Reconviction – yes/no

If yes, Seriousness (more, less, or the same) in terms of prior offending history with maximum statutory punishment as the indicator of degree; eg. life imprisonment, up to 14 years, up to 10 years, etc.

If yes, Time to failure, days when offending is possible until the offence leading to reconviction is committed (if no date of commission, then date of arrest)

If yes, number of reconvictions/offences dealt with

Adjudications – any adjudications for offences committed after completing the Sycamore Tree Programme and before release

3. List all subgroups to be tested for all varieties of outcome measures

Category of prison

Distance of prison from offender's address/family address

Size of prison (number of inmates)

Index offence of individual offenders

Length of sentence served

Other programmes completed (if any)

Proximity to release (from completion of Sycamore Tree Programme)

Early release – yes/no

Tagged on release – yes/no

Any period of licence on release – if yes, how long and any conditions

Direct, identifiable victim for individual offenders

Demographic data for individual offenders (ethnicity, age etc.)

Consistency of programme delivery (from observations and questionnaires for tutors and small group leaders)

Homogeneity of participants (eg. type of offences committed by prisoners present on the course)

Attendance record and pass/fail the course

Number of tutors and small group leaders present

Gender of tutors and small group leaders present

Physical conditions of venue (from observations)

Offence the invited victim had suffered

Number of offenders eligible for research

Number of offenders invited to attend recruiting session

Number of offenders attending recruiting session

Number of offenders agreeing to participate in research at each recruiting session

Attrition (caused by transfers or early releases)

Criteria used at prison for prisoners being recommended for the Sycamore Tree Programme

2. Organizational Framework: Check only one from a, b, c, or d

A. In-House delivery of treatments, data collection and analysis __

B. Dual Partnership: Operating agency delivers treatments with independent research organization providing random assignment, data collection, analysis __

Name of Operating Agency N/A

Name of Research Organization N/A

C. Multi-Agency Partnership: Operating agencies delivers treatments with independent research organization providing random assignment, data collection, analysis __

Name of Operating Agency 1 Prison Fellowship England and Wales

Name of Operating Agency 2 Her Majesty's Prison Service, Sodexo Justice Services, Serco, G4S

Name of Operating Agency 3 National Offender Management Service

Name of Operating Agency 3 Hampshire Constabulary, PNC access

Name of Research Organization University of Cambridge, Institute of Criminology and
Jerry Lee Centre of Experimental Criminology

D. Other Framework (describe in detail). N/A

3. Unit of Analysis

Check only one

A. People (describe role: offenders, victims, etc.) convicted offenders who admit their guilt

B. Places (describe category: school, corner, face-block, etc) N/A

C. Situations (describe: police-citizen encounters, fights, etc.) N/A

D. Other (describe) N/A

4. Eligibility Criteria

A. Criteria Required

Prison Fellowship requirements – Admission of guilt

Sufficient literacy and language ability

At least six weeks of sentence left to serve after completing a

Sycamore Tree Programme

Research requirements – On the waiting list for the Sycamore Tree Programme

Adult men

Determinate release date

Within a maximum of 18 months of release from time of recruiting
sample

B. Criteria for Exclusion

Prison Fellowship exclusions - No sex offenders or domestic violence offenders

Research exclusions –

No foreign nationals

No women

No young offenders

No indeterminate sentenced offenders

Not on the waiting list for the Sycamore Tree Programme

More than 18 months left to serve at time of recruitment

5. Pipeline: Recruitment or Extraction of Cases (answer all questions)

A. Where will cases come from? Prisons in England

B. Who will obtain them? Chaplains, Sycamore Tree co-ordinators, and Offender Managers

C. How will they be identified? By release date from the waiting list

D. How will each case be screened for eligibility? Chaplains and Sycamore Tree co-ordinators will check the waiting list and eliminate any prisoner with no determinate release date, who has more than 18 months sentence left to serve, or who is a foreign national liable to be deported upon release

E. Who will register the case identifiers prior to random assignment? Researcher

F. What social relationships must be maintained to keep cases coming? Prison Governors and Chaplains within prisons and their Sycamore Tree Programme administrators, Offender Managers within the prisons, prison IT managers, Police PNC access managers, Prison Fellowship Operations managers and Sycamore Tree Programme administrators outside prisons

G. Has a Phase I (no-control, "dry-run") test of the pipeline and treatment process been conducted? If so, N/A

- how many cases were attempted to be treated
- how many treatments were successfully delivered
- how many cases were lost during treatment delivery

6. Timing: Cases come into the experiment in (check only one)

- i. A trickle-flow process, one case at a time N/A
- ii. A single batch assignment N/A
- iii. Repeated batch assignments variable volume at each recruiting session
- iv. Other (describe below) N/A

7. Random Assignment

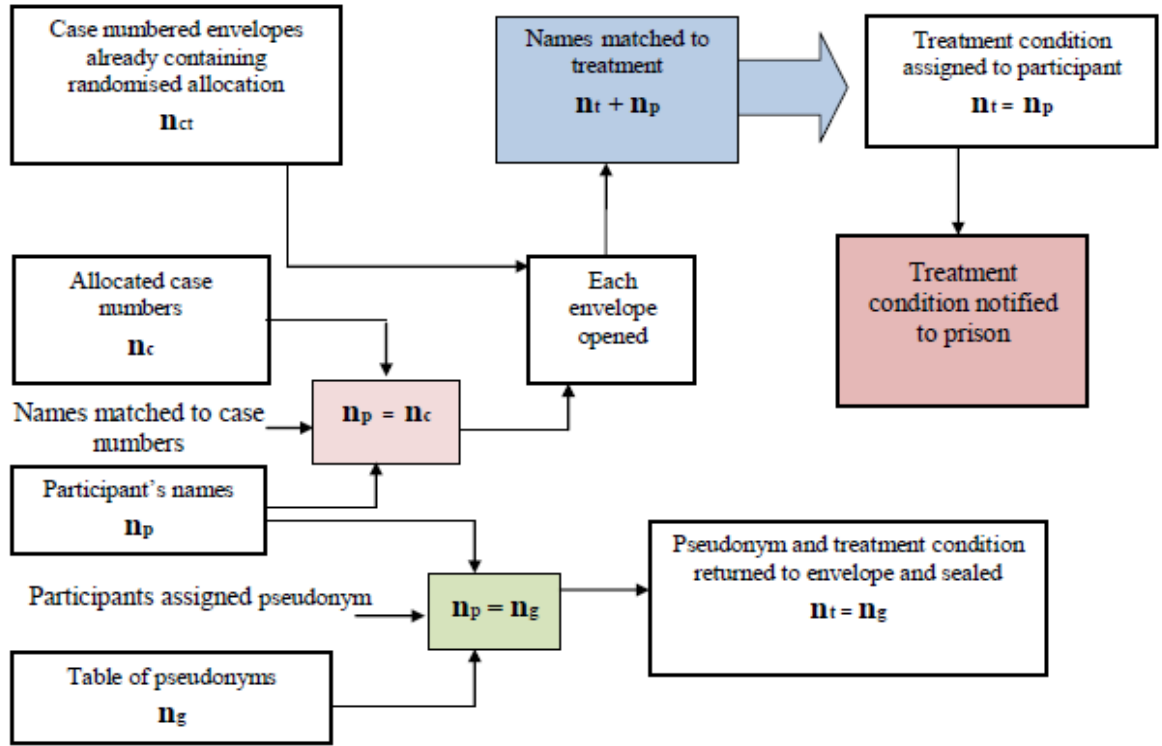
A. How is random assignment sequence to be generated?
(coin-toss, every Nth case, and other non-random tools are banned from CCR-RCT).

Check one from 1, 2 or 3 below

1. Random numbers table → case number sequence → sealed envelopes with case numbers outside and treatment assignment inside, with 2-sheet paper surrounding treatment

- i. Waiting list of men wishing to complete a Sycamore Tree Programme is assembled in prison Chaplaincies
- ii. Source for waiting list is Offender Managers, Sentence Planners and self-referral by prisoners (criteria used are ill defined and generally reflect a perceived need to address "victim issues")
- iii. Chaplains and Sycamore Tree co-ordinators identify from the waiting list which men want to complete a Sycamore Tree Programme and who fit the research criteria (determinate release date and sentence left to serve)
- iv. Chaplains and Sycamore Tree co-ordinators invite eligible men to watch a recruiting DVD and ask volunteers to sign consent form
- v. Names of volunteers are sent to researcher for random assignment to the Sycamore Tree Programme or a non-treatment control group
- vi. Each prison is allocated its own random number sequence which is itself randomly assigned
- vii. Depending on the number of places available on the next Sycamore Tree Programme for research participants, the Chaplains will be given that number of men assigned to treatment and a matching number for a control group. Any remaining men from that cohort will not be randomised until the next Sycamore Tree Programme with places available
- viii. Each man is assigned a case number which is matched to the numbered envelopes
- ix. Sealed envelopes are opened and the treatment condition matched to the research participant (figure X below)

- x. Each man is then assigned a pseudonym for anonymity purposes, this name, together with the treatment condition is placed in the envelope and it is resealed



n = number of cases per batch
 p = real names
 c = case number
 t = condition assigned (T or C)
 g = pseudonyms

Fig. X Randomised allocation of cases
original method

2. Random numbers case-treatment generator program in secure computer

✓ The Cambridge Gateway, computer generated random assignment, became available after initial recruitment of cases. All subsequent cases were/will be allocated using this programme. See figure Y below

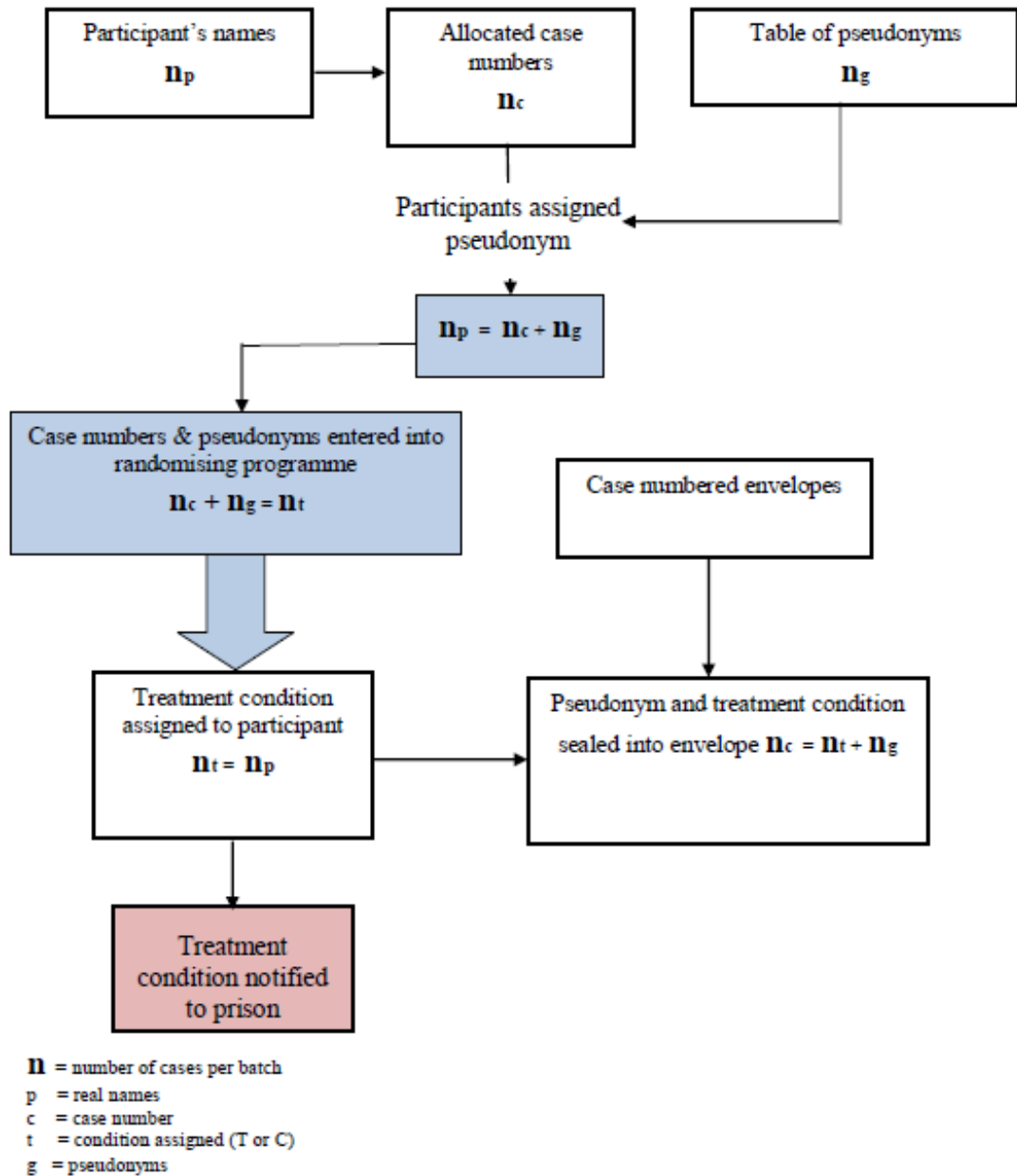


Fig. Y Randomised allocation of cases

3. Other (please describe below) N/A

B. Who is entitled to issue random assignments of treatments?

Role: researcher only

Organization: Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge

C. How will random assignments be recorded in relation to case registration?

Name of data base: Sycamore Tree Programme

Location of data entry: Institute of Criminology

Persons performing data entry: Researcher

8. Treatment and Comparison Elements

A. Experimental or Primary Treatment

1. What elements must happen, with dosage level (if measured) indicated.

Element A:

