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Criminal Justice Sanctions and Services

Exploring Potential

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Table of Contents

Figures and tables

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgements

Declaration

I declare that, with the exceptions outlined, I am the author of the work presented in this thesis. All references cited have been consulted by me. The work of which the thesis is a record has been completed by me, and it has not previously been accepted for a higher degree. Where elements have been based on a collaborative effort, the nature and extent of my contribution is clearly delineated (see project three, part two, and the introduction to appendix one).

Abstract

This thesis presents a body of work for the award of the Professional Doctorate in Social Work. Presented as three discrete but connecting projects, it is united by a broad interest in criminal justice sanctions and services and by a particular interest in the progression of participatory, person-centred and progressive approaches within that space. Project one consists of a recognised prior learning claim for 50% of the award and draws on four peer-refereed published papers. The first three papers contribute to developing criminological and professional debate on 'what works?' in supporting desistance from crime. The final paper locates recent justice 'developments' within Bauman's analysis of consumerism and related debates about the commodification of public services.

Project two reports on a funded study that set out to evaluate the impact of a staff training programme on the practice of community service supervision within a Scottish local authority. The commission and focus of this project reflects sustained attention to questions of what works in reducing re-offending and supporting desistance within community sanctions, and the reconsideration of these questions in spaces traditionally constructed in punitive rather than rehabilitative terms. The findings suggest that community service can provide people who offend with important opportunities for progression, desistance and change and that staff training has an important contribution to make to the progression of these outcomes. However, the findings also indicate that staff training is one of many important variables in this complex and multi-dimensional endeavour.

Connecting with the above themes, the final and most substantial project presented explores the place and potential of those sentenced within criminal justice sanctions and services. Specifically, it explores the potential of co-production within this complex, contested and constrained space. As will be demonstrated, this is an

important and topical area of inquiry, as are the methods used to progress it. The conclusion of this project is that co-production matters in justice. The detail and implications of this conclusion for justice policy, practice and research are discussed and explored.

Introduction and overview

This thesis presents a body of work for the award of the Professional Doctorate in Social Work. Presented as three discrete but connecting projects, it demonstrates my developing research practice over a period of eight years (including as it does a recognised prior learning claim). The projects are united by a broad interest in criminal justice sanctions and services - and in community based sanctions in particular - and by a particular interest in the progression of participatory, person-centred and progressive approaches within that space. Noting the increasing 'correctional turn' in contemporary justice services and sanctions, both with and beyond UK jurisdictions (see, for example, Bauman, 2000; Feeley & Simon, 1992; Garland, 2002), it may be observed that there exist some tensions in and/or between the interests and foci described. In introducing this thesis I would observe that much of the work that follows starts from these tensions, and from the questions and opportunities that arise from them.

Thesis structure

Project one comprises a recognised prior learning claim for 50% of the award. This section presents four academic papers, three of which are published in peer-refereed journals and one of which is published in an edited text by established academics. The papers are accompanied by a reflective narrative that connects the papers with the level twelve outcome standards as set out in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (2007). The narrative describes the learning, achievement and contribution of the papers presented and in doing so details where and how the SCQF criteria are met.

Three of the four papers presented contribute to developing criminological and professional debate on 'what works?' in supporting desistance from crime. More specifically, drawing on theoretical and empirical inquiry, this work explores the relevance of offenders' social contexts in efforts to support desistance.   In this respect, this body of work advances a more personalised, contextualised and considered approach to questions of 'what works?' in justice interventions while also speaking to questions of *how* criminal justice services can more effectively assist people who offend to overcome problems and achieve change.

The final of the four papers sets current developments in probation and 'offender management' services in the UK within the contexts first of Bauman's (1997, 1998, 2000) analysis of crime and punishment in consumer society and second of wider debates about the commodification of public services. In examining the extent to which the commodification of offender management is already evidenced in the way that probation's 'products', 'consumers' and 'processes of production' have been reconfigured within the public sector, attention is given to both the problems intrinsic to the commodification of probation, and to potential opportunities for the containment and moderation of that process. This part of the thesis has already been examined and for this reason it is presented as an appendix (see appendix 1).

Project two reports on a funded evaluative study in the area of community service. The aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of a pro-social modelling staff training programme on the practice of community service supervision within a Scottish local authority. This work is presented in two parts. Part one provides an overview of the evaluation project and findings. Part two considers the study findings as they relate to the dynamic of 'compliance' within community service. The commission and focus of this study reflects sustained attention to questions of what works in reducing re-offending and supporting desistance within community sanctions; the (re-)consideration of these questions in sanctions and spaces traditionally constructed in punitive rather than rehabilitative terms; and related questions of how to translate promising theoretical approaches into promising justice practice.   The findings

presented augment the findings of the few existing research studies in this area and suggest that community service can provide offenders with important opportunities for progression, desistance and change. Further, the findings suggest that, when delivered as part of a coherent strategy, staff training has an important contribution to make to the progression of these outcomes within justice sanctions. However, the findings also indicate that staff training is one of a number of important variables in this complex and multi-dimensional endeavour. In sum, this work concludes that if we want to translate staff training into meaningful justice outcomes – in the form of opportunities within a sentence for progression, desistance and change - then we need to *also* attend to the multiple service, social and societal obstacles that regularly impede and obstruct that process.

Project three is the most recent and substantial of the projects presented. Connecting with the above-discussed themes, it explores the place and potential of those sentenced within criminal justice sanctions and services. More specifically, it explores the potential of co-production within this complex, contested and constrained space. As the final of three projects this work began as a small (albeit ambitious) inquiry. What evolved was a much more substantial, involved, and lengthy process and project. As will be demonstrated, this is an important and topical area of inquiry - as are the methods employed in progressing it. Co-production is currently emerging as a new and necessary headline for UK based public sector provision. Yet, in the criminal justice context it is barely visible. In this final project I grapple with this tension and with the questions that arise from it. The conclusion of this project is that co-production matters in justice. The detail and implications of this conclusion for justice policy, practice and research are discussed and explored.

Opening (and concluding) reflection

Considered more broadly this thesis documents (albeit obliquely) my developing identity, craft and confidence as a researcher.   Neither the space nor focus of this thesis allows for detailed discussion of that journey, nor the important learning that has arisen from it. However, in introducing this thesis some brief reflection seems relevant. In the early stages of doctoral study (during completion of project two) I attended a research seminar in which I was invited to select a postcard that most reflected my sense of self as a researcher. With ease I selected an image of a small child located within a bustling market scene populated with a number of busy adults going about their business with a focus, haste and assurance that contrasted with the child's inquiring and observational stance. The relationship between this image and my research self is not difficult to tease out. The image captured my sense of self as a not-fully-grown, fledgling researcher who, in developing her craft had developed a mode of learning that relied on a somewhat arbitrary reassembling of self-directed observations, readings and imitations of other busy researchers. The outcome of this 'approach' was a research practice that felt vulnerable, imitative and unchecked.

The learning opportunities presented and reported on in this thesis have enabled me to move forward significantly from this identity and stance. It has not been a straightforward path, and I have had to relinquish my perception that there exists a more perfect house of research learning and practice, inhabited by fully grown, undaunted and technically competent researchers who with ease devise perfect methodologies and are immune to the afflictions of methodological weakness, error, doubt or inadequacy. However, in completing and reflecting on this work I have learned a great deal. Variously and iteratively, I have grappled with questions of research purpose and process; of identity, epistemology and ontology; of research methodology, and of research ethics. In doing so, I have discovered the important relationships that exists between these questions and the authenticity, ethicality and value of the research findings and outcomes produced. As I observe in the conclusion to the final project presented, it is not that I now have all of the answers to these questions (in fact some of the answers I found along the way have shifted and become redundant) it is that I now understand the importance of the questions. While alert

then to the work to be done in developing my research craft, as I look forward my position and outlook is considerably changed. Faced with the same bustling, complex and sometimes daunting scene, I now stand as neither expert nor novice. Rather, I would describe my position as one amongst many, equipped with the humility, confidence, and expectation of one who better understands my position, purpose and potential in the research world before me. The challenge as I move forward from this thesis is to progress that potential.

Project II:

An evaluation of the impact of pro-social modelling training on staff practice in community service

Introduction

This project reports on an evaluative study in the area of community service. The aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of a pro-social modelling staff training programme on the delivery and practice of community service supervision within a Scottish local authority. The project began as a funded study and resulted in three connected research outputs - in the form of a 15,000 word evaluative study and three academic papers (two of which are now published, McCulloch, 2010a; 2010b[1]).   In this section, I report on and present some of that work in two connecting sections. Part one provides an overview of the evaluation project and the general findings that emerge from it. In part two, attention is given to the study findings as they relate to the dynamic of 'compliance' within community service. Though the work presented here has been (moderately) developed to meet the requirements of this submission, the focus and form of what follows directly reflects the professional contexts from which it emerged and for which it was produced.

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[1] The final (unpublished) paper provides a reflective review of my research practice and journey in completing the study. Though this paper was completed as part of my Doctoral activity, for reasons of space it is not presented here. My learning in this area provides the foundations for project three and attests, again, to the evolving nature of my research knowledge and practice.

Part one. Realising potential: Community service, pro-social modelling and desistance

Introduction

Recent years have seen increasing research, policy and practice attention given to the question of 'what works?' in reducing re-offending and supporting desistance. Amongst other things, this has resulted in a growth in our understanding of what works in community based interventions, coupled with increased expectation in terms of service outcomes. Recently, this 'development' has been extended to community service (CS), resulting in something of a renaissance in attention to CS and, albeit on a modest scale, its re-integrative and rehabilitative potential.

The above developments have contributed to the emergence of a number of UK wide practice and research initiatives aimed at enhancing the rehabilitative potential of CS. Chief amongst these initiatives has been the Home Office funded CS Pathfinder projects, the stated aim of which was 'to develop the research base to investigate what in CS might be effective in reducing offending, focussing on a number of promising approaches' (Rex, Gelsthorpe, Roberts & Jordan, 2003). Practice developments in Scotland are, for the moment, less pronounced though there exist clear indicators of growing attention to this area of service development; see for example the recent 'Scottish Government Review of Community Penalties' (Scottish Government, 2007) and the subsequent report of the Scottish Prisons Commission (2008), each of which point to a more central and expanded role for CS.

Amidst the many tentative messages to emerge from recent CS related research studies, the concept of pro-social modelling (PSM) has emerged as a particularly

promising approach, in so far as it is considered to provide an opportune framework for the incorporation of features found to be most associated with positive outcomes in CS. In its most limited sense, PSM refers to the way in which justice staff and others model pro-social values and behaviours in their interactions with clients. More broadly, it refers to a group of skills which include role clarification; modelling of pro-social values; reinforcing pro-social behaviour, expressions and actions; and collaborative problem solving (Trotter, 2009, p.138). As Trotter notes, PSM is now widely and variously used in community correction settings across the globe and is increasingly recognised as a key skill in the effective supervision of offenders. However, in the research-light context of CS, knowledge relating to the use, implementation and potential of PSM (and other evidence-based approaches) remains limited and currently rests on the findings of a small number of related studies (Rex & Gelsthorpe, 2002).

Informed by the above, my aim in this paper is to contribute to developing understanding of, and inquiry into, the rehabilitative potential of CS. To this end the discussion that follows is structured in three parts. I begin by locating CS conceptually and by providing a brief overview of the research evidence that has prompted recent developments in the field – giving particular attention to the rise of PSM within that space. Attention is then given to the findings of a small-scale study in which I set out to evaluate the impact of a PSM training programme on the practice of CS supervision within a Scottish local authority[2]. In closing, I provide a thematic analysis of the study findings drawing out key themes which appear pertinent if CS is to realise its potential and assist offenders in their efforts towards desistance.

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[2] In contrast to the rest of the UK, and many other English-speaking countries, responsibility for providing services to the criminal justice system - in the form of assessment, supervision and throughcare of offenders - rests with local authority social work departments. For the last two decades, this has typically been delivered via specialist criminal justice social work teams who are tasked to deliver a range of services and schemes, including the provision of reports to the court, probation and community service.

Locating community service

Community service by offenders is a community based sanction first introduced in Scotland as pilot projects in 1977 (available nationally since 1979). Formally proposed by the Wootton committee in 1970 (see McIvor, 2007), it requires those sentenced to complete unpaid work of benefit to the community.   In many jurisdictions, Scotland included, CS can be imposed as a stand-alone sanction or in conjunction with other sanctions – often as part of an intensive supervision package.

As McIvor (2007) observes, when first introduced the strength and appeal of CS was thought to lie in its ability to respond to a number of different sentencing aims. While representing a fine on the offender's time – so meeting the need for proportionate punishment - CS also offered the potential for those sentenced to make reparation to their communities, a process which, it was believed, could also have a constructive and reforming influence on the offender by creating opportunity for pro-social contact with other non-offending peers. This initial and expansive vision of CS is barely recognisable in the policy and practice that has followed. Reflecting the rise of law and order politics in the 1980s and 1990s, officially at least, CS policy and practice in the UK has tended to capitalise on the punitive aspects and appeal of CS. Notably, as McIvor, Beyens, Blay and Boone (2010) observe, this trend can also be traced in the operation and development of CS in a number of other European jurisdictions.   In contexts and cultures increasingly keen to *see* justice *done* - with justice frequently equated with visible, tangible and often painful punishment - CS quickly established itself, both within and beyond UK justice systems, as a popular, well-reputed and 'tough' community sanction. By way of example, in Scotland in 2007/08, the number of convictions resulting in a CS order was just over 5,600 – approximately one-third of all community sanctions imposed. Further, offence categories with the highest proportion of convictions resulting in a CS order were serious assault, attempted murder, handling an offensive weapon, fraud and fire-raising (Scottish Government, 2009; para 8.8).