- a. Complete all six sessions of the Sycamore Tree Programme
- b. Meet a victim of crime in session 3
- c. Engage with other Sycamore Tree Programme participants in role-play and small group discussions
- d. Watch visual aid material which is integral to the Sycamore Tree Programme supplied routinely by Prison Fellowship
- e. Make an act of reparation in session 6 (usually a letter to their own victim or a piece of artwork, poem etc)

Element B:

Complete workbook (supplied by Prison Fellowship and returned to them for marking) and pass/fail the course

Element C: N/A

Other Elements: N/A

2. What elements must *not* happen, with dosage level (if measured) indicated.

Element A: Any infringement of prison rules that lead to exclusion from the Sycamore Tree Programme

Element B: Any other programmes where research participants meet a victim of crime

Element C: N/A

Other Elements: N/A

B. Control or Secondary Comparison Treatment

3. What elements must happen, with dosage level (if measured) indicated.

Element A: No alternative treatment/treatment as usual

Element B: N/A

Element C: N/A

Other Elements:

4. What elements must not happen, with dosage level (if measured) indicated.

Element A: Any other programmes where research participants meet a victim of crime

Element B: N/A

Element C: N/A

Other Elements:

9. Measuring and Managing Treatments

A. Measuring

1. How will treatments be measured? Workbook completed by prisoner during programme
2. Who will measure them? Prison Fellowship tutors following current practice
3. How will data be collected? Researcher
4. How will data be stored? Institute of Criminology by researcher
5. Will data be audited? yes
6. If audited, who will do it? By researcher and routine external moderating system
7. How will data collection reliability be estimated? Researcher and supervisor
8. Will data collection vary by treatment type? No

If so, how?

B. Managing

1. Who will see the treatment measurement data? Prison Fellowship tutors following current practice, researcher
2. How often will treatment measures be circulated to key leaders? N/A
3. If treatment integrity is challenged, whose responsibility is correction? Researcher

10. Measuring and Monitoring Outcomes

A. Measuring

1. How will outcomes be measured? Reconvictions via Police National Computer database
2. Who will measure them? Researcher
3. How will data be collected? Researcher
4. How will data be stored? Database at the Institute of Criminology
5. Will data be audited? yes
6. If audited, who will do it? Researcher and supervisor
7. How will data collection reliability be estimated? Researcher and supervisor
8. Will data collection vary by treatment type? No

If so, how?

B. Monitoring

1. How often will outcome data be monitored? Six monthly (more frequently if required)
2. Who will see the outcome monitoring data? Researcher
3. When will outcome measures be circulated to key leaders? End of research
4. If experiment finds early significant differences, what procedure is to be followed? Stop experiment

11. Analysis Plan

- A. Which outcome measure is considered to be the primary indicator of a difference between experimental treatment and comparison group? *Means of reconviction*
- B. What is the minimum sample size to be used to analyze outcomes? *800 ratio 1:1*
- C. Will all analyses employ an intention-to-treat framework? *Yes*
- D. What is the threshold below which the percent Treatment-as-Delivered would be so low as to bar any analysis of outcomes? *25%*
- E. Who will do the data analysis? *Researcher*
- F. What statistic will be used to estimate effect size? *Cohen's d standardised mean difference of reconviction*
- G. What statistic will be used to calculate P values? *t test*
- H. What is the magnitude of effect needed for a $P = .05$ difference to have an 80% chance of detection with the projected sample size (optional but recommended calculation of power curve) for the primary outcome measure. *Medium*

12. Dissemination Plan

- A. What is the date by which the project agrees to file its first report on CCR-RCT? (report of delay, preliminary findings, or final result). *30th September 2012 (thesis on setting up RCT)*
- B. Does the project agree to file an update every six months from date of first report until date of final report? *Yes*
- C. Will preliminary and final results be published, in a 250-word abstract, on CCR-RCT as soon as available? *Yes*
- D. Will CONSORT requirements be met in the final report for the project? (See <http://www.consort-statement.org/>) *Yes*
- E. What organizations will need to approve the final report? (include any funders or sponsors). *Institute of Criminology*
- F. Do all organizations involved agree that a final report shall be published after a maximum review period of six months from the principal investigator's certification of the report as final? *Yes*
- G. Does principal investigator agree to post any changes in agreements affecting items 12A to 12F above? *Yes*
- H. Does principal investigator agree to file a final report within two years of cessation of experimental operations, no matter what happened to the experiment? (e.g., "random assignment broke down after 3 weeks and the experiment was cancelled" or "only 15 cases were referred in the first 12 months and experiment was suspended"). *Yes*

- ✓ What will be the average waiting time between selecting learners and starting the next course?
- ✓ Who usually selects learners from the waiting list?
- ✓ Are any learners subject to indeterminate sentence? Will it be possible to recruit them?
- ✓ Will the Gov/psychologist accept non-participation in a victim awareness programme on the grounds of being assigned to the control group?
- ✓ Who will show the DVD?
- ✓ Can the DVD be shown to eligible prisoners in the Chapel?
- ✓ is the certificate of appreciation suitable?
- ✓ Will it be possible for chaplains or chaplaincy staff to administer Crime Pics II to the control group?
- ✓ Who will store appreciation certificates, Crime Pics II forms, FAQs, and consent forms? Can I leave them with the chaplaincy? If they are stored at the prison, will it be possible for me to send more forms through the post when more are required?
- ✓ Whoever shows the DVD will preferably be the person who collects the consent forms, it is likely to happen?
- ✓ Will it be possible to fax consent forms to me? If not, can we come to some sensible arrangement?
- ✓ Who will I contact to assign learners between control and experimental groups?
- ✓ Who normally, if anybody, interviews learners before assignment to the STP? If it is the tutors, will they be the people who let learners know whether or not they have got the STP?
- ✓ Is it possible to prioritise prisoners who volunteer for this evaluation? For those in the experimental group an immediate place, for those in the control group a subsequent guaranteed place?
- ✓ Who will sign the forms-appreciation certificates? Me and the Governor, just me, just the Governor, or the Chaplain?
- ✓ Is there a centralised tracking system for any control group/re-arrests and reincarcerations so that they can be prioritised in future?
- ✓ Is there an electronic database? May I have access to it? Is there any way of electronically dumping data into my own computer?
- ✓ Can we devise a system so that allocation/volunteering can be noted on prisoners' records?
- ✓ Will it be possible for me to come and see prisoners in the control group to administer Crime Pics II and collect any demographic data if necessary?
- ✓ Would chaplains like me to design a form for them for selection to the evaluation cohort?
- ✓ Will it be possible for me to have an advanced list of prisoners on the waiting list who are within one year of release and intend to reside in the UK?

- ✓ What is the maximum length of time between faxing me their consent form and me allocating them to either group that is acceptable?
- ✓ What is the maximum length of time I should give learners to consider whether or not to take part?
- ✓ Is it likely that I would be able to have keys?
- ✓ How will I guarantee that selection proceeds as usual?
- ✓ Will it be possible to meet prison psychologists to discuss various points from above?
- ✓ Will it be possible for me to have information on adjudications?
- ✓ How long will it take for me to have security clearance?
- ✓ Do I need to speak to sentence planning staff to discuss the ramifications for volunteers who are in the control group?
- ✓ What difficulties are anticipated in having the research conducted in this prison?
- ✓ Will it be possible, if it becomes clear that it is necessary, to interview prisoners on a one-to-one basis?
- ✓ Will it be possible to bring an audio recording device into the prison although no recording will be done it will be used solely in playback mode?
- ✓ Will it be possible for me to have access to prisoners' records especially considering other programmes that they have done?



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Professor Lawrence W. Sherman
Wolfson Professor of Criminology

*Director, Lee Centre for Experimental
Criminology*

Institute of Criminology
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge CB3 9DT
United Kingdom
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Lawrence.Sherman@crim.cam.ac.uk

Date 31st January 2011

Dear

I am writing to invite you to a seminar on restorative justice at the Athenaeum Club in London on Tuesday, 29 March, 2011. The Club is located at 107, Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5ER. The seminar will be held in the North Library.

The seminar will be followed by a dinner at which our guest of honour will be Michael Spurr, Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service. Other guests will include Natalie Cronin, CEO of Prison Fellowship, England and Wales, and Margaret Wilson, Director of the Cambridge Evaluation of the Sycamore Tree Programme (STP). The seminar will begin at 6 PM, presenting and discussing the design for the STP evaluation. The seminar will conclude by 7 PM, after an opportunity for all 15 participants to ask questions.

Following the seminar, a reception will be held at 7 PM, followed by dinner at 7:30.

I would be delighted if you would be my guest for this entire occasion, from the seminar through the dinner.

If you are able to accept, please could you let me know if you have any dietary requirements. I look forward to hearing from you. (RSVP to Margaret Wilson at mw37@cam.ac.uk)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lawrence W. Sherman'.

Sent on 12th April 2010 to all present plus Director, prison 4



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Institute of Criminology
Jerry Lee Centre of Experimental Criminology
Sycamore Tree Programme
Randomized Controlled Trial
Minutes of NOMS London Seminar
29th March 2011.

Persons present:

CEO, NOMS
Lead Psychologist, NOMS
CEO, Prison Fellowship
Governor, Offender Manager prison 1
Governor, prison 6
Director, prison 7
Governor, prison 3
Director, prison 5
Governor's representative, prison 2
Professor Lawrence Sherman, Cambridge University, Institute of Criminology
Margaret Wilson, Cambridge University, Institute of Criminology

Key Decisions Reached:

1. Control group prisoners in the Sycamore Tree RCT should not be assigned to any other victim awareness programme, or contact with victims while in prison.
2. No other constraints on in-prison, or after-prison, programming are imposed on either STP or control group cases.
3. Foreign nationals, IPP prisoners, and those within 20 weeks of release will remain ineligible for random assignment within the experiment.
4. Chaplains should verify that all eligible inmates are still in the prison, and willing to undertake STP, as of the date each and every name is sent to Margaret Wilson for random assignment.
5. Governors agreed they would attempt to insure minimum transfers of any case in the STP/Cambridge research.
6. Governors agreed to give Margaret Wilson full access to the CNOMIS system for checking on the cases, and any other access to prison staff as necessary.

- ◆ Matters discussed centred on the Randomised Controlled Trial being conducted to evaluate the Sycamore Tree Programme in the six prisons represented above and HMP Lowdham Grange (apologies received from Director, Gareth Sands)

- ◆ Professor Sherman opened the seminar by outlining the history of experimental research and the importance of evidence obtained from Randomised Controlled Trials. He pointed out some of the threats to the integrity of this type of experiment and welcomed the fact that the current study is the first that he knows of to be conducted within

Sent on 12th April 2010 to all present plus Director, prison 4

- ◆ Margaret Wilson stated that she needed access to the CNOMIS database in order to track prisoners should they leave the prison for any reason. This was not felt to pose any problems
- ◆ Natalie Cronin noted that the research would serve to encourage Prison Fellowship staff and volunteers and build on what is already known about Sycamore Tree Programme
- ◆ Although the Sycamore Tree Programme is delivered by volunteers, it is not without cost. However it was recognised to be a very inexpensive intervention within prisons and, with the exception of the Justice Awareness course (derived from the Sycamore Tree Programme), the only one in existence where prisoners meet a victim
- ◆ There was some discussion around the criteria of eligibility for the research. It was noted that the increasing use of indeterminate sentencing has led to Sycamore Tree Programme waiting lists being filled with such prisoners to the extent that prisoners who self refer are in the minority. Although there was a desire that such people should be included within the research design, this is not ethically acceptable since Parole Boards act autonomously and often require people to complete a Sycamore Tree Programme in order to be released. Michael Spurr commented that this position precisely illustrates the need for evidence-based interventions as the efficacy of Sycamore Tree Programme is assumed rather than known. Margaret Wilson commented that she has encountered a prisoner who wished to participate in a Sycamore Tree Programme and had requested that his sentence planner include it on his sentence plan so that he could be transferred to a prison where the course is offered
- ◆ Governors were concerned to know whether solely reconvictions would be used as outcome measures. Professor Sherman assured them that the experiment is designed to measure crime not only by reconvictions but by the harm caused to the individual victim and wider community and, thus, outcome will be measured, so far as is possible, in harm prevented
- ◆ Professor Sherman also outlined the merits of having a multi-site evaluation especially if a small effect in either direction is detected. He explained that, in the past, beneficial interventions have sometimes been discarded or rejected on the grounds that no statistically significant effect is detected. This is often because the sample size for the evaluation or the effect size was small. However, if several small sample sizes are used to test the same intervention, the overall effect is often statistically significant. Also, in criminological research small effects can still be cost-effective
- ◆ Margaret Wilson stated that the aim was to recruit 115 men in each prison and that random allocation would take place within those blocks. 10% (80 n) of the required sample have already been recruited
- ◆ Following further informal discussions all those present expressed their gratitude to Professor Sherman for hosting the event. They also

Appendix 3
'Launch dinner/seminar' for Governors

Sent on 12th April 2010 to all present plus Director, prison 4

indicated their willingness to support the research methodology in every way they were able

- ◆ The seminar and dinner ended with a toast and vote of thanks to Jerry Lee for supporting the event

Appendix 4

Recruiting protocols and forms



Sycamore Tree
Programme Evaluation



SELECTION PROCEEDURE

WHEN	WHO	WHAT	FORM	FROM
1 Prior to next ST course	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Check eligibility - within 1 yr of release (18 months max), no foreign nationals, at least 20 weeks left to serve	-	-
3 Once eligible men invited	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Take men to Chapel (or other venue) and show the recruiting DVD	DVD	C.U.
2 Once eligible men invited, prior to next ST course	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Prepare 'thank you' certificate; requires signature and prison's 'official' heading. Laminating optional but preferred	msw4	C.U.
4 When men have viewed the DVD (before they leave venue)	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Give out to all men the Consent Form with deadline for its return (may be completed then and there if preferred)	msw2	C.U.
5 When men have viewed the DVD (before they leave venue)	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Give out to all men Frequently Asked Questions form	msw5	C.U.
6 When men have viewed the DVD (before they leave venue)	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	OPTIONAL Give all men a copy of the script	msw8	C.U.
7 After time to consider whether to sign up (then and there if preferred)	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Collect signed consent forms and exchange for completed 'thank you' certificate. Record how many eligible, invited, and signed up	msw4	C.U.
8 Once consent forms are collected	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Either Fax signed forms to C.U. (01223 335356 Monday to Friday, 9 am-5 pm only) or Email names and prison numbers (electronic) and retain completed consent forms to be sent to PF by tutor together with work books etc. at end of course. State number of places available on next ST course	msw9	C.U.
9 Once names are received at C.U.	C.U. Margaret	Check by telephoning that men are still in your prison and then allocate each man to either ST course or control group and Email allocation to Chaplaincy 2 weeks prior to start date of next course or when names received.	msw9	C.U.
10 Once allocation is known in Chaplaincy	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Tell the men their allocation. If necessary use Control Group script	msw7	C.U.
11 Once allocation to Control Group is known to the men	Chaplain/ST co-ordinator	Give each man his assurance of no detriment and ensure a copy goes in their prison notes via OMU or Head of Reoffending	msw3	C.U.
12 Men allocated to complete the ST course do so as usual		Ensure tutors keep accurate register of attendance		
13 At final session of the ST course	ST co-ordinator/Tutor	All completed consent forms to be given to tutor for sending to PF head office via secure postage system with other PF paperwork		
14 ROUTINELY, ensure the relevant transfer form is attached to men's paper notes to prevent them completing any victim-present programme or in an attempt to ensure they complete a ST course. If possible notify transfers to Margaret at C.U. so that she can telephone the receiving prison.			msw6/msw6b	C.U.

Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, Sidgwick Avenue, CB3 9DA

Appendix 4 Recruiting protocols and forms



Sycamore Tree
Programme Evaluation



FORM ALLOCATIONS

FORM	WHO TO	WHEN	RETAINED BY
msw4 (thank you)	1 Given to men who attend the DVD viewing	At the time of viewing the DVD	All men
msw2 (consent form)	1 Signed by men who agree to participate in the study then given to ST tutors for sending to PF together with the Workbooks at the end of the next ST course.	At the time of viewing the DVD and when the next ST course ends	PF head office or Chaplaincy if faxed
msw5 (frequently asked questions)	1 Given to men who agree to participate in the study	At the time of viewing the DVD	Participating men
msw8 (copy of DVD script)	1 If you think it necessary, given to men who attend the DVD viewing	At the time of viewing the DVD	Men who'd like one
msw9/msw9excel (electronic spreadsheet)	Sent to Margaret as an Email attachment	When the men have signed (this is your guarantee to Margaret that you possess a signed consent form). The same electronic form is returned to you with the group allocation inserted	
msw7 (control group script)	Used by you to inform the men that they will not be doing the course. Completely optional, you can send them a copy, deliver it in person, or not bother to use it at all	When you inform the men of their group allocation	
msw3 (no detriment)	2 Given to men who will not be completing the course plus a copy to either OMU, Reducing Re-offending, or equivalent	When you inform the men of their group allocation	Participating men and OMU
msw6/msw6b (transfer)	1 Hard copy of the relevant form to OMU, Reducing Re-offending, or equivalent	If possible notify transfers to Margaret at C.U. so that she can telephone the receiving prison.	OMU or equivalent for paper records

Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, Sidgwick Avenue, CB3 9DA



Sycamore Tree Programme
Evaluation

CONFIDENTIAL



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

TESTING OUT THE SYCAMORE TREE PROGRAMME

Thank you for watching the film about the research that's testing out the Sycamore Tree Programme. You will receive a certificate when you return this to the Chaplaincy as a "Thank you" just for watching it and filling the form in.

Remember, those who do Sycamore Tree will be decided at random by a computer. Your sentence will not be affected whether you volunteer to take part in the research or not. If you don't get to do Sycamore Tree, you'll make the research possible just by agreeing to be a part of the research.

If you are willing to help in this research, please answer the questions below. Your name and any details you give are for the information of researchers and will be kept confidential. You will be told in a few days whether you have got on to the Sycamore Tree Programme.

Circle Yes or No

I have watched the film about testing the Sycamore Tree Programme Yes / No

I want to help test out the Sycamore Tree Programme Yes / No

I have been told that whether I volunteer for the research or not will not affect my sentence Yes / No

I understand that I may be in the half that doesn't get Sycamore Yes / No

I have been told that I can change my mind without giving a reason Yes / No

I agree that, as long as I cannot be identified, information I give may be used for research and educational purposes (secondary use) Yes / No

I am willing for researchers to see my criminal history Yes / No

Signed _____

Print name _____

Date of birth _____

Prison number _____

Chaplain/
prison _____

Last address (before custody) _____

Expected release date _____



Sycamore Tree Programme
Evaluation



Non-completion of course

Date:

Whilst at HMP Mr.

NOMS Number:

has agreed to take part in the evaluation of the Sycamore Tree Programme (HMPS Research Council ref. 59/09). He was assigned to the group that, for research purposes, must not complete the Sycamore Tree course, or any intervention programme where a prisoner meets a victim, before release.

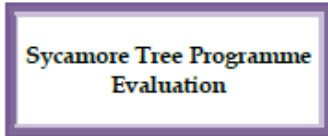
He should receive "no detriment by participating in this study". (Michael Spurr, Chief executive Officer NOMS. 6th December 2010).

His non completion of the Sycamore Tree programme should not be allowed to have a negative impact upon his sentence: including his eligibility for HDC, ROTL, D-Cat. nor his IEP status.

Signed

Name: Head of Reducing Re-offending HMP





CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

THIS CERTIFICATE IS GIVEN TO

.....
(name)

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS ATTENDING
THE PRESENTATION
ABOUT THE EVALUATION OF
THE SYCAMORE TREE PROGRAMME

With thanks

Signed.....

Print Name.....

Prison



Sycamore Tree
Programme Evaluation

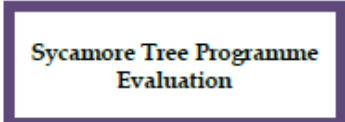
Frequently Asked
Questions



- Q. Will I still be able to do the Sycamore Tree course if I don't take part in the research?
- A. Places are always limited. Once all the volunteers (who have got places on the Sycamore Tree course) have got their places, then you may still get a place on another course.
- Q. Will I get a place on the Sycamore Tree course if I volunteer for the research?
- A. Volunteers will get places first, but you may be in the half of research volunteers who don't get it.
- Q. If I'm in the half that doesn't get a place here, could I get a place on the Sycamore Tree course in another prison?
- A. If you volunteer to take part in the research and you're in the group that doesn't get a place, you won't be able to do the Sycamore Tree Programme while you're serving this sentence. It doesn't mean you can never do it and, if you ever come back inside, you won't be prevented from doing it. In fact it may be possible to make sure you do get a place on a Sycamore Tree course in future.
- Q. Why do the researchers want to know about my criminal history?
- A. The Sycamore Tree Programme aims to help you change your life when you get out of prison and show you how victims of crime feel about the things that have happened to them. By knowing what you have done in the past and why you are in prison (which the tutors of the Sycamore Tree don't know unless you tell them) the researchers can see whether it has made any difference to you.
- Q. How do I know my consent form is confidential?
- A. Once you've filled it in and given it to the Chaplain, one of the Sycamore Tree volunteers, or researchers, it will be faxed or sent via secure post to the researchers in Cambridge. It will be received in a secure office, taken straight from the fax machine or secure post, put into a sealed envelope and left in a locked cupboard for the researchers to collect.
- Q. How do I know that nobody will be able to identify me?
- A. As soon as your signed consent form is received, you will be given a made up name. From then onwards only the made up name will be linked to your details and the answers you give to any questions you are asked.