Perhaps in part because of its quickly established and well-reputed position within the often contentious matrix of community sanctions, attention to the broader processes, outcomes and potential of CS has gone largely unexplored.   More recently however, in the UK at least, this pattern is shifting. Recent discussion and debate around CS has seen a notable return to some of CS's original aspirations. In part, this shift reflects recent research findings that suggest that CS may have a contribution to make to the project of penality beyond that of punishment and deterrence. Perhaps less generously, in a context of fiscal and political efficiencies, it may also reflect broader political drivers to get more for less. If CS does have the potential to operate as a penal 'Jack of all trades' (Rex & Gelsthorpe, 2002) then it is not now surprising to see that potential being exploited.

Community Service, rehabilitation and recidivism: exploring potential

With regard to the research evidence, the 1990s saw the emergence of a small number of studies which, in an analysis of reconviction rates following community sentences, found that reconviction rates for offenders given community service were slightly lower than those predicted taking into account individual offender profiles (see for example Lloyd, Mair & Hough, 1995; May, 1999; Raynor & Vanstone, 1997). Similarly, Killias, Aebi and Ribeaud's (2000) analysis of the comparative effects of CS and short term imprisonment found that that offenders sentenced to CS had lower reconviction rates than those sentenced to prison. Importantly, in exploring the detail behind this data, Killias et al. (2000, p. 53) suggest that the reduced reconviction rates associated with CS completion may be related to offenders' perception and acceptance of their disposal as fair and legitimate (that is, as 'a result of their own behaviour').

McIvor's (1992) seminal study of CS in Scotland supports the above findings though provides additional insight into the relationship between offender experiences of CS and reduced recidivism. McIvor found that offenders who viewed their experience of

CS as positive and worthwhile were more likely to comply with their order and less likely to re-offend. For the offenders in McIvor's study, positive and worthwhile experiences of CS were associated with engaging in meaningful work, opportunity for contact and exchange with beneficiaries, and opportunity for skills acquisition. McIvor's study also foregrounds the importance of CS providing help with other problems, though this was observed to relate more to short term compliance and completion rates than to recidivism.

As noted earlier, the above findings have prompted a number of recent practice developments aimed at enhancing CS's rehabilitative potential – with PSM emerging as a particularly 'promising approach' (Rex & Crossland, 1999; Rex, Gelsthorpe, Roberts & Jordan, 2004). The value of PSM in supporting the achievement of positive outcomes in offender supervision generally is now well documented (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Trotter 1993, 2009). In addition, there exist a small number of studies which indicate that the training of probation staff in this area can impact positively on the use of PSM and in turn client outcomes (Trotter, 1996a, 1996b, 2009). However, in common with the broader research base examining the implementation of evidence based practices within offender supervision (see for example Kemshall et al., 2004), research in this area tends to highlight that the delivery of training is only one factor influencing the use and impact of PSM in practice. For example, Trotter's (1996a) analysis of the implementation of empirical based practices (PSM included) amongst community corrections staff in Victoria found that 50% of those trained failed to make use of the prescribed practices for 'a number of reasons'. The reasons highlighted by the study include: a worker's experience in the job, previous training and education, and the worker's personality characteristics or traits. However, the principal reason highlighted by the study relates to the dissonance the worker perceives between the proposed practices and the wider 'culture' of the organisation – a finding supported by a similar study that examined the implementation of empirical practices in New Zealand (Trotter, 1996b). Reviewing both of these studies Trotter (2009, p. 145) concludes:

It seems likely that attempts to increase the use of pro-social modelling among direct practice staff will be most successful if they are part of a concerted effort involving training, supervision, collegiate support and modelling by senior staff.

Exploring the use of PSM within CS, Rex and Crosland (1999) report on a small pilot study that examined the implementation of a PSM approach within community service in Cambridgeshire. Again, in common with findings from probation based studies, the study found that offenders supervised predominantly by 'project' supervisors (i.e. those trained in PSM and legitimacy) were more likely than offenders supervised outside of the project to report experiences consistent with PSM. Further, the project group were more likely to view their CS experience as positive and to gain a better work rating, and they were less likely to have unacceptable absences or to have been breached.

The Community Service Pathfinder projects provided the first opportunity to test out the above findings on a larger scale. Funded under the Crime Reduction Programme in 1999, seven (pilot) pathfinder projects were established across ten probation areas in the UK. PSM was one of the three approaches implemented and tested across the projects (the remaining two being skills accreditation and tackling the problems underlying offending behaviour). The findings from this initiative were first published in 2002 and, overall, present an encouraging picture with regard to the rehabilitative potential of CS.   With regard to the efficacy of PSM in particular, the report tentatively concludes that projects focussing on PSM and skills accreditation were found to be most promising. The findings provide less insight into the relationship between staff training and changes in staff practice or service outcomes, however attention is given to factors found to be associated with effective implementation of the projects generally. The findings in this area echo the above discussed findings from Trotter's (1996a, 1996b) research and indicate that effective implementation of the projects was aided by 'commitment, understanding and support from managers and colleagues', 'team-work' and 'staff adopting creative problem-solving and flexibility in delivery' (Rex et al., 2003, p.2). The study also identifies a number of factors found to

impede effective implementation, ranging from staff reservations about the overall coherence and feasibility of the projects in light of practical constraints (for example, the tensions in implementing the detail of project initiatives while supervising the whole work party) through to the lack of priority given to CS work generally.

The above findings have much to contribute to both the *what* and the *how* of service development in CS. There is now a growing body of evidence that suggests that CS has the potential to demonstrate impact beyond its traditional boundaries of punishment and deterrence. In addition, there exist a small number of studies which indicate that, with the right supporting conditions, the training of staff in PSM (and other evidence based approaches) can improve staff practice and in turn service outcomes. However, the embryonic nature of our knowledge and understanding in this area needs to be acknowledged. For example, the above discussed findings underscore that achieving and demonstrating impact is by no means straightforward, and that staff training is only one variable in this complex endeavour. Similarly, the sustainability and longer term impact of what have predominantly been pilot projects has yet to be demonstrated.   From a different perspective, as we explore the potential of an expanded role for CS there is a need to progress carefully. Mair (1997) and McIvor (1998) highlight the real and potential pitfalls of a disposal that attempts to be 'all things to all people'.   Related studies of probation practice suggest that an overly broad conception of professional role may lead to unfocussed and ineffective practice (Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Bonta, 2007). By way of example, in discussing the outcomes associated with the 'less promising' Pathfinder projects (i.e. those prioritising offender related needs), the authors conclude that this was 'possibly because a lack of strong focus hampered success' (Rex et al., 2004, p. 4).   While acknowledging then the significant contribution of recent research in this area, the field, as it were, is wide open. As Rex and Gelsthorpe (2002, p. 323) conclude with reference to the most large scale research study in this area to date:

> The pathfinder initiative is merely the beginning of a programme of research
> into CS. We need to know considerably more about the processes that actually

take place, if we are to understand *how* the experience of undertaking work for the community can have a constructive impact on offenders, for example.

The research study to which we now turn seeks to contribute to this programme of research. Specifically, it seeks to evaluate if and to what extent staff training in PSM had an impact on staff practice and, where feasible, service outcomes. More broadly, it seeks to contribute to our developing understanding of the broader processes influencing training impact and service development in the CS context.

The research study

The research study set out to evaluate the impact of a pro-social modelling (PSM) training programme on CS staff practice within a criminal justice social work team, drawing primarily on staff and offender perspectives. Informed by the above aim, and mindful of the potential limitations of in-service training evaluations (Clarke, 2001; Pawson & Tilley, 2009), Kirkpatrick's (2006) four level model of evaluation was adopted as an overarching framework, directing evaluation at the following four levels: staff reaction, staff learning, staff behaviour and service outcomes.

The training programme

The training consisted of a two day pro-social modelling programme, delivered by the Cognitive Centre Foundation. Entitled: 'Focus on People – Effect Change', the course is designed for agencies and organisations working in criminal justice settings and focuses on the following areas:

- High quality relationships
- Pro-social modelling and reinforcement
- Role clarification

- Problem solving

At the point of delivery the CS team was made up of a senior social worker (the CS team leader), a senior criminal justice assistant, three criminal justice assistants (CJAs), a workshop manager and six workshop supervisors[3]. All twelve members of the CS team attended the training. The training was provided in a climate where attention to CS in the context of effective practice was only beginning to emerge. Consequently, CS staff were experiencing greater, albeit gradual, access to training in a range of areas. While this was broadly welcomed, discussion in this area pointed to the absence of a coherent and integrated training strategy. Staff were briefed about the training prior to its delivery and were aware of the research evaluation that would follow. Staff expectations of the training were reasonably high with most participants able to identify specific expectations relevant to their role and practice.

Training outcomes

Despite reasonable clarity amongst the senior management team regarding the potential value of PSM training for CS practice, and a desire that the training would improve the relational skills of the staff group, there existed less clarity regarding the more detailed outcomes and/or focus of the training. For example, research in this area highlights various definitions of PSM ranging from 'narrow' to 'broader' definitions (Trotter, 1999). 'Broader' definitions place emphasis on the importance of: honesty, concern and communication within worker/offender relationships, collaborative and concrete problem solving, advocacy and/or brokerage (see for example Rex, 1999; Trotter, 1999). Narrower interpretations emphasise the adoption of a pro-social approach within communication and engagement and do not typically extend to an attention to problem solving, advocacy or brokerage. Ideally, the

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[3] Responsibilities within the CS team were clearly delineated. CJAs were responsible for 'overseeing' individual orders; day to day, this mostly involved 'checking offenders in and out'. Supervisors were responsible for supervising CS work teams and for assisting offenders 'on the job'. The above is how the respective roles were described by the staff involved. The detail and diversity of the roles emerges in the discussion that follows.

identified outcomes for the training would have been informed by detailed discussion around these and other relevant issues, including consideration of what the service was seeking to achieve in terms of service outcomes. In reality, time and resource did not allow for this.   However, at my prompting, and following brief discussion between the CS team leader and the training provider, the following outcomes were identified for the training:

(i)   provide an improved respectful, caring and enthusiastic delivery of service to clients, with a fair and consistent use of authority

(ii) provide an improved level of support help and guidance to clients during the course of their order

(iii) provide better pro-social models and reinforcement to clients of their positive behaviour

(iv) improve client attendance and reduce the level of breaches and reviews

Methodology

As outlined, the study was concerned to assess training impact from the perspective of those directly involved in the delivery and receipt of CS (that is, staff and offenders). In part, this reflected a realistic appraisal of the resource available. More importantly, it reflected an appraisal that each was well (and differently) positioned to evaluate training impact. In addition, it was hoped that interviewing both groups would permit data triangulation and so provide a more detailed and rigorous account (Pawson & Tilley, 2009). To this end, the study employed a multi-method approach to data collection, drawing primarily on qualitative tools (see, for example, Mertens, 2005; Robson, 2002). Specifically, the study drew upon the following data sources:

CS Staff

Pre-training and post-training questionnaires were sent to all staff attending the training for self-completion and return[4]. Ten of a possible twelve completed questionnaires were returned.

Following an initial pilot interview with a CS team member, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all twelve staff attending the training. Interviews took place within the agency, were audio recorded, transcribed in full, and lasted on average 45 minutes. No significant changes were made to the interview schedule following the pilot interview.

Offenders

Three semi-structured focus groups took place with three CS work teams, involving 25 offenders in total. The decision to interview offenders within a pre-existing group reflected knowledge of the value of group-based interviews in gathering qualitative data, alongside practical concerns to maximise offender participation and minimise disruption to the CS work day (for a discussion of the value of focus group methods see Mertens (2005) and Morgan (1998)). The focus groups took place within the agency without staff present. They were semi-structured and were conducted by two researchers. Group discussions lasted between 60 and 75 minutes. Each discussion was audio recorded and transcribed in full.

Agency and National Data

Attention was given to relevant agency and national data information systems. This included documentary analysis of national criminal justice social work statistics and agency breach rates for comparative three-month periods before and after the training. At the outset it was hoped that offender perceptions of CS would also be

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[4] Pre-training questionnaires were issued immediately prior to the training and sought predominantly to measure staff expectations of the training as well as pre-training conceptions of the CS role and task. Post-training questionnaires were issued immediately following the training and sought primarily to measure staff reaction to the training. The more detailed analysis of training impact was explored via the staff and offender interviews. The design and use of the questionnaires was guided by May (1993) and Robson's (2002) discussion of this method of data collection.

measured by analysis of data from completed Crime PICS II[5] questionnaires. In the event the agency was not in a position to provide this data.

Data were analysed using thematic content analysis in four stages. Initial analysis began with thematically coding answers to the questionnaires and interview questions. This was followed by identification and coding of additional themes that emerged beyond the answers to the questions. Next, a comparative analysis of staff and offender responses was completed. This led to a progressive refinement of the themes, patterns and relationships. Arising themes were then considered in the context of connecting research knowledge (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The research sample

Participation in the study was voluntary. All CS staff were invited to participate via briefing meetings that took place prior to the training. Of the twelve staff interviewed three were female and nine were male. Experience in the job was generally high though ranged from six months to twelve years.

With regard to offender participants, three CS work teams – comprising two day teams and one evening team – were identified as potential participants. Offenders were briefed about the research study and the opportunity for involvement in advance of the groups and again immediately prior to the group starting. Across the three groups, 25 offenders attended and all agreed to participate. 22 of the offenders were male, three were female. The majority of participants had a reasonable amount of CS experience to draw upon (19 of the 25 had been on CS for more than three months) and most appeared keen to express their views and experience.

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[5] Crime PICS II is a widely used questionnaire for examining and measuring changes in offenders' attitudes to offending. It has been used extensively by prison and probation services across the UK, where it has been frequently used to evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of rehabilitative programmes and other interventions with offenders (M&A Research, 2009).

Limitations

The methods adopted for the evaluation were limited by the focus of the study and the resource available. Specifically the following factors need to be acknowledged:

- The evaluation was modest in its aim and sought primarily to evaluate training impact on staff learning, behaviour and practice, with attention to service outcomes where feasible.
- The study did not attempt a 'before and after' comparison of staff practice or service outcomes. In part, this reflects the fact that a similar training was delivered to an earlier staff group two years previously, therefore any pre-training measurement would be compromised. In addition, the resource required to create such a measurement was beyond the scope of this study. No comparative control group was identified for like reasons.
- The absence of direct observational data and, in turn, the reliance on participant perspectives requires acknowledgement of the potential for bias in the data gathered (see, for example, May's (1993) discussion of these issues).
- The small sample size and the limited information available concerning the larger population of CS staff and offenders limits speculation about the representativeness of the findings.