- Q. If I agree to take part in the research, when will I know whether I've got a place on a Sycamore Tree course?
- A. The Chaplain will be told who has been assigned to a Sycamore Tree course two weeks before the next one (with places available) is due to start. He will also be told at that time who is in the research group that won't have a place on that course.
- Q. Will prison staff know about anything I say?
- A. Researchers are obliged to inform prison staff if they hear anything about planned escapes, harm to other prisoners (or yourself), or undiscovered criminal activity that you know about. Otherwise any information you give to researchers will be absolutely confidential.
- Q. What if I have to do a victim-awareness course for my sentence plan?
- A. Although you can't do the Sycamore Tree course if you're in the research group that won't be offered a place, you can do any other course that Sentence Planners think will help you.
- Q. What happens if I volunteer and then change my mind?
- A. Nothing, you can change your mind at any time and any details you have given will then be destroyed.
- Q. Will the Sycamore Tree course be different now that it's being tested?
- A. No, we want to see whether the Sycamore Tree Programme really can help to make people understand about how victims of crime feel so we don't want anything about it to be different.
- Q. Suppose I volunteer for the research and I'm in the group that can't do the Sycamore Tree Programme and then I get convicted again, could I do it then?
- A. Yes, that would be fine. It may be possible to make sure you got it in the future if you ever got sent back to prison.
- Q. Suppose I volunteer for the research and I'm in the group that can't do the Sycamore Tree Programme, how will prison staff know that I'm not doing it because of the research?
- A. You will be given a note, and there will be a copy of it on your records, to say that you volunteered for the research but didn't actually do the course. It has been authorised that any re-categorisation or IEP status will not be affected if you volunteer but are in the research group that doesn't do the Sycamore Tree course.

- Q. Why will only half of the people who volunteer for the research get a place on the Sycamore Tree course?
- A. It is so that we can check the results of those who do the Sycamore Tree with the results of those who don't. This is the best way to study the programme.
- Q. What happens to all of the information I give?
- A. It will be collected by researchers and kept secure. It will only be used for educational and research purposes and so that we can improve the Sycamore Tree Programme if necessary.
- Q. Why is the Sycamore Tree Programme being tested?
- A. The Sycamore Tree Programme is being tested because, although it has good intentions to help, we don't know whether it does.
- Q. Will I need to speak to any researchers?
- A. No interviews with prisoners are planned at the moment but you may see researchers when they come to watch the Sycamore Tree sessions at your prison. If they are there, you don't have to speak to them as they are watching what goes on during the session.
- Q. If I decide not to help and I get a place on the Sycamore Tree Programme anyway and researchers watch any sessions I'm at, will they know I didn't volunteer?
- A. They may know and they may not but, even if they do, they are there to see whether the same things happen in every prison where the Sycamore Tree Programme runs, not to check up on the people who are actually doing the Sycamore Tree course.
- Q. If I agree to help with the research, will I know the results?
- A. The whole research programme is likely to take more than a year before we have any ideas about the Sycamore Tree course and whether it has helped people. It may be possible to let you know once you are released but that will need to be arranged through the Chaplaincy.



Transfer form

To OMU

HMP

Whilst at HMP

..... agreed to take part in the
(name and prison number)
Randomised Controlled Trial evaluation of the Sycamore Tree Programme (HMPS Research Council ref. 59/09). He was assigned to the group that should not get the programme and should not complete the Sycamore Tree course, or any intervention programme where prisoners meet a victim, before release or transfer from your establishment.

His re-categorisation or IEP status should not be affected by his non-completion of this intervention for research purposes (Michael Spurr, 6th December 2010).

Signed.....

Print Name.....

Prison



Sycamore Tree Programme
Evaluation



Transfer form

To OMU

HMP

Whilst at HMP

..... agreed to take part in the
(name and prison number)

Randomised Controlled Trial evaluation of the Sycamore Tree Programme (HMPS Research Council ref. 59/09). He was assigned to the group that should get the programme and should complete a Sycamore Tree course before release or transfer from your establishment.

This research is approved by Michael Spurr, CEO NOMS (6th December 2010).

Signed.....

Print Name.....

Prison



Sycamore Tree Programme
Evaluation



Assigned to Control Group

The researchers at Cambridge University are very grateful to you for volunteering to take part in the research to test out the Sycamore Tree Programme.

I have to tell you that you are in the group who will not get to do the Sycamore Tree Programme. This means that you will not be able to do it before you're released even if you get transferred to another prison.

You will be able to do any other courses or programmes that your sentence manager thinks will help you, and your sentence is not going to be affected by this.

Your record will have a form signed by..... and you can also have a copy to keep which shows why you haven't done the Sycamore Tree course. Your IEP status and any re-categorisation will not be affected by this result.

I hope you are not too disappointed but it was made clear at the beginning that this could happen to volunteers. This decision is because a computer, at random, picked you. The researchers want you to know that without you helping in this way, they could not do the research.

Researchers hope that this evaluation will find out whether the Sycamore Tree Programme can help men like you or not, so you can be proud of the fact that you are helping many people in the future even though you can't do the Programme yourself.



Sycamore Tree Programme
Evaluation
DVD script



We would all hate to be victims of crime and we all know that we shouldn't hurt or steal from other people. But once you've done something wrong and got caught what should happen next? You have very little chance to put your point of view, there's hardly any opportunity to speak in court or to have your say about what took place and what you think should be done about it. And the same is true of victims, they rarely have an opportunity to express how they have been affected by a crime. So the most important people - offenders and victims just have to accept whatever the court decides.

You have been sent to prison and, whilst serving your sentence, you have asked to go on a Sycamore Tree course. Sycamore Tree is designed to help you understand more about how victims of crime feel and how crime has had an impact on their lives. It aims to help you understand about responsibility and plan a new start in life. Then you may be able to live without reoffending again when you are released.

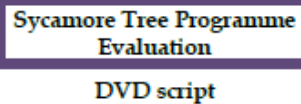
But we don't know whether Sycamore Tree really does help so some important research is being done and you have an opportunity to take part. But the choice is entirely yours.

The way the research will work is that only half of all of you will actually take part - I'll explain why in a moment. But if you do volunteer, and if you are selected you will be able to help test out Sycamore Tree. We already know that some offenders have been able to change and we know that some are less likely to commit new crimes in the future. But is it because of Sycamore Tree? Sycamore Tree sounds good but it's not enough for it to sound good; what we need to do is check 'does it really work?'. Will it help offenders not to reoffend after they're released and keep more people out of prison? Well, until we test it through research we really shan't know.

So this is a research project that gives you the chance to have your say and help us find out if taking part in Sycamore Tree really can keep people out of trouble. You are now being invited to take part in this very important research project.

If you agree to help, here is what will happen; you will have a 50% chance of getting to do Sycamore Tree. Now, whether you're in the 50% of prisoners that do it, or the 50% that don't, will be decided at random by a computer. The reason for the 50-50 split is so that we can check the results of those who do Sycamore Tree against the results of those who don't. This is the best way to select participants. We'll let you know in a week or two whether you'll do Sycamore Tree or not. As I said, the decision is made randomly by a computer. If you are not selected you'll have lost absolutely nothing - in fact you'll still have helped in the research. If you are selected, you will do Sycamore Tree.

Your sentence will not be affected whether you volunteer to take part in the research or not. If you're in the 50% who get to do Sycamore Tree or the 50% who don't, you'll make the research possible just by agreeing to participate. Incidentally, researchers might wish to interview you about the feelings you have about the crime you've committed and why you want to do Sycamore Tree.



Now remember even if you volunteer, only half will be selected - and let me stress again you don't have to participate - it's your decision. If you say no, you won't be treated any differently, and your remaining sentence will be unchanged. If you do volunteer, and you're in the 50% who don't get on the Sycamore Tree, you'll still have all the opportunities for other things that you would have had anyway.

But research is our best hope of making real progress in improving the way we do justice and we can't do it without you. I can't tell you that Sycamore Tree will work for you - if I could we wouldn't need to do the research in the first place but I can tell you that what we do know about prisoners who have done it is encouraging. Your agreement to take part in this research may keep more people out of trouble; it may prevent crimes against other people, and it may help build a safer society.

We don't yet know but with your help we could be about to find out.

Thank you for listening and considering whether to take part in this research.



Prisoner Name:

Prison Number:

Houseblock:

Date:

Dear

Following a referral to the Sycamore Tree programme, you are invited to attend an information session regarding the course. This will take place on **Thursday 14th April in the Chapel**. Therefore when you are called down to the Chapel, it is very important that you attend. Please note that you are to go to your place of work as normal unless told otherwise.

Please remember to bring your ID card

Programmes Manager



Selection Criteria Guidance Notes

Victim Awareness and Restorative Justice Programme (OCN accredited)

Selection of Prisoners for Suitability

- Sycamore Tree is appropriate for Men, Women and Young Offenders serving custodial sentences of any duration and tariff except:
- It is not currently considered suitable for prisoners sentenced for sex-offences, domestic violence, or those with significant, diagnosed mental health problems.
- The current teaching material is not considered to be suitable for Juvenile Offenders.
- It is inclusive to all regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, faith adherence, gender, etc

If possible – the Chaplain will check information on LIDS and with Healthcare before carrying out each assessment.

Criteria

1. The prisoner must voluntarily want to participate in Sycamore Tree and will not be selected solely due to a requirement to undertake a victim awareness course as part of their Sentence Plan.
2. With the proviso above - no more than 4 PPOs, 4 ISPPs or 4 lifers prisoners can take part in any one course (except with the agreement of Prison Fellowship).
3. Prisoners who categorically deny their convictions are not suitable.
4. It is not a requirement that they recognize that there are victims as a result of their offending behaviour. Prisoners who have committed what they perceive to be 'victimless crimes' are eligible for Sycamore Tree.
5. The prisoner must remain in the prison where the course is started and have sufficient time before their Anticipated Release Date to complete all sessions of the course (usually 6 weeks).
6. The prisoner must not be participating in other programmes that would cause a conflict in attending every Sycamore Tree session.
7. Prisoners with literacy ability lower than Entry 3 can only take part in Sycamore Tree if Prison Fellowship volunteers or the prison are able to provide additional literacy support. *(Prisoners with a poor literacy ability ie lower than Level 1 are recommended to improve their literacy skills if the length of their sentence allows and then participate in Sycamore Tree)*
8. Each prisoner must read and understand the content of the Sycamore Tree 3-fold leaflet and sign an Acceptance Form provided by Prison Fellowship prior to selection for a Sycamore Tree course.
9. Each prisoner must be able and willing to fully complete the Sycamore Tree Workbooks in his/her own time between each session and bring them along completed as instructed for each session.

Q. Who should carry out the selection assessment?

- A. The OMU Manager or someone working under their supervision. For selection of prisoners for Sycamore Tree this would usually be the Chaplain or their delegate.

Recommendations from 'Suitability for Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes' ¹

- Correct targeting of treatment is a fundamental principle of What Works
- Central NOMS principle is that "Resources follow risk", to use them to maximum effect.
- Treatment should be carefully targeted at those who will benefit from it most.
- Correct targeting is likely to be a NOMS "metric" i.e. a standard that the Prison Service will be judged by.
- We therefore needed to formally set out the suitability criteria for each programme.

The Suitability Guide's two principles

- Only offenders with suitable risk and needs should enter the programme
- When an offender has the right level of risk and need, we must find ways to make it possible for him/her to benefit from the opportunity

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Sycamore Tree Programme
(OCNER Accredited)

Learner Workbook 2, level 2

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01/2013



CONTINUOUS
OBSERVATIONS
DEFINITIONS



BODY LANGUAGE

POSTURE

	Stance	Trunk inclination	Head inclination	Arms	Legs
1	Erect	Erect	Erect	Hands on chin	Stretched forward
2	Hunched	Forwards	Forwards/ down	Clasped on lap	Foot on knee
3	Slouched	Backwards	Backwards	Hands on head	Legs/ankles crossed
4	Arms on table	Left leaning	Left leaning	Open	Foot tapping
5	Leaning	Right leaning	Right leaning	Arms folded	Bent at knees

FACIAL EXPRESSION

	Gaze	Face
1	Looking at individual	Laughing
2	Looking down	Smiling
3	Looking at something	Frowning/ Grimacing
4	Looking at nothing	Crying
5	Shut	No expression

ATTENTION

	Attention	Watching	Group mode
1	Apparently interested	Tutor	Whole Group(WG)
2	Apparently listening	Small group leader	
3	Apparently distracted	Other Learner/s	Small Group(SG)
4	Apparently asleep	Victim	Tea Break (TB)
5	Apparently curious	Other person (specify)	

ACTIVITY (whole group)

	Sound, utterance	Volume	Activity
1	Verbal solo	Very loud	Tutor/S G L Teaching/admin
2	Verbal several	Loud	Discussion / Chatting/Writing
3	Non-verbal	Conversational	Learner/s presenting at front
4	Laughter	Quiet	Learners Q & A/feedback
5	Silence	Whisper	DVD/ film/ flip chart

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Head Inclination	either leaning or turned to one side
Listening/watching	what person is the individual learner listening to or watching during the specified time slot at the time he is observed (if paperwork, forms, film, or DVD this is 9)
Group mode	observation taking place during whole group time, small group time, or tea break
Attention	this is quite a subjective category but may be helpful. During piloting I noticed that learners also watch each other quite intently, therefore code 5 refers only to 'off- centre stage' watching
Activity	refers to the task currently being undertaken by the group whilst individuals are being observed
Changes	each change of group mode or activity marked by line in coloured header

Appendix 6
Observation grids and questionnaires



CONTINUOUS
OBSERVATIONS
INDIVIDUALS ONLY



Date Prison Session number Chaplain

Individual ID.	Timed 5 minute intervals									
Posture										
Stance 1-5										
Trunk 1-5										
Head 1-5										
Arms 1-5										
Legs 1-5										
Facial Expression										
Gaze 1-5										
Face 1-5										
Attention										
Attention 1-5										
Watching 1-5										
Group 1-3										

Individual ID.	Timed 5 minute intervals									
Posture										
Stance 1-5										
Trunk 1-5										
Head 1-5										
Arms 1-5										
Legs 1-5										
Facial Expression										
Gaze 1-5										
Face 1-5										
Attention										
Attention 1-5										
Watching 1-5										
Group 1-3										

Individual ID.	Timed 5 minute intervals									
Posture										
Stance 1-5										
Trunk 1-5										
Head 1-5										
Arms 1-5										
Legs 1-5										
Facial Expression										
Gaze 1-5										
Face 1-5										
Attention										
Attention 1-5										
Watching 1-5										
Group 1-3										

Individual ID.	Timed 5 minute intervals									
Posture										
Stance 1-5										
Trunk 1-5										
Head 1-5										
Arms 1-5										
Legs 1-5										
Facial Expression										
Gaze 1-5										
Face 1-5										
Attention										
Attention 1-5										
Watching 1-5										
Group 1-3										

Appendix 6
Observation grids and questionnaires



GLOBAL OBSERVATIONS



WHOLE GROUP TOGETHER

Date Prison Chaplain
Session number Victim present Guests present Indoors Outdoors

WHOLE GROUP ONLY										Timed 5 minute intervals throughout										
Sound 1-5																				
Volume 1-5																				
Activity 1-5																				

WHOLE GROUP ONLY										Timed 5 minute intervals throughout										
Sound 1-5																				
Volume 1-5																				
Activity 1-5																				

General mixing pattern during tea break

Animated, well mixed [1] Group talking [2] One to one talking [3] Isolated individuals [4]

Who's talking with learners

Tutor	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Group leader 1	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Group leader 2	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Group leader 3	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Group leader 4	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Group leader 5	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Victim	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Learners	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Guests 1	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Guests 2	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Guests 3	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Guests 4	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Guests 5	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]

Activity

Drinking	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Smoking	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]

Physical Contact with learners

Hug	never	[1]	once or twice	[2]	several times	[3]	many times	[4]
Arm around	never	[1]	once or twice	[2]	several times	[3]	many times	[4]
Pat on back	never	[1]	once or twice	[2]	several times	[3]	many times	[4]
Handshake	never	[1]	once or twice	[2]	several times	[3]	many times	[4]
Touch body	never	[1]	once or twice	[2]	several times	[3]	many times	[4]
Avoided	never	[1]	once or twice	[2]	several times	[3]	many times	[4]



GLOBAL
OBSERVATIONS



Prison

Chaplain

Course number, number and date of session

PEOPLE

Victim present Male [1] Female [2] Yes [3] No [4]
 Crime reported _____
 Number learners present _____
 Number volunteers present Male ____ Age Approx ____ [1] Female ____ Age Approx ____ [2]
 Number public present Male ____ Age Approx ____ [1] Female ____ Age Approx ____ [2]
 Any others present Male ____ Age Approx ____ [1] Female ____ Age Approx ____ [2]

VENUE

adequate space Spacious [1] Enough room [2] Adequate [3] Cramped [4] Completely unsuitable [5]
 Standard of chairs Comfortable [1] Satisfactory [2] Adequate [3] Uncomfortable [4] Dreadful [5]
 Cleanliness Very clean and bright [1] Clean [2] Adequate [3] Looking tired [4] Messy [5]
 Comfort Too cold [1] Chilly [2] Just right [3] Too warm [4] Hot [5]
 Seating Rows facing front [1] Groups facing front [2] Large circle [3] Horse shoe [4] Other [5]
 Small-group seating Circle [1] Square [2] Other [3]
 Location Chapel [1] Large room [2] Interview room [3] Communal room [4] Other [5]
 Privacy Total [1] Noise but not intrusive [2] No interruptions [3] Intrusive noise [4] Intrusive noise and interruptions [5]
 Move to small groups Difficult within the space [1] Furniture to be moved [2] Easy [3]
 Refreshments available Hot or cold drinks and biscuits [1] Hot and cold drinks [2] No refreshments [3]



GLOBAL
OBSERVATIONS



VISUAL AIDS

TV	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]
Video player	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]
DVD player	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]
Flipchart	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]
OHP	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]
pebbles and water	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]
lights etc	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]
other _____	Working	[1]	Not working	[2]	Not present	[3]

CONVERSATIONS

Number of separate conversations seen		_____								
number of individuals involved	_____	Within Formal group	[1]	Within Informal group	[2]					
number of individuals involved	_____	Within Formal group	[1]	Within Informal group	[2]					
number of individuals involved	_____	Within Formal group	[1]	Within Informal group	[2]					
number of individuals involved	_____	Within Formal group	[1]	Within Informal group	[2]					
number of individuals involved	_____	Within Formal group	[1]	Within Informal group	[2]					
number of individuals involved	_____	Within Formal group	[1]	Within Informal group	[2]					
Volume	Loud	[1]	Moderate	[2]	Normal	[3]	Quiet	[4]	Whispered	[5]
Animation	Highly	[1]	Somewhat	[2]	Polite	[3]	Little	[4]	Stilted	[5]
Silence or pauses	None noticeable	[1]	One or two	[2]	A few	[3]	Several	[4]	Many	[5]
Rhythm	None noticeable	[1]	Very little	[2]	Quite	[3]	Good	[4]	Intense	[5]



GLOBAL
OBSERVATIONS



OVERALL INTERACTIONS

Victim

Introductions

Learners	[1]	PF volunteers	[2]	Members of the public	[3]	Procedures explained	[4]	Settled comfortably	[5]
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Position

Front facing class	[1]	One side facing class	[2]	Sitting	[3]	Standing	[4]	Other	[5]
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Signs of being uncomfortable

Nervous, unsure	[1]	Some	[2]	Calm	[3]	Composed, articulate	[4]	Fully in control	[5]
-----------------	-----	------	-----	------	-----	----------------------	-----	------------------	-----

Approval of offenders as people

None	[1]	A little	[2]	Some	[3]	Quite a lot	[4]	A lot	[5]
------	-----	----------	-----	------	-----	-------------	-----	-------	-----

Style of victim's account

Long narration	[1]	Story led by tutor	[2]	Interview technique	[3]	Other	[4]		
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How much was victim affected by crime suffered

Life changing	[1]	A great deal	[2]	Significantly	[3]	Not much	[4]	Not affected	[5]
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Any specific effects mentioned

Anxiety	[1]	Depression	[2]	Sleeplessness	[3]	Anger	[4]	Flashback	[5]
Financial	[6]	Family	[7]	Agoraphobia	[8]	Fear	[9]	Other	[10]

Any treatment mentioned

Hospital	[1]	Psychiatric	[2]	Counselling	[3]	GP	[4]	Medication	[5]
----------	-----	-------------	-----	-------------	-----	----	-----	------------	-----

Stayed for tea break

Session 3 yes	[1]	Session 3 no	[2]	Session 6 yes	[3]	Session 6 no	[4]	No tea break	[5]
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Community members

Tutor's briefing

What to expect	[1]	Clear instructions	[2]	Given visual aids	[3]	Conversation guides	[4]	Escorted	[5]
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Tutor's debriefing (community members only)

Security OK	[1]	Altered mind about offenders	[2]	Pleased with attendance	[3]	Sympathetic	[4]	Encouraged	[5]
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Reaction to learners' acts of reparation

Attention	[1]	Questions	[2]	Surprise	[3]	Anger	[4]	Encourage	[5]
Condemn	[6]	Dismissive	[7]	Unbelief	[8]	Silence	[9]	Non-verbal	[10]



GLOBAL
OBSERVATIONS



Response to learners' acts of reparation

No response	[1]	Encouraging murmur	[2]	Applause	[3]	Get up to speak	[4]	Express solidarity	[5]
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Signs of being uncomfortable

Not at all	[1]	A little	[2]	Some	[3]	Quite a lot	[4]	A lot	[5]
------------	-----	----------	-----	------	-----	-------------	-----	-------	-----

Approval of offenders as people

None	[1]	A little	[2]	Some	[3]	Quite a lot	[4]	A lot	[5]
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Learners

Views of programme

Excellent	[1]	Good	[2]	Interesting	[3]	Boring	[4]	Complete waste of time	[5]
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Arrival times

Early	[1]	On time	[2]	Little late	[3]	Very late	[4]	Non-arrival	[5]
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Settling down quickly

Subdued	[1]	Settled quickly	[2]	Several minutes	[3]	Lots of fidgeting	[4]	More than five minutes	[5]
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Dominance

No one dominant	[1]	One learner	[2]	Few learners	[3]	How many	[4]	Power struggle	[5]
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Emotional intensity

None	[1]	A little	[2]	Some	[3]	Quite a lot	[4]	Extreme	[5]
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Climate

Attentive excited	[1]	Attentive tense	[2]	Noisy busy	[3]	Quiet busy	[4]	Quiet idle	[5]
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Group solidarity

Physical contact	[1]	Verbal encouragement	[2]	Laughing together	[3]	Comforting each other	[4]	Volunteers affected	[5]
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Silences and pauses

A lot uncomfortable	[1]	A lot	[2]	Some	[3]	A few	[4]	None	[5]
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Positive content

Praise	[1]	Encouragement	[2]	Agreement	[3]	Empathy	[4]	Understanding	[5]
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Negative content

Rejection	[1]	Disagreement	[2]	Discouraging	[3]	Grudging	[4]	Indifferent	[5]
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GLOBAL
OBSERVATIONS



Prayer							
Before session	[1]	After session	[2]	Outside prayer group	[3]	None	[4]
Chaplain							
Pre-course Administration	[1]	Prayer	[2]	Attended session	[3]	Group leader	[4] Selected participants [5]
Presented certificates	[6]	Talked to learners	[7]	Not involved	[8]		
Governor							
Admin involvement	[1]	Attended session	[2]	Presented certificates	[3]	Talked to learners	[4] Not involved [5]
Prison staff							
Admin involvement	[1]	Attended session	[2]	Presented certificates	[3]	Talked to learners	[4] Not involved [5]
Prison staff influence							
Learners encouraged	[1]	Learners comfortable	[2]	None	[3]	Learners uncomfortable	[4] Learners discouraged [5]
Organisation							
Chaotic	[1]	Haphazard	[2]	Coping	[3]	Smooth	[4] Very efficient [5]
Paperwork during session							
Clumsy	[1]	Inefficient	[2]	Quite efficient	[3]	Efficient	[4] Very efficient [5]
General debriefing							
Critical comments	[1]	Minor problems	[2]	Generally neutral	[3]	Tutor satisfied	[4] Very positive [5]
Tea breaks (who attended)							
Victim only	[1]	Victim and public	[2]	community only	[3]	Staff	[4] Volunteers only [5]