Research findings

As stated, the research study set out to evaluate the impact of the PSM training programme on the delivery and outcomes of CS. Specifically, the evaluation sought to assess impact at four key levels: staff reaction, staff learning, staff behaviour and service outcomes.

This section reports on, and provides initial analysis of, the findings gathered as they relate to Kirkpatrick's (2006) four levels. In presenting the findings I have sought to

incorporate the direct reports of participants as much as is relevant, reflecting a concern to 'allow for the voice of the participant to be heard and so direct the analysis and interpretation of events' (Edwards and Talbot, 1994, p. 86).

Level one: Staff Reaction

Staff reaction to the training, as measured immediately following the training, was generally positive, with almost all participants identifying relevance and learning from the outset. On a scale of one to five (one being not useful and five being very useful), all but one of the participants scored the usefulness of the training at four or five.

For most, the training appeared to validate and reinforce what they already understood and/or believed themselves to be doing; this was linked by some to the fact that they had been on the training before as well as to previously held values and beliefs.

What was most/least useful?

While various participants identified specific learning as particularly useful (i.e. the importance of praise and positive reinforcement, or, how to diffuse conflict) ten of the twelve cited the opportunity for collective discussion and debate around staff roles as the most useful aspect of the training. This was particularly prominent among responses from supervisors who placed significant value upon: 'the ability to express open and honest opinion', 'the debate between supervisors and other staff', 'the difference in attitudes' and '[the opportunity to examine] other colleagues roles and how others deal with various situations'. This message recurs throughout the study and has implications for future training and staff development initiatives. Specifically it suggests a need to attend as much to questions of 'how' learning occurs as to questions of 'what' learning occurs.

With regard to aspects of the training considered less useful, no significant areas emerged. Responses did however demonstrate a reasonable level of critical

engagement with the training content and delivery, with participants able to identify elements that they found 'less convincing', including, for example, methods used to highlight or 'challenge' existing values.

Expectations re outcomes

The impact of the training on desired service outcomes will be discussed in detail under level four. However, on completion of the training staff were invited to identify how useful they *expected* the training to be in assisting them to achieve the identified training outcomes. With the exception of outcome four, again staff responses were largely positive with most participants expressing expectation that the training would assist in the achievement of the identified outcomes. In particular, expectations were highest for outcome one: '*provide an improved respectful, caring and enthusiastic delivery of service to clients, with a fair and consistent use of authority*'; and outcome three: '*provide better pro-social models and reinforcement to clients for their positive behaviour'*. However, while participant 'scoring' identified high expectations of training impact in these areas, supporting comment highlighted an expectation that the training would likely endorse and reinforce existing practice and approaches. Participants were also keen to highlight that the achievement of such outcomes would likely be mediated by wider contributing factors, i.e. pre-existing staff beliefs and/or practice styles.

Expectations re impact were most cautious with regard to outcome four: '*reduce the level of breaches and reviews'*, prompting most participants to note the observed limitations of PSM and the multiple variables *also* impacting on attendance and breach rates. As one supervisor put it: 'encouragement can be a great tool but once clients go out the door our control and role ends'.

In summary, staff reaction to the training was positive with a sense that the content 'reinforced' and legitimised the importance of what one supervisor termed 'going beyond supervision'. In addition to supporting specific learning, staff particularly valued the opportunities provided to discuss, debate and evaluate practice alongside other colleagues. Expectations of training impact were generally high though even at

this early stage responses highlighted an awareness of the limitations of PSM and a perception that some clients were 'beyond' its reach.

Level two: Staff learning

In addition to identifying general areas of learning, participants were prompted to consider learning in respect of how they understood their role and how they carry out that role. Ten of the twelve participants expressed that the training had 'reinforced', 'refreshed' or validated existing knowledge and understanding in this area. A smaller number identified more specific learning, i.e. clarification of responsibilities (arising from the opportunity for dialogue between staff and management), while others noted a subtle 'shift in emphasis' in how they understood their role, i.e. towards a more relational, person-centred, or pro-social approach to supervision. This 'shift in emphasis' was most prominent amongst CJA responses, with all participants in this group identifying a development (or shift) in their understanding and perception of their role with offenders. As one participant expressed: 'it put more emphasis on assisting [offenders] to get through the court order, rather than only monitoring through encouragement'. Another reflected:

> In a sense although my role is to enforce the order … enforcement is one part, but we're also here to help them through that order … the training makes you more aware of how you actually work with clients.

Another CJA expressed that existing skills and approaches, i.e. 'non-confrontational communication', though always there, had now 'move[d] to centre stage'. In a correctional climate where punitive and confrontational approaches are often allowed to dominate and dictate, these findings are significant and promising.

In addition to reinforcing or refocusing existing learning and knowledge, nine of the twelve participants were also able to identify specific learning arising from the training. Learning areas most frequently cited were:

- developed insight into the impact of interactions on clients – particularly re the use of praise, encouragement and respectful communication
- the importance of adopting a more reflective and considered approach
- the value and skill of adopting a non-confrontational approach in routine interactions

The above areas highlight an encouraging level of practice reflection arising from the training, a message that recurred throughout the research conversations. However, while participants clearly valued the opportunity to reflect on their practice, most observed that these opportunities were rare and limited in day-to-day practice. Other identified areas of learning included: how to apply 'familiar' approaches in a different way, and a change in (pre-conceived) attitudes towards offenders.

In discussing learning in the above areas participants frequently provided examples from their practice indicating an encouraging level of reflexive learning *and* learning transfer. It is to the latter area that we now turn.

Level three: Behaviour

Noting the identified outcomes for the training (three of which focus on the 'improvement' of staff behaviour and practice), attention to improvements and changes in staff behaviour and practice was central to the research exercise.

Allowing for the passage of a reasonable post-training 'practice' period (approximately four months), staff were prompted to identify general changes in their behaviour or practice that might be related to the training, as well as any specific changes relating to the training outcomes. While most participants were able to identify changes in behaviour that could be attributed to the training, in-keeping with level two findings, for many, changes were subtle and best described as a development - or more conscious and confident application – of existing approaches. Again, the CJAs interviewed were most able to identify direct change in their behaviour as a result of

the training, with three of the four of those interviewed providing at least two examples of training related behaviour change.

The most significant 'change' areas identified by the participants included changes in:

- general interaction with clients
- the use of authority
- the use of praise
- the provision of help and support with appropriate family/social issues

Two thirds of participants identified a change in their general 'interaction' with clients towards a more 'positive'/'progressive' approach. Specifically, individuals identified themselves as being more understanding of client perspectives and problems, more willing to listen, more considered, and less reactive in their responses. As one participant put it:

> It's difficult to put into words but seems to come across different now … the importance of listening and a little bit of praise. Has changed, can't just put my finger on it … it's not just with this type of work it comes out in other situations outside of work as well.

Just under half of the participants identified change and improvement in their use of authority and response to difficulties, with a number of participants identifying a less 'reactive' and more considered approach to the resolution of difficulties. In addition, more than a third of participants provided examples of the increased use of praise and reinforcement. Just under a third identified increased attention to providing appropriate help and support with domestic issues. Finally, a few of the participants identified a more reflective and engaged approach in practice generally, expressing that the training encouraged a shift from 'routine' to 'reflective' practice. As one participant explains:

> There is a point where everyone reaches a slight complacency, where you're doing something but maybe not doing it as best as you had been doing it … you've lost the slight edge to what you've been doing.

Of the three participants who did not identify any direct change, each reported that they had completed the training a few years previously and considered themselves to have been adopting a PSM approach prior to the recent round of training. Further, two of these three, in discussing their application of a pro-social approach, placed significant emphasis on the beliefs, attitudes and skills they brought to the job, as well as the experience and learning gained through doing the job. For these and other participants, these factors were considered *as* significant to the application and progression of a PSM approach as the training itself.

The above findings indicate an encouraging level of learning transfer and suggest that the training had a positive and tangible impact on staff behaviour. Naturally, these findings need to be evaluated alongside the findings gathered from offenders - the primary recipients of staff behaviour and practice. However, before considering this area, it is worth noting that fewer than half of the participants felt that 'changes' (or training impact) would be noticed by offenders, staff members or seniors. For most, this was considered to be for the 'best of reasons', i.e. that change was subtle, that the nature of the training was more conducive to improvement than change, or that there was much in their previous practice that already reflected a PSM approach.

Notwithstanding the above, the CJAs interviewed were most optimistic with regard to 'others' noticing change in their practice, with participants most confident that changes would be noticed by others in the staff team. In particular, CJAs highlighted changes in the nature of their communication with offenders over the phone, and in their efforts to support clients through their order. CJA confidence in this area may reflect the fact that this group were more able to identify concrete change with regard to how they understand their role and how they carry that out. It may also reflect the smaller size of the staff team, the close proximity within which they worked, and the nature of the work undertaken. For example, discussion in this area indicated that

opportunity for observation, group discussion and reflection between colleagues was more natural and routine for CJAs than it was for supervisors. As already noted, opportunity for collective discussion and reflection was identified by both groups as one of the most significant benefits of the training.

Staff were not asked directly whether they had noticed change in the practice of their colleagues, however a few participants commented on an observed difference in staff behaviour in the weeks immediately following the training. Interestingly, examples in this area related mostly to interaction and communication between staff rather than to staff/offender interactions. Specifically the following observations were highlighted:

- improved relationships within the staff team (correlating with earlier noted findings relating to the considerable value placed by participants on the opportunity to learn together and to consider respective roles)
- an increased openness in discussing theory 'within the constraints of a non-interventionist disposal'
- growing recognition of and/or debate around an expanded staff role, incorporating, for example: advocacy, help and problem solving

Though the above impact areas extend beyond the identified objectives of the training, the first two at least would appear to be significant to the effective implementation and development of empirically based practices within CS. The final area relating to role is more complex. While existing research findings indicate that an overly broad concept of professional role and task may lead to unfocussed and ineffective practice, research in this area has focussed predominantly on probation practice (see for example, Bonta, 2007; Dowden & Andrews, 2004). By contrast, emerging CS research suggests there may be some gain in developing, albeit carefully, previously constrained conceptions of the CS role and task beyond traditional boundaries (McIvor, 1998; Rex et al., 2003).

In summary, the majority of staff identified a positive and tangible training impact on their own behaviour and practice. Again, the nature of training impact was described mostly in terms of improved or developed practice rather than direct change - perhaps accounting for participants' limited confidence that others would notice change or improvement. Of equal significance is the fact that the training was seen by some to have impacted on staff interactions and, to some extent, staff culture. These messages are encouraging and pertinent in a practice area where the 'official' doctrine of effective practice is only now finding a foothold. Naturally, any conclusions about behaviour change are tentative in the absence of data from those at the receiving end of that behaviour, i.e. offenders. The final level of analysis attends to this area in some detail.

Level four: Outcomes

The fourth level of Kirkpatrick's model for the evaluation of training seeks to evaluate what final results or outcomes occurred because of attendance and participation in the training programme. Typically this would include attention to changes in organisational practice and/or benefits to clients. For various reasons this is routinely the most challenging element of training evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 2009). This study is no different.

First, it needs to be acknowledged that the identified outcomes for the training - which are mostly behavioural in nature - sit somewhere between level three and four of Kirkpatrick's evaluation matrix. This makes a strict division between the two levels inappropriate here. Second, the impracticalities of constructing a control group or a 'before and after' analysis mean that findings in this area are best construed as indicators. Notwithstanding these limitations, the data drawn from staff and offender perspectives provide reasonable insight into the extent to which those outcomes identified for the training were achieved.

Staff perspectives

When asked to consider the extent to which the training impacted (if at all) on the identified training outcomes, again, participants generally rated training impact highly. However, responses in this area highlighted mixed interpretations of the concept of 'training impact' and, in some instances, of the outcomes themselves. Also, a number of participants, while scoring the training as having a 'high' impact in a particular area, immediately acknowledged other influencing factors on the achievement of a particular outcome (i.e. previous experience, knowledge and beliefs, other training etc.).

Acknowledging the above qualifications, analysis of quantitative and qualitative data indicated that the training was considered to have greatest impact on outcomes one and three:

> (i) *provide a respectful, caring and enthusiastic delivery of service, with fair and consistent use of authority*
>
> (iii) *provide better pro-social models and reinforcement to clients for their positive behaviour*

Ten of the twelve participants identified that the training had impacted on their ability to 'provide a respectful, caring and enthusiastic delivery of service, with fair and consistent use of authority'. For most, supporting examples tended to underscore the developmental nature of training impact in this area, in so far as staff described themselves as 'more' respectful, or 'more' fair as a result of the training. As one participant put it: 'I treat them with more respect … and fair … I'd say slightly more fair than before the training'. Often, examples in this area focussed on a particular aspect of the above outcome, i.e. the use of respect *or* fairness, thus making it difficult to assess to what extent the training impacted on the component parts of this multi-dimensional outcome.

Eight of the twelve participants identified that the training had impacted on their ability to 'provide better pro-social models and reinforcement to clients for their

positive behaviour'. Again, responses here focussed on the 'reinforcement' element of the outcome with less attention given to the notion of 'pro-social models'. Further, while acknowledging impact, participants were keen to point out that they had always used 'praise' and 'encouragement' in their work, asserting that the training simply 'reinforced' this and encouraged 'more of it'. As one participant put it: '[its] a bit like recharging a battery'.