CONTINUOUS
OBSERVATIONS
SESSION 1



Date _____ Prison _____ Chaplain _____

Arrival times

Early	[1]	On time	[2]	Little late	[3]	Very late	[4]
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Settling down quickly

Subdued	[1]	Settled quickly	[2]	Several minutes	[3]	More than five minutes	[4]
---------	-----	-----------------	-----	-----------------	-----	------------------------	-----

General demeanour

Enthusiastic	[1]	Willing	[2]	Subdued	[3]	Defiant	[4]
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Attention to instructions

Prompt	[1]	Slow but complied	[2]	Repeatedly asked	[3]	Ignored	[4]
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General attention

Interested	[1]	Listening	[2]	Fidgeting	[3]	Quite distracted	[4]
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Work books and forms

Writing	[1]	Reading and writing	[2]	Reading	[3]	Not using	[4]
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General admin

Form distribution	[1]	Work books	[2]	Instructions	[3]	Introductions	[4]
-------------------	-----	------------	-----	--------------	-----	---------------	-----

Who's talking

Tutor Leader	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Group leader	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Learners	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]

Activity

Whole Group	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]
Small Groups	Most of the time	[1]	Half time	[2]	Little	[3]

Number of small groups

Number in each group

Signs of being uncomfortable/wary

Not at all	[1]	A little	[2]	Some	[3]	Quite a lot	[4]	A lot	[5]
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GLOBAL OBSERVATIONS



SESSION 3 VICTIM PRESENT

Date	Prison	Chaplain
Victim offence		
Arrival times		
Early	[1] On time	[2] Little late [3] Very late [4]
Settling down quickly		
Subdued	[1] Settled quickly	[2] Several minutes [3] More than five minutes [4]
General demeanour		
Enthusiastic	[1] Willing	[2] Subdued [3] Defiant [4]
General attention		
Interested	[1] Listening	[2] Fidgeting [3] Quite distracted [4]
Work books		
Writing	[1] Reading and writing	[2] Reading [3] Not using [4]
Who's talking		
Tutor Leader	Most of the time	[1] Half time [2] Little [3]
Group leader	Most of the time	[1] Half time [2] Little [3]
Victim	Most of the time	[1] Half time [2] Little [3]
Learners	Most of the time	[1] Half time [2] Little [3]
Activity		
Whole Group	Most of the time	[1] Half time [2] Little [3]
Small Groups	Most of the time	[1] Half time [2] Little [3]
Number of small groups		
Number in each group		
Response to victim		
None at all	[1] listened	[2] led applause [3] spontaneous applause [4] Visibly moved [5]
Reaction to victim		
Opportunity given for questions	yes [1] no [2]	
Attention	[1] Questions	[2] Surprise [3] Anger [4] Sympathise [5]
Apologise	[6] Dismissive [7] Unbelief	[8] Silence [9] Non-verbal [10]
Questions		
Many	[1] Several	[2] A few [3] One or two [4] None [5]
Tone of questions		
Surprised	[1] Curious	[2] Details [3] Offender forgiven [4] None [5]
examples		
Signs of being uncomfortable		
Not at all	[1] A little	[2] Some [3] Quite a lot [4] A lot [5]

Appendix 6
Observation grids and questionnaires



CONTINUOUS
OBSERVATIONS
FINAL SESSION



Date _____ Prison _____ Chaplain _____
VICTIM PRESENT yes [1] no [2]

Victim offence _____
GUESTS PRESENT number _____
Governor yes [1] no [2]
Other official yes [1] no [2]
Members of public yes [1] no [2]

Arrival times

Early [1] On time [2] Little late [3] Very late [4]

Settling down quickly

Subdued [1] Settled quickly [2] Several minutes [3] More than five minutes [4]

General demeanour

Enthusiastic [1] Willing [2] Subdued [3] Defiant [4]

General attention

Interested [1] Listening [2] Fidgeting [3] Quite distracted [4]

Work books

Writing [1] Reading and writing [2] Reading [3] Not using [4]

Who's talking

Tutor Leader Most of the time [1] Half time [2] Little [3]

Group leader Most of the time [1] Half time [2] Little [3]

Victim Most of the time [1] Half time [2] Little [3]

Learners Most of the time [1] Half time [2] Little [3]

Guests Most of the time [1] Half time [2] Little [3]

Activity

Whole Group Most of the time [1] Half time [2] Little [3]

Small Groups Most of the time [1] Half time [2] Little [3]

Number of small groups _____

Number in each group _____

Response to victim

Not at all [1] A little [2] Some [3] Quite a lot [4] A lot [5]

Support of victim

Not at all [1] A little [2] Some [3] Quite a lot [4] A lot [5]

Responsibility taken for offences

Not at all [1] A little [2] Some [3] Quite a lot [4] A lot [5]

Affected by own crimes

Appendix 6
Observation grids and questionnaires

Not at all	[1]	A little	[2]	Some	[3]	Quite a lot	[4]	A lot	[5]
Signs of being uncomfortable									
Not at all	[1]	A little	[2]	Some	[3]	Quite a lot	[4]	A lot	[5]
Reaction to members of the public/guests									
Nervous	[1]	Shame or embarrassment	[2]	No reaction	[3]	Pleased to see them	[4]	Other	[5]
Final piece of work									
Letter to own victim	[1]	Letter to common victim	[2]	Poem	[3]	Other artwork	[4]	Dropped pebble only	[5]
How delivered									
Read from front	[1]	Read from seat	[2]	Read by surrogate	[3]	Other	[4]		
Number from front			[1]	Number from sitting			[2]		
Number used surrogate			[3]	Number other (eg workbook)			[4]		
Final piece of work									
Remorseful	[1]	Apologetic	[2]	Neutral	[3]	Blame othe vrs	[4]	Defiant	[5]
Future resolve									
Go straight	[1]	Think about others	[2]	Do good things	[3]	Go to church	[4]	Not mentioned	[5]
Final session response									
Disclosed offence	[1]	Realised harm done	[2]	Express relief	[3]	Pride in completion	[4]	Nothing expressed	[5]
Views of programme									
Excellent	[1]	Good	[2]	Interesting	[3]	Boring	[4]	Complete waste of time	[5]
Guests' reactions									
Supportive	[1]	Surprised	[2]	Mixed well	[3]	Indifferent	[4]	Condemnatory	[5]



**SYCAMORE TREE
PROGRAMME
EVALUATION**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**
INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

**QUESTIONNAIRE
VOLUNTEERS AND TUTORS
Session 1**

Prison _____ Chaplain _____ Course number _____ date _____

Please answer all questions. Your answers are anonymous, confidential, and for research purposes only.
Your opinion is important and relevant to the research. Please give reasons where asked for them.
You may circle the comment or the number adjacent to it, or mark with a cross, whichever you prefer.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS COURSE

Was this session similar to different groups of learners on other courses?

Very representative	[1]	Quite representative	[2]	Representative	[3]	Not representative	[4]	Nothing like others	[5]
---------------------	-----	----------------------	-----	----------------	-----	--------------------	-----	---------------------	-----

In your opinion how well did this session go?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason _____

In your opinion how did this session rate compared with other first sessions you have been involved with?

Much better	[1]	Better	[2]	The same	[3]	Worse	[4]	Much worse	[5]
-------------	-----	--------	-----	----------	-----	-------	-----	------------	-----

Reason _____

In your opinion were there any particularly dominant learners?

Yes several	[1]	Yes one or two	[2]	Just one	[3]	Didn't notice	[4]	Well-balanced	[5]
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In your opinion were there any particularly reticent learners?

Yes several	[1]	Yes one or two	[2]	Just one	[3]	Didn't notice	[4]	Well-balanced	[5]
-------------	-----	----------------	-----	----------	-----	---------------	-----	---------------	-----

In your opinion did you notice any bonding or solidarity happening between learners?

Really bonded	[1]	Became quite solid	[2]	Noticeable warmth	[3]	Very little	[4]	None at all	[5]
---------------	-----	--------------------	-----	-------------------	-----	-------------	-----	-------------	-----

Were you or any of the group leaders emotionally affected by this current session?

Extremely affected	[1]	Quite affected	[2]	Some impact	[3]	Hardly affected	[4]	Don't know	[5]
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QUESTIONS CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION

Was there any difficulty in finding a victim for this course?

Extremely difficult	[1]	Difficult	[2]	Not too bad	[3]	None at all	[4]	Don't know	[5]
---------------------	-----	-----------	-----	-------------	-----	-------------	-----	------------	-----

Were there any problems with security clearances?

A lot	[1]	Some	[2]	A few	[3]	None	[4]	Don't know	[5]
-------	-----	------	-----	-------	-----	------	-----	------------	-----

If yes were they easily resolved?

Very simply	[1]	Fairly	[2]	No	[3]	Difficult	[4]	Don't know	[5]
-------------	-----	--------	-----	----	-----	-----------	-----	------------	-----

Reason _____

How would you rate the support of prison staff (uniformed) for this course?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate your contact with the Chaplaincy for this course?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the team of volunteers here?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the support from Prison Fellowship headquarters?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the venue you're given?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the visual aids you have to use?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOURSELF

gender	M [1]	F [2]		
age	25-34 [1]	35-54 [2]	55-64 [3]	65 or over [4]
employed	full time [1]	part time [2]	retired [3]	unemployed [4]
education level	secondary [1]	college [2]	university [3]	vocational [4]
teaching experience	yes [1]	no [2]		
years with PF	_____			
ethnicity	white [1]	Afrocaribbean [2]	Asian [3]	other [4]



**SYCAMORE TREE
PROGRAMME
EVALUATION**



**QUESTIONNAIRE
VOLUNTEERS AND TUTORS
Session 3**

Prison

Chaplain

Course number

date

Please answer all questions. Your answers are anonymous, confidential, and for research purposes only.
Your opinion is important and relevant to the research. Please give reasons where asked for them.
You may circle the comment or the number adjacent to it, or mark with a cross, whichever you prefer.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS COURSE

Was this session typical of this group of learners in session 1 and 2?

Very representative [1]	Quite representative [2]	Representative [3]	Not representative [4]	Nothing like others [5]
-------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	-------------------------

Was this session 3 similar to different groups of learners in session 3 on other courses?

Very representative [1]	Quite representative [2]	Representative [3]	Not representative [4]	Nothing like others [5]
-------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	-------------------------

In your opinion how good has this course been so far?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

In your opinion how well did this session go?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

In your opinion how does this course so far rate compared with others you have been involved with?

Much better [1]	Better [2]	The same [3]	Worse [4]	Much worse [5]
-----------------	------------	--------------	-----------	----------------

Reason

In your opinion were there any particularly dominant learners?

Yes several [1]	Yes one or two [2]	Just one [3]	Didn't notice [4]	Well-balanced [5]
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In your opinion were there any particularly reticent learners?

Yes several [1]	Yes one or two [2]	Just one [3]	Didn't notice [4]	Well-balanced [5]
-----------------	--------------------	--------------	-------------------	-------------------

In your opinion did you notice any bonding or solidarity happening between learners?

Really bonded [1]	Became quite solid [2]	Noticeable warmth [3]	Very little [4]	None at all [5]
-------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------	-----------------

In your opinion what impact did the victim (and/or their story) have on the learners?

Extreme impact	[1]	Quite affected	[2]	Some impact	[3]	Hardly any impact	[4]	No impact	[5]
----------------	-----	----------------	-----	-------------	-----	-------------------	-----	-----------	-----

In your opinion did learners generally accept responsibility for their crimes?