In respect of the remaining two outcomes, just over half of the participants agreed that the training had impacted on their ability to *'provide improved levels of support, help and guidance to clients through the course of their order'.* Others were more cautious. A few expressed the view that this had not changed in so far as they had provided support, help and guidance before the training – a view supported by existing agency data[6]. For others (mostly supervisors) the increased emphasis on support, help and guidance invoked caution, with some expressing the view that staff may not be sufficiently trained or equipped to give advice or guidance on certain matters. Further, individual discussion in this area highlighted varied interpretations of what was meant by support, help and guidance – ranging from help in completing a work task, to the provision of advice or help with wider personal and social problems. While then most participants were committed and motivated in principle - recognising the considerable influence they can have on clients as a result of the considerable time spent with them – more than a quarter of the participants considered this to be an area that required further discussion and clarification.

Perhaps not surprisingly, participants were most cautious discussing training impact on the final identified outcome: *'Improve client attendance and reduce the level of breaches and reviews'.* Of the five participants who felt that the training would impact on this area (less than half), responses are best described as hopeful. Each of these participants recognised a relationship between a pro-social approach and offender attendance/compliance, though each was quick to also acknowledge the considerable impact of 'other factors' on this outcome. Some of the CJAs identified that the

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[6] As recorded in offender questionnaires completed on completion of an order.

training had impacted on the way they manage 'breaches'. As one participant put it: 'It's no longer as clear cut as first warning, second warning, third warning, breach'. Rather, supporting examples in this area highlighted new or improved levels of problem exploration, negotiation and problem solving.

Those more hesitant expressed the view that a PSM approach would 'work with some', but that the nature of some offenders' experience, attitude, or 'other problems' meant that 'some [would] always return to court'. Those most sceptical (two of the participants) felt that this was an outcome 'beyond' the influence of staff or PSM. However, for most, the hesitation, scepticism or uncertainty expressed here related less to the efficacy of PSM as an approach and more to the 'stronger' influence of other factors. Notably, the 'other factors' highlighted by participants extended beyond offenders' personal and social problems (i.e. marital or drug problems) to also encompass considerable organisational and socio-political constraints, including: 'poor' or 'boring' placements, insufficient staffing levels, public attitudes towards offenders and CS, external and 'political' pressures, and what one participant described as the 'numbers game' currently dictating the quality of local CS provision.

In sum, almost all of the participants agreed that the worker-offender relationship was a significant factor affecting attendance and thus a PSM approach 'could' impact on this outcome - and many 'hoped' that it would. However, participants were acutely aware of the significance of wider factors, which were seen by most to exert greater influence on this particular outcome.

Wider factors affecting training outcomes

In concluding the research conversations staff were asked to consider what wider factors aided and obstructed training impact. With regard to aids, the two factors considered most significant were experience and training, in that order. The significance of experience, i.e. learning through trial and error and/or learning from and with others (staff and offenders), was particularly significant for supervisors. For CJAs, the value of training was given most emphasis. Difference in this area appeared to reflect differences between the staff groups, specifically: different levels of

experience in the job (mostly, CJAs were newer to the role), different levels of access to training (CJAs had more access to training) and, perhaps most significantly, differences in time spent with offenders. Supervisors spent considerably more time with offenders than CJAs and described PSM as an approach that they 'worked out' in the realities of CS supervision.

With regard to the things that made it difficult to put the training into practice, responses were varied, ranging from the size of CS teams - which made it difficult to engage in pro-social forms of communication, problem solving or support - through the quality of placements available, to the attitudes and or 'suitability' of offenders. However, amidst this diversity, the most frequently cited obstacle - identified by over half of the participants - was the perceived impact of wider public, professional, political and media attitudes to offenders and/or CS. As one participant concluded, if a pro-social approach is to be truly effective it needs to be implemented at all levels – both within the agency (i.e. from the first point of contact at reception) and beyond it (i.e. within the typically punitive matrix of social relationships that offenders faced in the community).

Offender perspectives

Noting the paucity of literature attending to the perspective and experience of offenders within criminal justice social work generally, far less within CS, data gained from the offender focus groups provides valuable insight into offenders' experience of CS supervision within the Scottish local authority context. More specifically, it allows for the triangulation of data between staff perspectives on training impact and offenders' expressed experience of that. Offender focus group discussion centred on the identified outcomes for the training[7] and invited offenders to discuss if, and to what extent, they experienced the desired behaviours and outcomes in their routine interactions with CS staff. Given that offenders construed the CJA and supervisor role

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[7] With a view to maximising clarity within focus group discussions, outcome one was divided into two outcomes. Also, in relation to outcome four, offenders were invited to discuss whether the attitude and behaviour of staff towards them supported their attendance and compliance with their order.

separately, each role was considered in turn. In addition, offenders were invited to discuss: their understanding of the CJA and supervisor role; the significance of these relationships on attendance and compliance; factors most likely to help attendance and compliance; and factors most likely to impede that.

Participants were observably more animated and enthusiastic in their discussion of supervisors than CJAs, a feature that appeared to reflect the fact that relationships between offenders and supervisors were, for most, well established.   Conversely, most of the participants felt that they did not know 'their' CJA particularly well with contact limited for most to a few minutes each week (though this was not considered to be a problem). There were however exceptions to these trends. In respect of CJAs, a small number of participants – those who had experienced problems in completing their order and had in turn sought assistance – felt that they knew their CJA well and spoke positively about these relationships. Relatedly, though the majority of participants were very positive about the manner in which supervisors communicated and engaged with them – with particular supervisors standing out – all agreed that though this was the case with 'most' supervisors, it was not the case for all. The detail of these messages emerges below.

'My CJA/supervisor is respectful, caring and enthusiastic towards me'

In respect of CJAs, just under half of the participants strongly agreed with the above statement, though some members of staff were identified as exemplary. As noted, the most positive responses came from those who had experienced and sought assistance re particular problems in complying with their order. As one participant expressed: 'mine is brilliant. I've started working a few times since I've had this order. She's rearranged the day and aw that no problem like. If it wasnae for her I'd have breached ages ago'. The remainder provided more neutral responses, based mostly on the fact that they felt that they didn't know their worker very well and saw them only to 'check in' or 'say hello'.

For supervisors, most participants strongly agreed with the above statement – for the majority of supervisors. Examples focussed repeatedly on the way staff spoke to them, highlighting the value placed by offenders on being treated respectfully. As one participant summed up: '[they] treat you like a person, not like a criminal'. For the one or two staff where participants disagreed, again this was shown in 'the way they speak to you', by the lack of 'give and take' and an unwillingness to 'work alongside' or offer practical help with work tasks.

'My CJA/supervisor uses authority fairly and consistently'

For the CJAs, views across the groups varied on the issue of authority. Two of the three groups strongly agreed with this statement, describing a clear experience of consistency and fairness in the use of authority. As one participant explained: 'if you're late even by a few seconds you're still late … everyone gets treated the same … I like that … we know how they will react'. Participants in the remaining group (those in employment) initially expressed disagreement or an 'in-between' stance. For example, participants cited the 'consistent' or 'inflexible' use of authority as a problem, a factor that the other groups valued highly. Generally, a sense emerged amongst these members that they would have liked individual circumstances to be taken into account – driven largely by a perception that the demands of employment made it difficult to comply with the demands of CS, specifically, attending on time and providing evidence of absences. While noting then some variations in offender responses in this area, the findings indicate that the use of authority, as practiced by 'most' CJAs, was fair and consistent. The variance in views reflects the extent to which offenders were 'happy' with that consistency.

In relation to supervisors, all agreed that with most supervisors the use of authority was fair and consistent. Offenders felt that overall they were treated equally and that the manner adopted by the supervisors meant that the 'use' of authority was rarely evident. In contrast, two supervisors were considered to be more 'confrontational' in their use of authority, adopting an approach that was at times felt to cause rather than diffuse conflict. Not surprisingly, participants identified that this was most problematic

in situations when individual offenders were experiencing personal problems affecting their mood - often resulting in what was described as a 'clash over nothing'.

'My CJA/supervisor provides me with support, help and guidance through the course of my order'

A few participants who had experienced help with particular problems strongly agreed with the above statement in respect of CJAs, though most either disagreed or positioned themselves as 'in-between'. Again, responses in this area appeared to reflect the fact that most had very limited contact with CJAs and, as a result, neither experienced nor expected 'support, help and guidance'. Most however, agreed with the view that 'if you needed help they probably would help you'; though the limited contact experienced by some made for a somewhat tentative agreement in this area. Indeed, some offenders expressed genuine surprise on hearing that fellow offenders had discussed and received help from their CJA in relation to personal problems.

Again, acknowledging the above-noted exceptions, offenders were quick to agree with the above statement in respect of supervisors. However, further discussion highlighted that, for most, responses in this area related to the provision of 'practical' support, help and guidance with CS tasks. When asked to consider the provision of support, help and guidance with problems 'beyond' CS, responses varied. A minority of offenders had experienced help with problems outside of CS and clearly valued this aspect of the role. As one offender noted: 'they've helped me put things into perspective … problems and things'. While another responded 'I get loads of help … with the job and life … you can actually sit and have a talk to them'. Where this did occur it appeared to depend on the attitude and initiative of the offender, and/or on the relationship developed between offender and supervisor. For most however, this was deemed to be 'not their job', with some participants again surprised at the idea that they would discuss personal or wider problems with staff. It is worth noting however that, though most participants were surprised by the idea that they would discuss or seek help with problems, all agreed that 'other problems' greatly affected attendance and compliance with their order. The hesitation and uncertainty evident in

discussing this issue is significant and correlates with the uncertainty expressed by staff. At the very least these findings suggest a distinct ambiguity regarding the scope and boundaries of the CS role - an ambiguity that is further reflected in the limited extant literature. Relatedly, the findings suggest some confusion amongst offenders regarding what they can expect from their order and from those who act in a supervisory capacity.

'My CJA/supervisor acts as a positive role model and reinforces the positives in my behaviour'

While some participants agreed with this statement in respect of CJAs - providing clear examples of being encouraged by particular workers, discussion highlighted a mixed experience. Again, many of the participants felt unable to comment based on insufficient contact, while others were ambivalent because, in their words: 'it depends who'.

Again, acknowledging the exceptions, there was general agreement with the above statement in respect of supervisors, with participants providing examples of receiving praise and encouragement for work done well. Participants were more ambivalent around the issue of supervisors acting as a role model with at least one participant expressing the view that this was beyond the CS supervisory role.

'My CJA's/supervisor's positive attitude and behaviour towards me supports my attendance and compliance with my order'

All of the participants agreed that the CJAs attitude and behaviour towards them 'made a difference' to the CS experience, however this was not considered critical to attendance and/or compliance. Again, offenders attributed this to the limited contact with CJAs and to the greater significance of other factors (i.e. the influence of supervisors, other offenders, or the consequences of not attending).

Participants were very clear that supervisors' positive attitude and behaviour towards them 'supported' attendance and compliance. Responses in this area included:

> Yes … they want you to get through it, they want you to finish it same as you want to finish it.

> Yes … makes the day go quicker, … if you know it's going to go ok you don't grudge coming in so much.

Notably, the converse was also deemed to be true with participants agreeing that 'negative' attitudes and behaviours on the part of supervisors were equally significant. As one participant put it: 'you don't want to come in if it's the supervisor you don't like'.

Though the attitude and approach adopted by supervisors was seen to affect attendance, again, this was not considered *as* critical to attendance and compliance as other factors. Not surprisingly, for all participants, the consequences of non-attendance were identified as the most critical factor, though each group also highlighted the significance of the offenders they worked alongside. Given what we know about the significance of group dynamics and peer relations in affecting individual behaviour and decision-making, the attention given here to relationships between offenders should not be surprising. Yet, this is an aspect of the CS dynamic that remains relatively unexplored. Further, noting the very the limited use of individual and external placements in the authority examined, this is an area that perhaps merits further attention.

What then do the above findings tell us and to what extent do they correlate and/or contrast with the views expressed by staff? Certainly, the above findings present a more varied and detailed picture of staff practice and training impact. Further, they provide some important insights in respect of the broader processes affecting the progression and achievement of identified CS outcomes. Within these variations however sit a number of recurring messages.

First, with regard to training impact, staff and offender perspectives were most varied in regard to the practice and approach of CJAs. While CJA staff provided clear examples of training impact in most of the areas discussed, offender responses in this

area were more neutral. Occasionally, this was explained by variances in the practices adopted by CJAs. Mostly, it reflected the very limited opportunity for contact and interaction between the two groups. Put simply, offender reticence in identifying a pro-social approach in the routine practice of CJAs was related to the fact that *most* felt that they did not know the CJAs well enough to comment. As already noted, there were important exceptions to this pattern. Discussion in these instances was often detailed and provided clear evidence of meaningful and effective relationships between CJAs and offenders. When in place, these relationships were felt to impact not only on attendance and compliance but on motivations and behaviour beyond CS. Notably, the development of these relationships appeared dependent on the particularities of the offender and/or staff member involved and on offenders taking action to resolve problems with the support of their CJA – a process that, as noted, generated genuine surprise from many offenders.

Relatedly, CJA and offender perspectives were broadly consistent on the issue of authority. Though views varied in respect of how 'happy' offenders were with the fair and consistent use of authority, most agreed that CJAs used authority fairly and consistently.

Though expressed differently then, there is some correlation between staff and offender perspectives on training impact. When the CJA/offender relationship has opportunity to develop, there is some evidence of a pro-social approach. In these instances staff practice can be observed to impact positively on offender attendance, compliance and progression within and beyond an order. However, the limited interaction between CJAs and most offenders, coupled with a lack of clarity amongst many offenders as to the breadth and scope of the CJA role, would appear to significantly limit the impact and potential of a pro-social approach within these relationships.

Messages regarding the approach and practice of CS supervisors were more consistent and more positive across the offender groupings – mostly reflecting the amount of time spent between offenders and supervisors. Further, offender findings in this area

broadly correlate with the views expressed by supervisors, that is, that the training *reinforced* an approach that, for most, was already in evidence. However, a clear variation between offender and staff accounts relates to the differences offenders experienced in the practice and approach of individual supervisors. While each staff member considered themselves to be adopting a pro-social approach, albeit to varying degrees, offender responses clearly suggest that a pro-social approach was only in evidence for 'most supervisors'[8]. These findings suggest that the training had no discernable impact on the practice of a minority of supervisors who displayed a punitive approach before and after the training.

Lastly, it needs to be acknowledged that though offender perspectives broadly supported staff perspectives in identifying evidence of a pro-social approach in practice, only one offender observed a noticeable 'change' in staff practice following the training. Possibly, this message fits with staff perspectives on this issue – that is, that the training 'reinforced' rather than 'changed' staff practice. However, noting the potential of a PSM approach, and the significant investment in service development initiatives of this kind, these findings may also suggest that there is 'room for improvement' in the progression of a PSM approach in the authority examined. Amongst other things, these findings suggest a need to better understand how we can progress the potential of evidence based approaches, with all staff, in the lived out realities of practice.

The role of other factors on CS attendance and compliance

The prescribed remit of the evaluation did not require attention to or analysis of the wider processes and factors felt by participants to affect attendance and compliance with orders. However, noting the service improvement aspirations within which the training and evaluation sits, growing awareness of the centrality of compliance issues to questions of effectiveness and service improvement, and the opportunity presented

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[8] Though this message also emerged in some staff conversations, in that there was an acknowledgement that not 'all' supervisors adopted a pro-social approach in practice.

in this study to explore these issues from the perspective of offenders, attention was given to this important area in closing. As is often the case with offender perspectives, emerging findings on this issue are both straightforward and complex.

Factors/processes that aid attendance and compliance

When asked to consider what most helped attendance and compliance, the most significant factor to emerge from discussion was the desire to have their 'time back', linked by many to a desire to move forward and 'get on with life'. Interestingly, CS was seen by most to be 'holding them back' from this process. In light of Maruna's (2001) discussion of the significance of offenders' perceptions and 'life scripts' in journeys of desistance, this message merits analysis. While the branding of CS as a predominantly punitive disposal may serve political and public interests and priorities (though see Maruna and King, 2008), this finding suggests that the negation of an explicit rehabilitative image for CS may well act as an inhibitor to that important process and outcome.

Other identified 'aids' to compliance included: knowledge of consequences, i.e. 'fear of going to jail', and relationships with fellow offenders on CS. Interestingly however, when considered in light of recent experiences of non-attendance, such issues were seen to hold little influence. Notably, participants struggled to identify or explore what they or others could do to help them comply with their order. While, in part, this was underpinned by a belief amongst participants that neither they nor others had much control over the myriad of factors affecting attendance and compliance, there also emerged a sense that participants had never considered what might help. They certainly did not consider that others (that is, CS staff) might assist with this.

Returning to this theme later, participants were asked what CS staff (and/or others) could do to aid attendance and compliance. Responses to this question were contrastingly clear and forthcoming and related almost exclusively to the nature of the

work undertaken. Repeatedly, participants expressed a desire for more 'relevant tasks, 'better jobs' and an end to 'pointless work'[9]. As one participant summed up:

> If you could actually be doing better work rather than sitting there sanding a bit of wood … you're standing there sanding something and it doesn't need to be sanded, or painting a fence and then coming back and painting it again, its pointless work that you shouldn't be doing. Fair enough you've got to work 'cos you've done something wrong but when it's work like that … what's the point of that? It's like they've ran out of things for you to do so they make you do stupid things like that.

Interestingly, though the experience of engaging in 'pointless' work was agreed by all, some appeared uncomfortable expressing this as a problem, suggesting that this was 'the point of CS'. As one participant expressed: '… it's work and you just come and do it … basically you know you're gonna get jobs that nobody else is going to do, you're no here to enjoy yourselves'.

Factors/processes that impede attendance and compliance

Again, responses in this area focussed mostly on practical or operational issues, including: job monotony, the 'cost' of CS and limited CS places (which sometimes resulted in offenders turning up and being sent home). Again, job monotony was the most common and recurring problem identified, summed up as 'jobs that don't make a difference'. While discussion occasionally touched on the (greater) significance of wider life problems experienced, most seemed either unable or unwilling to explore these issues in this setting. For the participants, such issues were perceived to be beyond the focus of CS and as such our discussion.

Notwithstanding the above noted reticence, within the conversations a number of participants highlighted a general 'lack of motivation' as a common obstacle, in particular an absence of things (i.e. rewards) to motivate you to turn up and complete

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[9] While the issue of individual placements is clearly relevant to this discussion few participants had knowledge or experience of individual placements. Hence discussion was focussed around the relevance and nature of team activities.

your hours. This appeared to be a relatively complex issue and, again, one that participants struggled to explore in detail. Participants did however recognise the apparent conflict between this issue and the views already expressed regarding what most helped (i.e. fear of going to jail). For example, one offender who clearly asserted 'you come because you've got to come', later acknowledged that despite being only weeks away from completing his order he had just returned from an eight week absence – a period when he relayed that he would turn up then go back home because he 'couldnae be bothered'. Though this participant struggled to explain his non-compliance - beyond the above explanation - the absence of any 'valued' motivating factor or reward appeared to be a significant part of the problem. For this individual – and others - lack of motivation appeared to be partly linked to: 'other stuff going on in your life [that] might have nothing to do with CS' – factors that were seen by most to matter a lot more than 'what people here say and do to you'.

Discussion and conclusions

Returning to the principal aim of the study - two key conclusions can be drawn from the findings presented. First, the findings suggest that the PSM training impacted positively on most CS staff and on the general practice of CS supervision. Specifically, the data provides considerable evidence of staff learning, with encouraging indicators of learning transfer in key areas. In addition, the data provides substantial, albeit variable, evidence of the intended outcomes of the training, with evidence most apparent for outcomes one and three. However, the extent to which *the training* contributed to these outcomes is more difficult to measure. Responses from staff and offenders suggest that while the training certainly supported the application of a PSM approach in practice, staff training was only one factor contributing to this outcome (with a worker's experience, knowledge, beliefs, general attitude and attributes identified as equally significant). In addition, the training appeared to contribute to an

improved learning and reflective culture amongst the staff group – a not insignificant finding in the context of CS service development.

The second conclusion to be drawn from the study relates to the nature of training impact. Training impact was mostly described as a validation, 'reinforcement' and/or 'development' of existing practice, as opposed to direct change. In part, this appears to reflect the nature of the training, the intended outcomes and the fact that some staff had engaged in similar training previously. However, the findings from levels three and four of the analysis also highlight clear limitations in training impact. Specifically, the training appeared to have no impact on a small minority of the staff group. Further, impact was limited, or certainly more 'complex', in key outcomes areas – specifically, in 'the provision of support, help and guidance', and 'reducing the level of breaches and reviews'.

In a service context where the implementation of evidence based practices remains at an early stage, the detail behind the above conclusions is as significant as the conclusions themselves. It is in this detail that we can identify a number of themes and issues relevant to the progression of evidence based practices within CS. The final part of this discussion gives attention to these emerging themes and considers the implications of the study findings for CS policy, practice and research.

Developing and sustaining a pro-social approach

Perhaps the clearest message to emerge from this study regarding the implementation of a pro-social approach (and, one would venture, other evidence based practices) is that the delivery of staff training is of value but it is not enough. This message is consistent with the findings of wider research in this area and reminds us of the need to attend as much to questions of 'how' we effectively implement and sustain evidence based practices within offender supervision as to questions of 'what' evidence based practice might look like (see also Bourgon, Bonta, Rugge & Gutierezz,

2010). What then can we learn from this study with regard to realising the potential of a pro-social approach (and other service development initiatives) within CS practice?

First, the findings foreground the need for a more strategic, coherent and co-ordinated approach to staff training and service development. Specifically, one in which the intended outcomes of new initiatives are clear, achievable, supported and compatible with the wider objectives, approach and practices of the organisation. Second, the findings support a more responsive and multi-modal approach to service development, that is one that recognises and responds to staff and service 'starting points' and that draws on a variety of learning and development mechanisms capable of progressing and sustaining desired outcomes. Specifically, the findings point to the value of mechanisms that create routine and ongoing opportunities for group learning, dialogue, reflection, review and reward. Finally, the findings suggest a need for enhanced attention to staff recruitment and staff development generally. In common with probation based studies, staff in this study placed as much significance on the experience, values and attitudes that they brought to the role as on the training itself. This finding is particularly significant in the CS context when one considers the potential contact hours spent between CS supervisors and offenders. Current Scottish guidelines prescribe that offenders complete a minimum of two CS days per week, arguably resulting in a weekly contact that exceeds the hours a probationer might spend with his officer/social worker over the course of an entire order. In light of this very basic analysis it seems reasonable to observe that if we wish to realise the potential of the CS supervisory relationship then we need to invest in these relationships.

Revisiting the community service role and task

The findings presented here suggest that, for many, the training contributed to a developing and broader understanding of the CS role and task. At the same time however, the findings highlight a concerning lack of clarity - amongst staff and

offenders - regarding what it is that CS is trying to achieve. Further, there is evidence to suggest that the absence of clearly expressed objectives for the service, specifically those that relate to the restorative and re-integrative potential of CS, may impede the progression and achievement of these objectives. For example, both staff and offenders described notably diverse supervisory practices currently in evidence within CS, both of which were seen to be legitimised by the at times competing objectives of the service (i.e. to punish and assist). Similar examples can be drawn regarding the nature of work offenders are expected to undertake, the accepted scarcity of individual and local placements and the routine, albeit undesirable, prioritising of quantitative over qualitative outputs. From a different perspective, offenders appeared to have little if any expectations of CS beyond punishment. Though offenders were keen to point out that the experience of CS was not necessarily punitive - in that many of the supervisors treated and interacted with them positively - this and other elements of CS, including the provision of help and support, was for many *beyond* what was expected.   More concerningly, offenders appeared to locate the completion of CS within an 'offending' rather than a 'desistance' trajectory - in so far as the process of 'moving forward' or 'getting on with life' (and the outcomes associated with that) was seen to begin on completion of the order rather than within it. Noting Maruna's (2001) work on the significance of personal narratives, hope and ambition within individual change processes, these findings are troubling and suggest that CS has some work to do if it is to achieve a shift in offender attitudes to and expectations of CS. Certainly, for the offenders in this study, the project of desistance or 'going straight' was seen to begin *after* CS.

These findings suggest a need to revisit the role and function of CS at both local and national levels. As outlined, there is now a growing body of evidence to suggest that the outcomes of CS can (and frequently do) extend beyond its more traditionally conceived objectives. However to date, with the exception of a small number of promising pilot projects, these benefits appear to have been achieved by default rather than design. While, as noted earlier, there is a need to progress carefully in this area, the findings from this study suggest that a failure to sensitively incorporate

recent thinking about CS into the service's expressed purposes and objectives may in fact impede the progression of these important objectives. As a starting point, we perhaps need to 'make up our minds' regarding what we want CS to achieve. The emerging context of 'Community Payback' in Scotland presents both opportunity and challenge in this regard. On the one hand there is opportunity to formally articulate a broader and more 'constructive' vision for CS or 'unpaid work', as envisaged for example in the report by the Scottish Prisons Commission (2008). The attendant danger however is that the reparative, re-integrative and rehabilitative ideals of community payback become obscured by competing political priorities to publicly 'package' payback as punishment first and last (see, for example, Maruna & King's (2008) discussion of these issues). More practically, if we are serious in our efforts to exploit the reparative, restorative and re-integrative potential of CS, as some recent policy espousals suggest, then the findings from this study suggest there is a need to revisit the more rudimentary elements of that disposal (including 'boring placements' and 'pointless work'). In our late-modern preoccupation with form over function these elements may have become less fashionable but, for the offenders in this study, they remain outcome critical.

Getting to grips with support, help and guidance

Noting the range of personal and social problems typically experienced by offenders completing CS (Rex et al., 2003), the now well documented correlation between offenders' problems, compliance and recidivism (McIvor, 1998; Raynor & Vanstone, 1997), and the significance offenders placed on 'other stuff going on in your life', there would appear to be a developing rationale for attending more closely to the provision of support, help and guidance within the CS context. Further, recent research exploring the rehabilitative potential of CS has repeatedly highlighted the potential of a 'problem solving approach' within that space (see, for example, McIvor, 1998, 2002; Rex et al., 2003).

Yet, the findings from this study suggest considerable ambivalence amongst staff and offenders regarding the appropriateness, scope and boundaries of a problem solving approach within CS. As outlined, while all offenders acknowledged the considerable impact of 'wider' problems on motivation and compliance, most were surprised by the suggestion that they might receive support or help within CS with wider problems. The limited research in this area presents a similarly ambivalent picture. In a paper presented to The Clarke Hall Day Conference, McIvor (1998, p. 59) discusses the value of 'concrete problem solving' within CS and advocates the use of a problem solving approach at the following three levels:

- in the supervisor's approach to the completion of work tasks
- in the development of work tasks which help to alleviate offenders' social problems
- *in actively helping offenders to deal with problems which arise in the course of an order* (emphasis added)

However, in a more recent professional paper, McIvor's (2002) discussion of problem solving within CS is notably constrained to '*the tasks* that offenders in teams are required to undertake'. Similarly, despite a clear focus on this area in the Community Service Pathfinder projects, the findings to emerge on this issue are far from straightforward (Rex et al., 2003). For example, though projects focussed on using CS to tackle offender-related needs reported significant reductions in offenders' 'self-perceived problems', as the authors go on to observe, they 'did not appear to produce positive outcomes overall' (p. 76). Interestingly, success in this area was thought to be hampered by implementation problems, in particular 'a lack of strong focus' – a surely salient observation in light of related findings from the effectiveness literature which indicate that the provision of help or problem solving should be focussed, clearly targeted, and appropriately resourced (Dowden and Andrews, 2004; Raynor & Vanstone, 1997).

In light of the above, perhaps the clearest message to emerge on this issue is the need for further research. Specifically, there is a need to further explore *if* CS can be

effective in assisting offenders with the personal and social problems experienced in the course of an order; and if so, *how* CS staff (and/or others) can help in this area. In the interim, the findings suggest a need for service providers to clarify the nature and scope of what is currently envisaged in the provision of support, help and guidance, and to more effectively communicate that to those delivering and completing CS. Further, if the provision of support, help and guidance is to extend beyond the 'completion of CS tasks' then there appears to be a need for organisations to ensure that staff possess (or have access to) the knowledge, skills and time required to fulfil that role.