Definitely	[1]	Yes	[2]	Probably	[3]	I doubt it	[4]	Definitely not	[5]
------------	-----	-----	-----	----------	-----	------------	-----	----------------	-----

Were you or any of the group leaders emotionally affected by this current session?

Extremely affected	[1]	Quite affected	[2]	Some impact	[3]	Hardly affected	[4]	Don't know	[5]
--------------------	-----	----------------	-----	-------------	-----	-----------------	-----	------------	-----

QUESTIONS CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION

Was there any difficulty in finding a victim for this course?

Extremely difficult	[1]	Difficult	[2]	Not too bad	[3]	None at all	[4]	Don't know	[5]
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Were there any problems with security clearances?

A lot	[1]	Some	[2]	A few	[3]	None	[4]	Don't know	[5]
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If yes were they easily resolved?

Very simply	[1]	Fairly	[2]	No	[3]	Difficult	[4]	Don't know	[5]
-------------	-----	--------	-----	----	-----	-----------	-----	------------	-----

Reason

How would you rate the support of prison staff (uniformed) for this course?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate your contact with the Chaplaincy for this course?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the team of volunteers here?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the support from prison Fellowship headquarters?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the venue you're given?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the visual aids you have to use?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOURSELF

gender	M	[1]	F	[2]				
age	25-34	[1]	35-54	[2]	55-64	[3]	65 or over	[4]
employed	full time	[1]	part time	[2]	retired	[3]	unemployed	[4]
education level	secondary	[1]	college	[2]	university	[3]	vocational	[4]
teaching experience	yes	[1]	no	[2]				
years with PF							
ethnicity	white	[1]	Afrocaribbean	[2]	Asian	[3]	other	[4]

In your opinion did learners generally accept responsibility for their crimes?

Definitely	[1]	Yes	[2]	Probably	[3]	I doubt it	[4]	Definitely not	[5]
------------	-----	-----	-----	----------	-----	------------	-----	----------------	-----

Were you or any of the group leaders emotionally affected by this current session?

Extremely affected	[1]	Quite affected	[2]	Some impact	[3]	Hardly affected	[4]	Don't know	[5]
--------------------	-----	----------------	-----	-------------	-----	-----------------	-----	------------	-----

In your opinion how much were the learners affected by the presence of the community guests?

Extremely affected	[1]	Quite affected	[2]	Some impact	[3]	Hardly affected	[4]	No reaction	[5]
--------------------	-----	----------------	-----	-------------	-----	-----------------	-----	-------------	-----

During this whole course do you think there was a high or low point for the learners? If so, when?

High point Yes	[1]	Session number	High point No	[2]	Low point Yes	[3]	Session number	Low point No	[4]
----------------	-----	----------------	---------------	-----	---------------	-----	----------------	--------------	-----

During this whole course do you think there was a high or low point for you or the other group leaders? If so when?

High point Yes	[1]	Session number	High point No	[2]	Low point Yes	[3]	Session number	Low point No	[4]
----------------	-----	----------------	---------------	-----	---------------	-----	----------------	--------------	-----

How many men in your group made an act of reparation?

Stood at front	From their seat	In their book
Group leader read	Tutor read	None made

QUESTIONS CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION

Was there any difficulty in finding a victim or guests for this course?

Extremely difficult	[1]	Difficult	[2]	Not too bad	[3]	None at all	[4]	Don't know	[5]
---------------------	-----	-----------	-----	-------------	-----	-------------	-----	------------	-----

Were there any problems with security clearances?

A lot	[1]	Some	[2]	A few	[3]	None	[4]	Don't know	[5]
-------	-----	------	-----	-------	-----	------	-----	------------	-----

If yes were they easily resolved?

Very simply	[1]	Fairly	[2]	No	[3]	Difficult	[4]	Don't know	[5]
-------------	-----	--------	-----	----	-----	-----------	-----	------------	-----

Reason

How would you rate the support of prison staff (uniformed) for this course?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate your contact with the Chaplaincy for this course?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

Appendix 6
Observation grids and questionnaires

How would you rate the team of volunteers here?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the support from prison Fellowship headquarters?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the venue you're given?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the visual aids you have to use?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

How would you rate the contribution of guests?

Very bad	1	→	2	→	3	→	4	→	5	→	6	→	7	→	8	→	9	→	10	Very good
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------

Reason

QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOURSELF

gender	M [1]	F [2]		
age	25-34 [1]	35-54 [2]	55-64 [3]	65 or over [4]
employed	full time [1]	part time [2]	retired [3]	unemployed [4]
education level	secondary [1]	college [2]	university [3]	vocational [4]
teaching experience	yes [1]	no [2]		
years with PF			
ethnicity	white [1]	Afrocaribbean [2]	Asian [3]	other [4]

**Sycamore Tree Programme
Evaluation**

December 2012



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**
INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

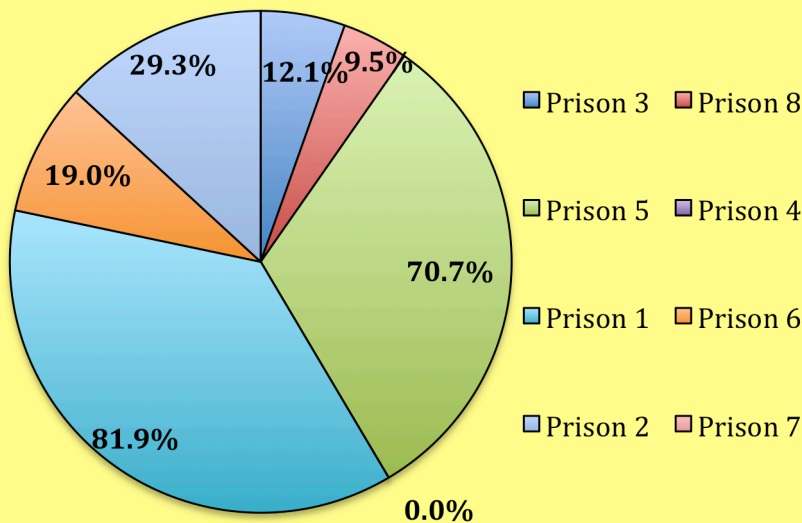
Welcome to the first STP Evaluation newsletter. I hope this will help keep you all up to date with the experiment and encourage you as you see the progress made.

Exciting News

Two prisons have almost reached their target of 100 men signed up for the research. Many congratulations from Professor Sherman and me.

CURRENT OVERALL POSITION

Sycamore Tree evaluation: % total cases required
0.0%



**Warm
Welcome**

HMP prison 8 has joined the research to become the eighth prison involved in the experiment.

I need to come to your recruiting sessions therefore please let me know the dates you plan to hold them so that I can avoid clashes.

Help available-01788 xxxxxx

ST co-ordinator at HMP prison 1 has offered to talk to anybody who would like to discuss the recruiting process with her. She can be contacted at prison 1 on Monday or Tuesday after 10am. (Tuesday afternoon is her ST teaching day so avoid then if possible).

CAN YOU PROVE THAT THE SYCAMORE TREE COURSE WORKS?

Let's change the question to; "Do you **want** to prove that the Sycamore Tree course works?"

- ✓ Prison Fellowship International, Michael Spurr, CEO of NOMS, and MPs all await results of this research
- ✓ If prisoners are to have a course that really helps them turn their lives around we need evidence, this research is designed to supply it
- ✓ If the evidence shows that the course doesn't help, then scarce resources (for example, your hard work) can be redirected

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

We need to recruit more men, we are not yet halfway to the target of eight hundred men over eight prisons (see chart) which should have been achievable during this last year.

- ✓ The longer recruiting takes, the longer we have to wait for meaningful results

Sycamore Tree Programme
Evaluation

December 2012



- ✓ Lower numbers will produce a weaker result
- ✓ Remember that we don't *know* whether the Sycamore Tree Programme works overall for the majority of prisoners **once they have been released**
- ✓ I know that all of you are convinced that the Sycamore Tree Programme really helps. We must let the *research* **prove** it

In case it helps, here is a helpful recruiting protocol developed at HMP prison 1 by Chaplain and ST coordinator.

- + Send invite letters to eligible men
- + Enter names on daily allocation list eg. Please send Mr. X to chapel
- + If time on the day 'phone the

MY WEEK

You may wonder what I get up to when I'm not observing Sycamore Tree sessions or randomly assigning your men to do the course or not as the computer decides. Here is a small taste.....

- ✂ Designing spreadsheets ready for collecting or analysing information
- ✂ Gaining permissions to access data
- ✂ Searching databases for offenders' history
- ✂ Maintaining ST timetables
- ✂ Maintaining research participant records
- ✂ Reading current academic literature on relevant and related matters
- ✂ Writing my thesis (which is intended to be like a roadmap so that others can duplicate everything I've done)



Photograph PFI website

The Sycamore Tree Programme at work in New Zealand

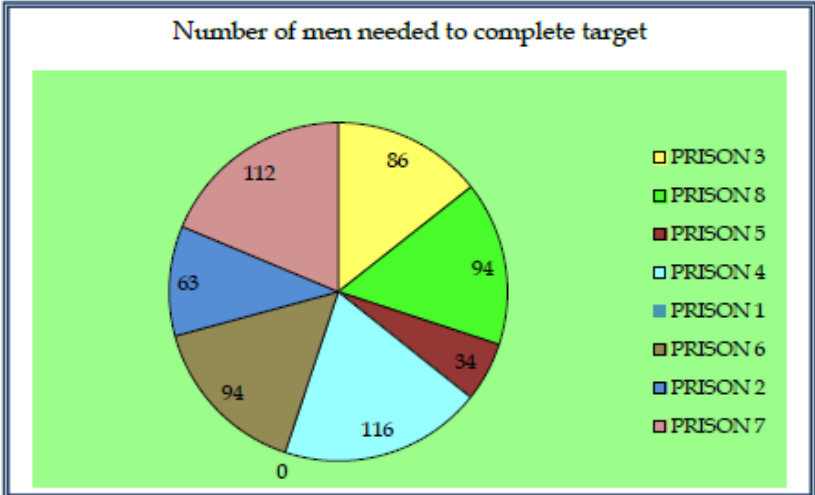
My contact details

I am keen to help and assist you in any way I can. You can telephone, Email, or write to me at:

01223 335360 (Institute of Criminology reception)
07734 xxxxxx (mobile)
msw37@cam.ac.uk
Institute of Criminology,
University of Cambridge,
Sidgwick Avenue,
Cambridge,
CB3 9DA

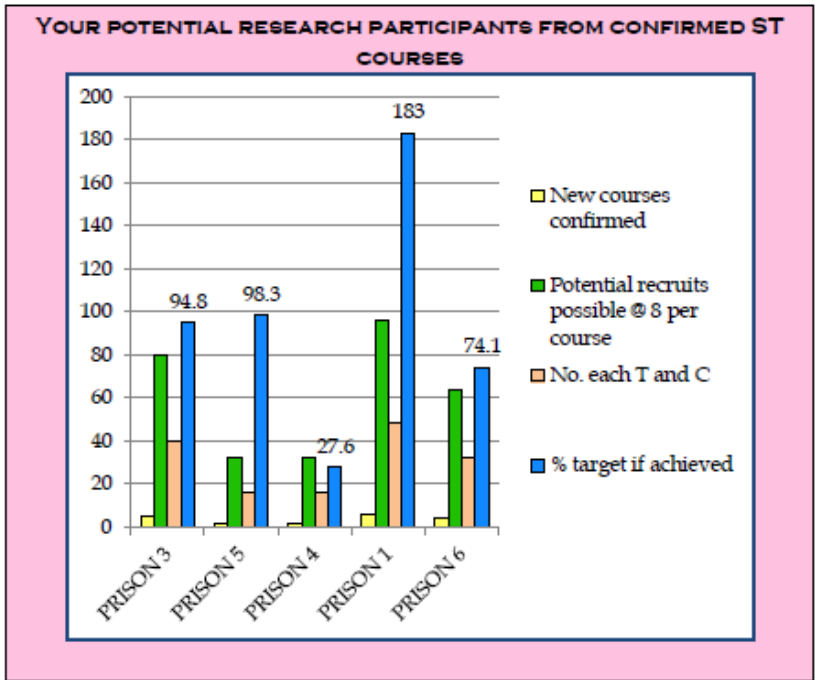
Here is the second STP Evaluation newsletter. I hope this helps to keep you all up to date with the experiment and encourages you as you see that your target is achievable.