The complexity of compliance

Despite a growing recognition of the centrality of compliance to effectiveness in community penalties (Bottoms, 2001; McCulloch, 2010b; Robinson & McNeill, 2008), few studies exploring the rehabilitative potential of CS attend in any direct way to this complex issue. Rather, writing in this area has tended to focus on developments aimed at enhancing the offender's experience of completing CS, the assumption being that a positive experience of CS will in turn improve compliance. The findings from this study suggest that offender compliance with community service is more complex. Acknowledging the significance of compliance within emerging criminological debate, we return to this issue more fully in part two.

Conclusion

In this paper I have reported on the findings of a small scale Scottish study that set out to evaluate the impact of pro-social modelling training on the practice of CS supervision within a local authority team. In doing so I have attempted to locate this discussion within the evolving landscape of contemporary CS practice – an approach

that highlights the considerable potential that resides within CS, as well as the many obstacles that lie in the way of sustainable service development. The findings presented here suggest that, with the right supporting conditions, the delivery of staff training can impact positively on staff practice, offender experiences and service outcomes. However the findings also indicate that staff training is one of a number of important variables in this complex and multi-dimensional endeavour. In sum, this paper concludes that if we want to realise the potential of a pro-social approach – and the important outcomes associated with that – then we need to also attend to the multiple service, social and societal obstacles that regularly impede and obstruct that process.

Part two. Exploring community service, understanding compliance

Introduction

Amid the many lessons to emerge from recent research, policy and practice attention to the question of 'what works' in reducing reoffending, the concept of compliance has emerged as a critical issue and dynamic.   In consequence, there now exist a small number of studies that attend to the dynamics of compliance within justice sanctions, and to the question of *how* workers can aid and influence compliant behaviour (Bottoms, 2001; Robinson & McNeill, 2008, 2010). In this discussion I return to the study reported on in part one with a view re-examining the study findings in light of developing knowledge and understanding of compliance. Though the study did not set out to explore this issue directly, perhaps unsurprisingly, it emerges as a critical issue. I begin by providing a brief review of recent research evidence relating to compliance within community penalties – giving particular attention to compliance research in the area of community service (CS). I then provide a brief summary of the above-discussed research findings as they relate to our discussion here. In closing I consider the implications of this discussion for future research, policy and practice. Recognising the small scale of the study, and its location within a Scottish context, it is left to the reader to speculate as to the generalisability of the findings discussed. Certainly, the discussion that follows attests to the need for larger scale and more systematic inquiry in this area. However, it is my impression that the issues raised connect with broader penal trends, questions and issues now arising in other jurisdictions - both in relation to the development of CS generally and offender compliance specifically.

Compliance

The concept of compliance exists as both a central and relatively unexplored component of research and critical debate relating to CS. On the one hand, compliance - in the form of successful completion of CS hours - has long been recognised as one of the principal indicators of CS success. Indeed, in early evaluations of the CS pilot projects, the viability of CS was premised largely on the basis that 'orders [were] being made and completed' (Pease, Billingham & Earnshaw, 1977, p. 70; see also Duguid, 1982). Almost three decades on, and in the context of an expanded vision for CS – compliance and completion of CS continues to be identified as a primary measure of success and effectiveness.   As Rex et al. (2003, p. 45) discuss in outlining the 'first output measure' for the Community Service Pathfinder projects:

> [T]his is a critical measure for community service, not only because of the confidence of the judiciary in such a sentence, but also because for offenders the ability to complete a court–ordered penalty successfully may be significant in influencing other future compliance behaviour, not least re-offending and reconvictions.

On the other hand, even amidst growing awareness of the significance of compliance within community penalties generally (Bottoms 2001; Robinson and McNeill, 2008, 2010) and CS specifically (McIvor, 2002; Rex & Gelsthorpe, 2002), as yet there exists no published research evidence that attends directly or systematically to the concept of compliance within CS.   In light of this fact, this section begins by (re-)examining the dynamics of compliance as currently understood in relation to the community penalties, drawing primarily on Bottoms' (2001) work in this area. Attention will then be given to recent CS research, which provides some insight into the compliance dynamic within this particular justice sanction.

Understanding compliance

As already noted, the concept of compliance is more than familiar to those involved in the delivery or development of CS. Definitions however are notably varied. Typically, compliance has been used to refer to an offender's compliance with the formal requirements of the order, and might, for example, be used to refer to an offender's attendance, performance and/or successful completion of his or her requisite hours. More recently, as Rex et al.'s (2003) comment highlights, notions of compliance within CS have developed to also encompass *future* compliant behaviour, i.e. law abiding, non-offending or reduced offending behaviour. Despite this elasticity of meaning, compliance is rarely defined within CS policy or practice directives, or in related research discussion.

In the context of this definitional vacuum, Bottoms' (2001) work on compliance within community penalties provides a very helpful introduction to this issue. In deconstructing the notion of compliance, Bottoms exposes the complex and multi-dimensional nature of compliance within community penalties, while also providing an accessible framework for understanding it. Bottoms begins by distinguishing between two forms of compliance – that of 'short term requirement compliance' and 'longer-term legal compliance'. The former relates to compliance with the specific legal requirements of a community penalty – i.e. successful completion of a court order. The second relates to an offender's compliance with the criminal law – i.e. future law abiding behaviour or 'non-offending' within a specified time period. Building on this definition, Robinson and McNeill (2008, 2010) propose a further distinction within short-term requirement compliance - between *formal compliance* and *substantive compliance.* Here, formal compliance is used to refer to behaviour that meets the minimum requirements of an order and, in the case of CS, might include attending work placements or attending on time. Substantive compliance is used to relate to an offender's active engagement and co-operation within the requirements of the order and might be evidenced, for example, in an offender's positive attitude to and

engagement with CS tasks. This concept of substantive compliance is particularly relevant to later discussion regarding the relationship between short term *substantive* compliance and the achievement of longer term compliance outcomes.

Having established the significance of both short and long term compliance for those involved in the supervision of community penalties, Bottoms goes on to map out four variants of, or 'principal mechanisms underpinning', compliant behaviour. Each is shown to be instrumental both to our understanding of compliance and to our capacity to influence compliant behaviour. The compliance mechanisms identified by Bottoms are as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Compliance mechanisms (Bottoms, 2001)

A   Instrumental/prudential compliance

   (a) Incentives

   (b) Disincentives

B   Normative compliance

   (a) Acceptance of/belief in norm

   (b) Attachment leading to compliance

   (c) Legitimacy

C   Constraint-based compliance

   (1) Physical restrictions or requirements on individual leading to compliance

      (a) Natural

      (b) Imposed

   (2) Restrictions on access to target

<div style="border:1px solid">

(3) Structural constraints

D   Compliance based on habit or routine

</div>

Briefly, *instrumental* or *prudential compliance* relates to the various incentives and disincentives deployed to influence compliance within community penalties – most obviously illustrated in the form of legal sanctions to be applied in the event of non-compliance. Normative compliance is divided by Bottoms into three sub-types. The first relates to a conscious or moral belief in the norm in question and might include, for example, an offender's acceptance of his/her sentence as reasonable or fair. The remaining two sub-types relate to the influence of social relationships on compliant behaviour and may include the influence of a partner or family on compliance, or, with regard to *legitimacy,* the influence of an authority figure, i.e. a supervising officer. In light of related research around legitimacy and effective relationships within community penalties (Dowden & Andrews, 2004; McIvor, 1998), this mechanism is clearly significant and highlights the dynamic and interactional nature of compliance within community penalties.   Constraint based compliance is broadly self-explanatory and relates to the various restrictions and constraints impacting on an individual's compliance as a result of either: physical needs (i.e. the need for sleep), physical restrictions (i.e. prison or electronic monitoring) and opportunity (or lack thereof). Bottoms' final compliance mechanism – compliance based on habit or routine – relates to compliance that occurs almost unconsciously, either through habit or routine. Interestingly, Bottoms notes that habits or 'dispositions' can be developed towards longer term compliance outcomes, again highlighting the dynamic nature of compliant behaviour.

The above framework helpfully illuminates the often simplified dynamic of compliance within CS. Specifically, Bottoms' analysis foregrounds that offender compliance is a dynamic and interactive entity, one that can be (and is) shaped and influenced by

multiple and often complex mechanisms – many of which are routinely overlooked in CS policy and practice. It is no great leap then to suggest that those concerned to influence and support compliance within community penalties (both short and long term) need to better understand and explore the above-discussed mechanisms in pursuit of more effective targeting of compliance efforts.

Compliance and community service

Noting the dearth of research attention given to CS generally, it is unsurprising to find that research attention to the dynamics of compliance within CS is scant to say the least. Of the few published research studies that do attend to this issue, none attend in any detailed way to the dynamic or complex nature of compliance as outlined above. Nonetheless, existing findings in this area have much to contribute to our understanding and, at the very least, provide a baseline for the development of new knowledge.

McIvor's (1992) aforementioned study of CS in Scotland was perhaps the first study to significantly identify and illuminate a relationship between the quality of offenders' experiences on CS and compliant attitudes and behaviours. McIvor's study found the offenders who experienced CS as positive and worthwhile were more likely to demonstrate both short and long term compliant behaviour (in the form of improved completion rates and reduced recidivism). As noted in part one, for the offenders in McIvor's study, a positive experience of CS was associated with engaging in meaningful/rewarding work, the opportunity for contact and exchange with beneficiaries and the opportunity for skills acquisition. Further, in common with probation-based research, offender interviews highlighted the significance of a positive relationship with supervisors (that is, one based on consistency, fairness and mutual respect - features identified as critical in sustaining motivation and commitment to completing CS). Finally, McIvor's study identified a relationship

between efforts to help offenders with personal problems and successful completion. As McIvor (2002) writes: 'Schemes that tended to adopt a more problem-focussed, 'holistic' approach had better completion rates than would have been predicted'.

A small number of studies have since endorsed McIvor's findings regarding the potential relationship between CS and longer term compliant behaviour. In an analysis of reconviction rates following community sentences, Lloyd et al. (1995), Raynor and Vanstone (1997) and May (1999) each report findings that indicate that reconviction rates for offenders given CS were slightly lower than those predicted on the basis of individual profiles. Similarly, Killias et al. (2000), in an analysis of the comparative effects of CS and short term imprisonment, found that offenders sentenced to CS had lower rates of reconviction than those sentenced to prison. Killias et al. also explore the possible mechanisms influencing longer term compliant behaviour and suggest a relationship between reduced reconviction and an offender's perception and acceptance of their order as fair and legitimate. On the basis of such findings, Rex and Gelsthorpe (2002, p. 316) speculate:

> Could it be … that [as] offenders undergo constructive and reintegrative experiences in undertaking community work … that accepting the sentence as fair in the first place makes them more receptive to these experiences?

Undoubtedly, the above findings have contributed to renewed attention to the purpose and process of CS, and to the development of a number of UK wide initiatives aimed at enhancing its rehabilitative potential – most notably in the introduction of evidence based practices within CS supervision. Chris Trotter's (1993) work on pro-social modelling has been particularly influential in this regard, in so far as it is considered to provide an opportune practice framework for the incorporation of features found to be most associated with short and longer term compliant behaviour (McIvor, 1998, 2002).

Again, as noted earlier, the Community Service Pathfinder projects provided the first formal and large scale opportunity to explore and test out the above findings. Noting

the scale and focus of this project, and its identification of compliance as a critical measure of effectiveness, we might expect that this study would have much to contribute to our understanding of the compliance dynamic within CS. In reality the findings to emerge on this issue are modest.   Certainly the study provides encouraging data in respect of both short and long term compliance behaviour. With regard to formal compliance, 73% of offenders successfully completed their order (in comparison, 71% of community punishment orders and 60% of community service elements of combined orders were successfully completed across England and Wales in 2000 (Home Office, 2002)). Substantive compliance - in the form of co-operation and performance - was also rated highly, with 75% of offenders achieving good or very good co-operation and 81% achieving good or very good performance. The study identifies a number of factors associated with the above outcomes, *all* of which relate to offender circumstances at the point of commencing the order. For example, successful completion of CS was found to be associated with the following factors (as assessed at the point of commencement): age, risk of reconviction, employment or educational status, educational qualifications, stability of accommodation, support from family, partners or friends, sole or shared responsibilities for others and motivation to complete. With regard to co-operation and performance, little association emerged between 'other factors' and performance, though younger offenders with higher risks of reconviction were found to perform less well. Though significant, these findings provide little insight into how the *process of completing* CS impacted on short and long term compliance, or indeed of how such processes interact with individual circumstances (for example, age, family ties, employment, etc.).

In respect of longer term compliant behaviour, 61% of the sample who completed Crime Pics II showed significant reductions in both pro-criminal attitudes and problems. Further, a majority of offenders thought that CS had changed the way they saw things, and three quarters thought it had made them less likely to offend. Notably, and in common with McIvor's (1992) findings, features that appeared to be most associated within these changes were whether offenders perceived the work to be of value to themselves or beneficiaries. More broadly, the report tentatively

concludes that projects focussed on PSM and skills accreditation were 'amongst the most promising approaches'. Projects focussing on tackling other offending related needs were found to fare less well and 'did not appear to produce positive outcomes overall' (p. vii). Notably, success in this regard was seen to be hampered by an attempt to take on 'too wide a range of initiatives' and/or 'a lack of strong focus' (p. 76) – a finding that is clearly significant in the context of discussion around an expanded role for CS.

The above research evidence has much to contribute to our developing understanding of compliance dynamics within CS. First, there now exists a significant body of evidence that indicates that CS has a legitimate contribution to make to the much coveted outcomes associated with longer term compliant behaviour. Further, there is now considerable agreement within that research evidence regarding those features or 'mechanisms' of CS that appear to be most promising in supporting compliance. However, available evidence also attests to the considerable limitations of our knowledge in this area – in part a reflection of the lack of direct or systematic attention to this outcome within CS. In this respect there is a need for more targeted attention to the issue of compliance (and indeed non-compliance) within CS and to the principal and varied mechanisms that act upon it. Specifically, we need to better understand why offenders do and do not attend CS (formal compliance); what motivates offenders towards substantive compliance, and to what extent do these short term outcomes also impact on longer term compliant behaviour? Further, if we are clear that longer term compliance (and thus reduced recidivism) is a legitimate objective for CS, there is a need for targeted policy, practice and research attention to what can be done both within and beyond CS to support that outcome.

Acknowledging the above, we return now to the findings to emerge from the research study discussed in part one. Drawing on staff and offenders perspectives, these findings further attest to the centrality and complexity of individual compliance within CS. In common with the empirical studies discussed above, the study reported on did not set out to explore the issue of compliance directly. Rather, it was through a

process of talking and listening to participants – and to offenders in particular - that the significance and complexity of compliance emerged.

The research study

As outlined in part one, the research study set out to evaluate the impact of a pro-social modelling (PSM) training programme on the practice of CS supervision within a criminal justice social work team, drawing primarily on staff and offender perspectives. The intended outcomes of the training were identified as follows:

1. Provide an improved respectful, caring and enthusiastic delivery of service to clients, with a fair and consistent use of authority.

2. Provide an improved level of support, help and guidance to clients during the course of their order.

3. Provide better pro-social models and reinforcement to clients of their positive behaviour.

4. Improve client attendance and reduce the level of breaches and reviews.

While there was a clear desire that the training would improve the relational skills of staff supervising CS - and in turn formal and substantive compliance - no direct attention was given to the training's longer term impact in terms of reconviction rates/longer term compliant behaviour. However, the findings emerging from the study do attend to these issues and suggest that the above processes – applied in the right conditions - may well be associated with both short and long term compliance.

The research methodology, sample and limitations are as outlined in part one.

Research findings

The following provides a summary of the research findings (as discussed in part one) relevant to our discussion here.

Staff perspectives

In considering impact on the intended outcomes of the training, staff generally rated training impact highly. Specifically, the data indicated that the training had greatest impact on outcome one: *provide a respectful, caring and enthusiastic delivery of service, with fair and consistent use of authority*; and outcome three: *provide better pro-social models and reinforcement to clients for their positive behaviour*. Responses were most varied in relation to outcome two: *provide an improved level of support, help and guidance to clients through the course of their order* - reflecting some variance in views regarding what was meant by support, help and guidance, and the extent to which staff were sufficiently trained or equipped to improve provision in this area. As might be expected, staff were most reticent in identifying training impact on outcome four: '*improve client attendance and reduce the level of breaches and reviews'.* Though the majority of participants considered the quality of worker-offender relationships to be a significant factor affecting attendance and compliance, participants were quick to assert the, often greater, influence of *other* factors on this outcome. 'Other factors' highlighted by staff included but extended beyond offenders' personal and social problems (for example, marital or drug problems) to also encompass significant organisational and socio-political constraints, such as 'poor' or 'boring' placements, staffing levels, public attitudes towards offenders, external and 'political' pressures, and what some perceived to be the 'numbers game' (referred to as the prioritising of quantitative outputs over qualitative outputs) currently dictating the quality of local CS provision.

The impact of 'wider factors' was also keenly felt in regard to the broader impact of the training. Staff highlighted various issues that made it difficult to implement the training, including: the size of CS teams, the quality of placements available, and the attitudes and/or 'suitability' of offenders. The most frequently cited obstacle - identified by over half of the participants - was the perceived impact of wider public, professional, political and media attitudes to offenders and/or CS. As one participant concluded: 'if a pro-social approach is to be truly effective it needs to be implemented at all levels, both within the agency and beyond'.

Offender perspectives

Offender perspectives *broadly* supported staff perspectives, though the findings in this area present a more varied and detailed picture.

First, offenders were quick to endorse the existence of a PSM approach in *most* supervisors. However, offenders consistently asserted that this was not the case for *all*. The findings in this area indicate that the PSM training appeared to have no impact on a small but consistent minority of supervisors with whom relationships were described as 'difficult'.   Focussing on their relationship and interaction then with 'most' supervisors, most participants were quick to provide evidence of outcomes one and three (supporting the findings to emerge from staff interviews). Supporting examples focussed on consistency and fairness in the use of authority, the use of praise and encouragement and, most significantly, the way staff spoke to them. Consistent with wider research findings on the relational element of supervision (McIvor, 1992), offenders placed considerable value on being treated respectfully and considered this critical to progress. As one participant put it: ' [they] treat you like a person, not like a criminal'.   Another observed: 'Mine is brilliant … if it wasnae for her I'd have breached ages ago'. For the minority of staff with whom relationships were difficult this was felt to be evidenced in 'the way they speak to you', by the 'lack of give and take' and an unwillingness to 'work alongside' or offer help with work tasks.

Again, in line with the findings to emerge from staff interviews, offender responses were most varied in relation to outcome two: *'provide an improved level of support, help and guidance'*. Initially, offenders were quick to agree with the above statement. However, further discussion highlighted that, for most, responses related to the provision of practical support, help and guidance with CS tasks. When asked to consider the provision of support with wider problems, responses varied.   A minority of offenders had experienced help with problems outside of CS and clearly valued this aspect of the role. As one offender noted: 'they've helped me put things into perspective … problems and things'. Another responded: 'I get loads of help … with the job and life … you can actually sit and have a talk to them'.

Where 'help and guidance' did occur it appeared to be largely down to the attitude and motivation of the offender to bring problems into the supervisory relationship, which in turn depended on the quality of that relationship. For most however, this was deemed to be 'not their job', with some offenders expressing genuine surprise on hearing that fellow offenders had discussed and received help with personal problems from staff. Though many were surprised by the idea that they would discuss or seek help with problems within CS, all agreed that 'other problems' greatly affected motivation, attendance and compliance. The hesitation and uncertainty expressed when discussing this issue is significant and correlates with the uncertainty expressed by staff. In this respect the findings suggest a level of ambiguity - amongst staff and offenders - regarding the appropriate scope and boundaries of the CS role.

As with staff perspectives, offender responses were most reticent in identifying a relationship between a PSM approach and attendance and compliance within CS (outcome four). In common with findings from previous studies (McIvor, 1998; Rex et al., 2003), participants were clear that the positive attitude and behaviour of staff towards them *supported* attendance and compliance. Offenders were equally clear that 'negative' attitudes and behaviours on the part of supervisors 'made you think twice' about attending. As one participant expressed: 'you don't want to come in if it's the supervisor you don't like'. However, staff attitude and approach was not

considered *as* critical to attendance and compliance as 'other' factors. Noting the significance placed by offenders on 'other' factors, attention was also given to factors offenders considered most critical to compliance within CS; specifically, those factors most likely to aid compliance and those most likely to impede it. The findings to emerge on this issue are both straightforward and complex.

Offender compliance and the significance of other factors

The most significant 'aid' to compliance identified by offenders was the desire to 'have [their] time back', linked by many to a desire to move forward and 'get on with life'. For most, CS was seen to be 'holding them back' from this process - a finding worth further analysis in the context of Maruna's (2001) work on the significance of offender narratives in supporting desistance.

Other identified 'aids' to compliance included: knowledge of consequences – such as 'fear of going to jail' – and relationships with fellow offenders on CS. However, when considered in the light of individual experiences of non-attendance, the above factors appeared to exert limited influence on attendance and compliance decisions. For many of the offenders interviewed, and arguably for the 2,161 offenders reflected in recent breach statistics, Scottish Government, (2008a) fear of incarceration or a desire to 'have their time back' were not, in themselves, enough when set in the context of individual experience. This message is significant and may suggest that *instrumental compliance* - at least in the form of deterrence or threats - is less influential on individual compliance decisions than is often assumed (see also Ugwudike, 2010). Faced with this anomaly, participants struggled to explore what they or others could do to help them comply with their order. In part, this was underpinned by a narrative that neither they nor others had much control over the myriad of factors (life problems) affecting compliance. However, there also emerged a sense that participants had not considered what might help with such problems. Certainly, offenders did not consider that others (including CS staff) might assist with this.

When invited to consider more practical aids to compliance, responses were contrastingly clear and forthcoming and related exclusively to the nature of work undertaken. Repeatedly, participants expressed a desire for more 'relevant tasks', 'better jobs' and an end to 'pointless work'. As one participant summed up:

> If you could actually be doing better work rather than sitting there sanding a bit of wood... you're standing there sanding something and it doesn't need to be sanded, or painting a fence and then coming back and painting it again, its pointless work that you shouldn't be doing. Fair enough you've got to work 'cos you've done something wrong but when it's work like that … what's the point of that? It's like they've ran out of things for you to do so they make you do stupid things like that.

Though the experience of engaging in 'pointless' work was familiar to all, some were uneasy expressing this as a problem, suggesting that this was 'the point of CS'. As one offender responded: 'It's work and you just come and do it … basically you know you're gonna get jobs that nobody else is going to do, you're no here to enjoy yourselves'. This finding resonates with the uncertainty expressed earlier regarding the legitimate scope and purpose of CS. It also suggests that offender experiences of CS may be very closely associated with their expectations of it (for example in relation to change and desistance). Again, in the light of emerging research evidence on the significance of offender attitudes to, and expectations of, themselves and others in change processes (see for example Maruna, 2001), these findings are significant and suggest that offender perceptions of the purpose or point of CS may well be critical to the outcomes achieved.

Factors considered by offenders to impede compliance focussed almost exclusively on practical or operational issues (such as job monotony, the 'cost' of CS, operational frustrations, etc.). While discussion occasionally touched on the (greater) significance of wider personal problems, for most, such issues were deemed to be beyond the focus of CS and, as such, our discussion. Notwithstanding this reticence, offender discussion did reveal a relationship between non-compliance and a 'lack of motivation'

- in particular an absence 'of things [broader rewards] to motivate you to turn up and completed your hours'. The apparent tension between this view and the view expressed earlier regarding what most helped (that is, the fear of going to jail) was not lost on participants and attests to the complexity of offenders' experience and views on this issue.   For example, one offender who very clearly asserted 'you come because you've got to come', later acknowledged that, despite being only weeks away from completion, he had recently returned from an eight week period of unexplained absence. For this individual – and some others - lack of motivation was at least part of the explanation, linked to: 'other stuff going on in your life [that] might have nothing to do with CS'. Significantly, for most of the offenders interviewed, such factors were seen to matter a lot more than 'what people here say and do to you'.

Discussion

The above-discussed findings present a number of interesting messages regarding the relationship between a PSM approach within CS supervision and offender compliance – few of which are straightforward. Some of these messages have already been discussed under the discussion headings in part one. Here, I return to some of the emerging questions raised by my review of existing research evidence relating to compliance with community penalties, and in the context of CS in particular. My intention is not to answer these questions – such a task is impossible drawing on a study of this scale and focus. Rather, my aim is to open up, trigger and contribute to what now needs to become a more substantive and research-led discussion in this area.

What are the principal mechanisms impacting on compliance and non-compliance?

Generally, and consistent with existing research data, the findings indicate that the adoption of a pro-social approach within CS supervision certainly *supports* offender attendance, motivation and compliance within CS. However, the findings also signal that staff attitude and approach is only *one* mechanism amongst many impacting upon formal, substantive and longer term compliance.

On one level the findings endorse existing research messages, with staff highlighting the greater significance of offenders' attitudes and problems, alongside the considerable influence of wider organisational and socio-political constraints. Offenders, again as might be expected, attested to the considerable influence of those they worked alongside, the perceived consequences of non-compliance and, most significantly, the nature of work they were expected to undertake. Despite the familiarity of these messages, in a climate where we are witnessing the emergence of a range of new and improved 'technologies' to aid compliance within CS (i.e. the introduction of text messaging to support attendance), these more 'traditional' insights present a considerable challenge to those concerned to influence and improve both substantive and longer term compliance within CS. For example, despite the fact that 'the nature of work undertaken' has been highlighted as outcome critical in almost every published evaluative study of CS to date (see for example, McIvor, 1998; Rex & Gelsthorpe, 2002), these same studies, in common with this one, continue to provide ample evidence of offenders engaging in 'pointless work'.

Beyond these familiar messages, offender discussion also highlighted the considerable complexity that surrounds individual attendance, motivation and compliance. In essence, the detail emerging from individual accounts suggests that supporting compliance within CS is about much more than what goes on *within* CS. For at least some of the offenders interviewed, there emerged a tentative expression of the need for a valued reason, reward or purpose to comply in the long term.   As is often the case with offender perspectives, there is a common sense nature to this finding; there

is also a growing body of research evidence to support it (see, for example, Maruna, 2001; Robinson & McNeill, 2008; Ward & Brown 2004).   However, offenders' need for a valued *reason* to comply perhaps presents one of the greatest challenges to contemporary penal policy and practice.   To return to the Scottish context, the new penal discourse currently emerging in Scotland has once again endorsed a commitment to providing offenders with an *opportunity* for change within the context of community penalties – a commitment that, for many, is to be celebrated and seized. The challenge however lies in the perhaps inconvenient truth that offenders, both in this study and others, appear to need more than *opportunity* for change and compliance; they need a substantive reason.

The above findings also connect well with Bottoms' (2001) conceptual mapping of the various and interactive mechanisms underpinning compliance behaviour – reminding us that there are no simple or single answers in our efforts to understand and aid compliant behaviour. For the offenders in this study, compliance (and non-compliance) appears to be a complex and shifting dynamic, influenced to greater and lesser degrees by an array of acknowledged and unacknowledged variables encountered within and beyond the CS context. However, notwithstanding the complexity of this message, the findings indicate that offenders – when assisted to consider and explore those issues for themselves – are well placed to aid us in our understanding of these issues, an observation that now needs to become more widely recognised. My impression from facilitating offender discussion in this area is that both sides of the service/offender partnership have much to gain from a more collaborative exploration of the compliance dynamic as it is experienced and played out in individual pathways.