Warm
Welcome
To the new
Governors and
Chaplains at our
research sites.



LAST SURGE OF RCT RECRUITS

I recently met Natalie Cronin, CEO of Prison Fellowship, to discuss our continued recruiting of men. We have agreed to stop recruiting in the new year as the rate has slowed down during 2012/13. Please can we have a final push to boost the numbers as high as possible? I have drawn a pie chart just to the left to show how close each prison is. Below it is a graph that shows what you could do if you are able to recruit just eight men per course between now and the new year. Three prisons haven't confirmed courses yet so I've speculated overleaf. If you have any specific problems please let me know if there is anything I can do to help.



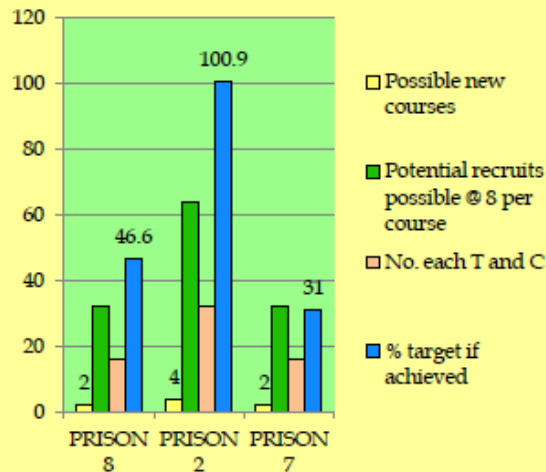
msw9

It is really important to complete every column on the msw9 before you send it to me please. Don't forget to include PNC numbers if possible.

CONSENT FORMS

It is very important to make sure that all consent forms and any remaining purple Crime Pics II forms are returned to Prison Fellowship head office. These can be given to tutors to return via secure postage together with work books. I have to scan them and send copies to the Police before any reconviction data will be supplied.

Three prisons have not yet confirmed ST courses so I have suggested what is possible



THANK YOU

As the recruiting period of our Randomised Controlled Trial draws to a close you should all feel very proud of your achievement. You have been a vital part of the first RCT in HMPS for thirty years (that is, the first RCT that uses a design whereby the control group complete their sentence without getting the treatment being tested (the STP)). It is also the first that uses reconviction outcomes as well as adjudications to measure effectiveness. As you know, even when we stop recruiting new men to the study, we will have to wait for them to have been 'on the out' for two years before we can calculate final results. Nevertheless, once a substantial percentage of our men are released, we may begin to get some indications of whether the STP really does prevent recidivism. It couldn't have happened without you all. It's also worth mentioning that the study couldn't have happened in a worse economic climate so it is a further testament to you hard working Chaplaincy people that we have come as far as we have.

MY WEEK

My main task at this point is to complete my thesis – the experiment has a longer life

- ✂ Writing an account of what setting up a Randomised Controlled Trial in Her Majesty's Prisons entails (about 80,000 words)
- ✂ Maintaining the integrity of treatment allocations (did each man do what he was randomly assigned to do? Please let me know if you discover men have been transferred)

My contact details

I am keen to help and assist you in any way I can. You can telephone, Email, or write to me at:

01223 335360 (Institute of Criminology reception)
07734 xxxxxx (mobile)
msw37@cam.ac.uk
Institute of Criminology,
University of Cambridge,
Sidgwick Avenue,
Cambridge,
CB3 9DA

DATA TYPE		REASON RELEVANT TO THE EVALUATION
vital		
Very important		
Important and relevant to the evaluation		
1	Prison (name)	All of these I (should) have supplied by participating prisons and the HMPS website
2	Prison category	
3	Prison type	
4	Prison capacity	
5	Prisoner's first name	
6	Prisoner's surname name	
7	Prison number NOMS	
8	Prison number LIDS	Important for cross references because some prisons were still using LIDS numbers when they started sending names and I have only been supplied with them and do not have current NOMS numbers if they have been assigned. Additionally, I have found typing errors in NOMS numbers which have been sent and only by checking in the prisoner's record have I confirmed the correct NOMS. LIDS numbers will assist in identifying the correct individual
9	CRO Number	Important for accurate identification with PNC and an indication of length of criminal career as CRO numbers have ceased to be used
10	PNC Number	Vital for PNC identification and, providing they are accurately recorded, remove the need to have place of birth and height
11	Date of birth	Vital for cross reference and checking the accuracy of data supplied
12	Place of birth	These are important for accuracy in PNC checks but, if I have a PNC number, they may be unnecessary
13	Height	
14	Nationality	
15	Ethnicity	These are important for monitoring ethnic mix in the two groups - those who get the course (T) and those who must not get it (C). Ethnic and National mix may affect how the course is received by individuals. It may also be relevant when examining the ethnicity of tutors and group facilitators compared with the men on their courses because we know that predominantly white facilitators of Restorative Justice in Australia were associated with higher recidivism amongst Aboriginal men in some cases
16	Address before custody - Post Code	Very important because the last address before custody indicates the distance of the place of custody from social and family groups. We know that the ease of access to prisons experienced by their families' visits can have an impact on prisoners and, consequently, outcomes. Addresses are also important for cross checking accuracy with PNC data
17	Index offence for current custody	Vital because an important outcome measure is whether the course influences the seriousness of any re-offending after release. This information enables a cost/benefit calculation even if a released prisoner does re-offend



INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

18	Date of offence for current custody	} Vital as we use these dates to calculate the time between last offence and conviction, custody, and completing the course. This information may indicate that there is an optimum duration between offence and completing a Sycamore Tree course or a time during a sentence for prisoners to complete the course. At present it can be completed at any stage of incarceration regardless of proximity to offending or commencing a sentence
19	Date of conviction for current custody	
20	Date incarcerated for current custody	
21	effective Imprisonment term	Vital as length of incarceration is known to affect recidivist rates; it is also used in calculating the seriousness of the index offence which is one of our outcome measures (see 17 above) and it will also indicate the likely period of licence (if any)
22	Released Yes/No	Since we have an expected release date supplied when men agree to participate in the study, it is very important to know whether a man is actually released on that date as some may not be
23	Date released	Vital as we need to know exactly when men are released as this directly affects another outcome measure; if men re-offend after release, how long between release and re-offending (if this is not known, then the arrest date is used). Depending on duration, these calculations are sometimes done in hours or half days
24	sentence expiry date	Important because the expiry date gives an indication of the date by which a man will have to be released if he is not suitable for HDC or other early release. It can also dictate any licence period and, therefore acts as a cross check on data supplied
25	H.D.C. Eligible Yes/No	} The HDC release date is used when determining eligibility for the research so it is very important that we know it. We have already experienced some attrition where men have agreed to be a part of the research but have been released on HDC without warning to the Chaplaincy staff because their eligibility date was not known in advance. These data also give an indication of seriousness of offence plus behaviour in custody which is always relevant to post-release behaviour
26	H.D.C. release date	
27	Tagged on release Yes/No	} It is absolutely vital to have accurate information about all the circumstances of a man's release as this is likely to affect his behaviour. Tagging should physically reduce his opportunity to offend (whatever his stated inclination) and any degree of supervision (as with licensing) is likely to affect his thinking and behaviour. We also need to know about breaches leading to re-incarceration as this is not counted as re-offending and needs to be distinguished from it
28	Licence period Yes/No	
29	Licence expiry date	
30	Settled address on release Yes/No	This is vital information because we know that having a settled address is strongly linked to re-offending. Additionally, this information allows us to assess the outcomes of the two groups (T & C) compared with each other and check within them for similarities and differences which may explain results
31	Adjudications before Sycamore Tree course	} This is important for the Prison Service. The course has a reputation for improving behaviour in custody and it is available to prisoners no matter how long they have left to serve (eg. Lifers, PPO, and IPP prisoners). Confirmation of improved behaviour before release will be relevant to policy and timing of the intervention
32	Adjudications after Sycamore Tree course	



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33	Date of offence in custody after Sycamore Tree course	Adjudications give some measure of behaviour and co-operation within the prison regime. If adjudications are necessary following completion of the course, analysis of the time between commission and course end could indicate whether the timing for undertaking the course is relevant and should be taken into consideration when planning this intervention (also whether adjudications after completing the course seem to be linked to particular prisons)
34	Previous convictions if known	Helpful for cross referencing with PNC records especially given some inaccuracies already discovered in the data supplied
35	Prisoner's category	These are important because they indicate a prisoner's co-operation with the prison regime, their degree of potential harmfulness, and allow us to compare the two groups (T & C) for homogeneity. They are also relevant to the profile of people referred to the Sycamore Tree course and how comparable they are with the general prison population; this is extremely important when considering the generalisability of our results to the wider prison population
36	IEP status	
37	OASys score	As 35 & 36 above, but the OASys score illustrates an overall picture of individuals by taking into account various factors not included in this spreadsheet and expressing them in a single, measurable, and comparable figure. We still require the other data listed as not all men in our sample have an OASys score
38	How referred to STP eg sentence plan/self referral/other referral	It is crucial that we know what mechanism propelled men onto the waiting list
39	STP date (session 1)	Very important for calculating time lapsed before release, time between random assignment and starting the course, tracking the men's scores, and pass/fail results from Prison Fellowship (who own, run, and moderate the course)
40	Other interventions completed during this custody period	Apart from interventions where men meet a victim of crime, we are not withholding any interventions deemed necessary or important for them. It is extremely important to know what other interventions men have completed to ensure that nothing contaminates the random assignment. It is also relevant to future sentence planning involving other interventions that we seek evidence of which ones might complement or clash with the Sycamore Tree Programme (which is accredited as an educational programme but widely implemented as victim awareness)
41	previous work experience/skills	These details are not vital but are very helpful when looking at the resettlement of ex-prisoners because we know that better employment opportunities and educational qualifications affect recidivism. Additionally, the Sycamore Tree Programme leads to a Level 1 or Level 2 educational qualification and so may directly influence outcomes, such as employment, that influence recidivism
42	In-prison training	
43	Level of education received	
44	Any educational qualifications	
45	Next of Kin (who named)	We know that having a 'significant other' affects post-release behaviour and resettlement, also that some, such as partners, have more positive influence than others; parents, for example. Therefore, the named NOK is relevant to our outcomes
46	Married Y/N	This is important because, as above, but adding the fact that a married and loyal spouse can have the greatest stabilising effect (separated or divorced spouses can have a significant detrimental effect) on released prisoners with children increasing that stability
47	Children Y/N	
48	Number of children	



49	Visits (number)	} We know that the number of visits, their frequency, and their proximity to the end of incarceration affects recidivism in different ways. As our main outcome is re-offending, visit data is highly relevant to see whether the course can overcome the negative effects of visit patterns, reinforce the positive effects, or have no influence at all
50	Visits (average frequency)	
51	Visits within 6 months to release (number)	
52	Transfers between establishments (not court or medical)	The unpredictable instability of prison life can affect the experience of incarceration (for example making family visits more or less difficult, changing the people with whom one has to interact on a daily basis). This may be a factor that, in turn, affects post-release life (because a prisoner can become increasingly defiant, resentful, or depressed). Knowing, and being able to take account of transfers (good and bad, for example a lower category classification) helps us increase the likelihood of isolating the cause/effect of the course we are testing
53	Victimisation	} As with 52 above, substance dependency and victimisation will affect the experience of incarceration and, consequently, post-release activity. This data will enable us to control for any such effects when looking at outcomes
54	Drug use	
55	Alcohol	

SEE APPENDIX 4 (PAGE 308) FOR SCRIPT.