If we are clear that longer term or 'substantive' compliance is a legitimate objective for CS, what are the policy, practice and research implications?

First, as discussed in part one, the findings from this study suggest that it is *not* yet clear that 'substantive' or 'longer term' compliance (that is, in the form of future or sustained law abiding behaviour) is a legitimate and valuable objective for CS. While there are many who support the location of longer term compliance outcomes within CS's core objectives 'in principle', neither staff nor offenders could be described as being clear on this issue. In the context of ongoing debate regarding the intended outcomes for CS, and the diverse and often competing practices found to be in operation within and across CS settings, the findings from this study suggest a need to make up our minds regarding what we want CS to achieve. If we are clear that CS can and should be an aid to offenders in their compliance and desistance efforts then we need to begin by communicating that as an explicit and legitimate CS objective. This will require the development of communication mechanisms that ensure that service objectives agreed at policy and practice levels are understood by service participants. It will also require the development of CS practices that are coherent with CS objectives. Put simply, it means that what we *say* about CS has to connect with how we *do* CS.

Conclusion

The above discussion attests to the fact that the professional, political and academic landscape of CS is changing. As efforts to enhance the effectiveness of CS take root we can expect to see the adoption of a number of service initiatives that seek to foster both short and longer term compliant behaviour. Unfortunately, to date, such initiatives appear to have been developed and implemented within a policy and

practice context where the dynamic of compliance is poorly understood, and where efforts to support compliance routinely sit alongside other mechanisms known to impede that. Emerging research evidence offers some insight regarding the way forward. We are learning that it is not enough to tinker with compliance. We do not aid compliance in individual offender pathways by admiring its credentials or by attending to it when we can. Rather, substantive and long term compliance emerges as a complex, challenging and vacillating dynamic. Further, it is a dynamic that is required in a service context that, though laced with potential, is at the same time structured upon longstanding impediments to successful compliance outcomes. As compliance (re)-emerges then as the latest in a long line of much coveted outcomes for modern and re-imagined community penalties, our engagement with this complex dynamic needs to start from a more realistic, respectful and research led-appraisal of the factors and practices associated with it.

Project III:

Co-producing justice?
Exploring the place and potential of
those sentenced within criminal
justice sanctions and services[10]

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[10] This project employed a co-productive research design and thus the work presented here reflects a collaborative effort. The nature and extent of that collaboration is detailed in part two.

Introduction

This inquiry is about the place and potential of those sentenced within criminal justice sanctions and services. In the last thirty years there has emerged within criminal justice policy and practice a discernable, and some have argued dramatic, shift towards increasingly punitive, controlling, managerial and correctional forms of punishment. These new forms have all but established themselves as defining features (and functions) of late modern justice sanctions, as demonstrated, for example, in the nomenclature that now frames justice services and sanctions across the UK and beyond (consider, for example, the recent rise of the 'National Offender Management Service' in England and Wales, or the related rise of 'Payback' as a new headline for community based sanctions across the UK). These shifts have been widely described and debated in the criminological literature, as have the social, cultural and political forces that have given rise to them (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Garland, 2002). In practice, they have been seen to displace (though not entirely dispense with) more 'traditional' justice concerns - including a longstanding focus on the individual offender and his or her effective punishment, rehabilitation and reintegration - replacing these with purportedly more modern and more defensible priorities relating to the effective *management* of offenders, and the associated delivery of safety, security, enforcement and compliance. As a new industry of corrections grows up around these new priorities the individual 'offender', and his or her place in the justice process, has all but disappeared from view. He, or she, is now the object upon which justice is done and his or her role in that transaction is to comply and conform (or face the consequences of failing to do so).

Yet, in the same period, in the broader sphere of public service provision, there has emerged an equally discernable though perhaps less dramatic shift towards more participatory, personalised and, most recently, co-productive public services. Here,

the emphasis is on engaging, involving and empowering service users and communities towards supporting their substantive participation in and co-production of public services and the outcomes to which they aspire. Again, the social, cultural and political drivers behind these developments are broad and diverse and are by no means beyond critique (see, for example, Bovaird, 2007; Fergusson, 2007). However, central to this shift is a growing recognition that effective service delivery, in any sector, depends on the interplay of effort, activity and commitment between service users, traditional providers, and communities.

This research inquiry starts from the apparent contrast and contradiction in the above-described developments. Certainly, there are particularities, risks and challenges in the criminal justice context that might explain the divergent pathways described above. However, there is no immediately obvious reason for assuming that the fundamental insights and rationale underpinning user-involvement, personalisation and co-production are less relevant to the challenge of effective service delivery in the justice context than they are elsewhere.

Criminal justice is a complex and contested space. Criminal Justice sanctions - as a site where the multiple and multi-dimensional ambitions of justice services gather and collect - are perhaps even more so. Justice sanctions, across most liberal democracies, continue to be tasked (variously and with different emphases) to deliver justice, punishment, protection, desistance, rehabilitation and social integration (amongst other things), and to do so in ways that respect and respond to the rights, needs and realities of victims, communities and 'offenders' themselves. The idea that we might resolve or move through the complexities involved in progressing these diverse, sometimes competing and often elusive outcomes through the force, control or ingenuity of professional actors or actions, and/or through the subjugation of those criminal justice services are tasked to transform, seems to me to be at odds with the research evidence now emerging within and beyond the criminal justice sphere. Reflecting these tensions, this inquiry explores the evolving place and potential of those sentenced within criminal justice sanctions and services.

The inquiry begins (and began) as a theoretical inquiry – presented in part one. Here, I examine the evolving place of those sentenced in the context of community penalties and, more specifically, in the increasingly salient context of compliance. In mapping the limitations of recent UK efforts towards compliance, I question the efficacy of short term, managerial compliance strategies, dominated as they are by professional actors and actions. In an attempt to explore a more constructive way forward consideration is given to connecting research literature around normative compliance and to the implications of this for developing justice policy and practice. In conclusion, I propose a more co-productive pursuit of compliance while raising questions about the possibility of that in the contemporary justice climate.

Part two describes the empirical inquiry developed in response to the above conclusions and questions. Reflecting the theoretical, epistemological and ontological starting points of this second-stage inquiry, our purpose extended beyond the production of knowledge to also encompass social justice aims and outcomes[11]. Specifically, this inquiry sought:

- to progress, in collaboration with people who have come through the criminal justice system, a research practice that is collaborative, relevant and progressive for all of the people involved
- to explore, through this collaboration, the meaning, relevance, possibility and potential of co-production as a mode of practice within criminal justice contexts

In progressing these aims the inquiry employed a co-productive research design, as described in part two.

Parts three and four present the results of the research inquiry in two distinct forms. Part three presents the 'data' gathered in the form of six co-produced research narratives. In this section primacy is given to the narrator's voice with my voice and analysis constrained (mostly) to the margins. Part four presents our analysis of the

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[11] The change in pronoun here reflects the co-productive nature of the research inquiry and activity from this stage onwards.

research narratives, attending also to the arising implications for justice policy, practice and research.

The conclusion of this inquiry is that co-production matters in justice. It emerges as a foundational feature of individual and on-going journeys of progression, desistance and recovery; and of productive, progressive and rehabilitative justice sanctions. Further, the findings indicate that co-production is possible in the justice context, in a variety of forms, albeit with clear caveats and constraints. Reflecting these findings, the inquiry concludes with some consideration of how we might move co-production forward in this complex, constrained and critical space.

Part one. Theoretical inquiry

Introduction

> It is common to describe people who hold important positions in society as
> 'somebodies' and their inverse as 'nobodies' – nonsensical terms, for we are all
> by necessity individuals with identities and comparable claims on existence.
> But such words are apt in conveying the variations in the quality of treatment
> meted out to different groups. Those without status remain unseen, they are
> treated brusquely, their complexities are trampled upon and their identities
> ignored.

The above quotation, taken from Alain De Botton's text *Status Anxiety* (2004, p. 12)*,*
aptly captures the nonsense, the reality and some of the consequences of the
differential treatments afforded to penal actors within late-modern penal systems and
processes. In this deeply stratified context, typically, those with status include criminal
justice policy makers, professionals and academics, and those without include both the
victims and perpetrators of criminal activity[12]. In this discussion I raise questions about
the status afforded to those completing a sentence[13] in the context of community
penalties and, more specifically, in the increasingly salient context of compliance.

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[12] For an overview of why this might be the case, see Sander and Young's (2007) discussion of the
criminal justice system as a complex regulatory social institution. Essentially they argue that, in
operating within a society in which power, status and wealth are unequally distributed along lines such
as age, gender, race and class, the criminal justice system - as a regulatory and coercive social institution
- both reflects and compounds these inequalities in its routine activity.

[13] In the discussion that follows I seek, wherever practical, to refer to 'offenders' as people.   This
decision reflects my belief that to refer to people who offend as 'offenders' is to reinforce and make
central the negative aspects of their developing identity, a practice that seems to me to be at odds with

I begin by tracing the rise and pursuit of compliance in late-modern community penalties. In charting the limitations of recent UK efforts towards compliance I question the potential of short-term, managerialist compliance strategies, dominated as they are by professional actors and actions. In an attempt to explore a more constructive way forward, consideration is given to connecting research literature around normative compliance mechanisms and to the implications of this literature for developing compliance policy and practice. In conclusion, I propose a more coherent and co-productive pursuit of compliance, in which justice authorities take greater cognisance of their supporting role in the compliance dynamic towards the meaningful participation and progression of those required to comply. At the same time I raise questions about the possibility of co-production in a penal context that seems ever keen to demonstrate its punitive punch.

A brief mapping of compliance

Before proceeding it is necessary to provide some preliminary mapping of what is meant by compliance and how it is here defined and understood. For the purpose of this discussion compliance is defined as the act of adhering to a rule or order. In the context of community penalties then, the act of compliance is located principally with the individual required to comply, albeit in a context of constraints and, increasingly, compulsion. In this respect compliance is distinguished from the act of enforcement, which might be defined as the response of a given authority to an act of non-compliance.

More broadly, drawing on the work of Tyler (1990), Bottoms (2001), and Robinson and McNeill (2008), compliance is understood as a dynamic process that occurs across a continuum and in response to multiple and interactive mechanisms. Specifically, this

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justice ideals and ambitions. Given that the term 'offender' is used extensively and expediently in criminological discussion this sometimes makes for a more 'clunky' communication. I invite the reader to bear with me in this transition.

discussion recognises Bottoms (2001) distinction between short and long term compliance, and Robinson and McNeill's (2008) distinction between formal and substantive compliance. In the context of community penalties, short-term compliance refers to a person's compliance with the specific legal requirements of a penalty, for example, successful completion of a court order. Longer-term compliance refers to a person's compliance with the criminal law, i.e. future law abiding behaviour or 'non-offending' within a specified time period. Importantly, Robinson and McNeill (2008) propose a further distinction within short term compliance - between formal and substantive compliance. Here, formal compliance is used to denote a person's 'technical' compliance with the legal requirements of an order and/or the criminal law. Substantive compliance by contrast is used to refer to the person's active and meaningful engagement with the requirements of an order and/or its prescribed purposes. This might be evidenced, for example, in a person's positive attitude to and engagement with unpaid work requirements, or, in respect of long term compliance, a person's internalised decision (and capacity) to desist from criminal activity.

My interest in this chapter lies principally in the concepts of substantive and long term compliance, that is, in the 'types' of compliance that rely less on the power of penal products and those who enforce them, and more on the engagement, co-operation and contribution of the person 'required' to comply. This is not to suggest this discussion is not concerned with the role of the state and/or justice authorities in *supporting* compliance. Quite the opposite, a key concern is the extent to which community penalties, and those who oversee them, can more effectively create the conditions and contents required to support people to progress their own compliance journeys, towards meaningful progression and change.

The rise and problematising of compliance

Though there may be some appeal in constructing compliance as a late-modern penal concern - spawned it might be argued by recent global preoccupations with risk, security and control - even a cursory reading of probation's origins, development and evolving purposes attests that compliance is an old-new concept. That is, that the pursuit of compliance has long occupied a central place in criminal justice endeavours, to the extent that compliance with and completion of court orders consistently emerges as a primary measure of the service's success and effectiveness (see Duguid, 1982; McNeill & Whyte, 2007; Pease, et al. 1977; Vanstone, 2004).

More recently however, compliance has re-emerged as a 'new penological discourse' (Feeley & Simon, 1992) in which the traditional (if understated) pursuit of *individual* compliance - as demonstrated, for example, in efforts to cultivate the engagement, participation, progression and desistance of the person completing a court order - has been supplanted by a more rationalised, short term and professionally centred preoccupation with the management, control and regulation of the 'dangerous' (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Nellis, 2004, 2006). In policy and practice terms, this has contributed to an unprecedented preoccupation with 'enforcement' in community penalties, a consequence of which is that community penalties are now increasingly required to demonstrate effectiveness in terms of their capacity to manage and control 'dangerous' groups. In this brave new world compliance has moved from being an outcome to be fostered in the context of a participatory and progressive relationship, to one required and enforced from the outset[14]. When considered in the context of 'offenders' demonstrated tendencies towards non-compliance (at least in the face of instrumental mechanisms of control) the results of this penal 'strategy' are not difficult to fathom. By way of summary, in the last two decades breach rates for community penalties have increased significantly (Hearnden & Millie, 2004; McCulloch, 2013b); prison rates continue to escalate and the increasingly tenuous link between effective enforcement practice, individual compliance and reduced reconviction has all but collapsed under the force and myopia of a strategy of enforced compliance

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[14] See also Nellis, 2004 and 2006 for an overview of the role of surveillance and electronic monitoring technologies in this process.

(Hedderman & Hough, 2004). At the very least, these (and other) less than positive justice 'outputs' have produced a truce of sorts in the policy landscape. Politicians, policy makers and probation chiefs have been forced to acknowledge that neither formal nor substantive compliance is particularly amenable to being systematically enforced; rather, those seeking to secure compliance need now to look beyond short term strategies of enforcement towards the progression of more participatory and pro-social processes thought to foster compliant behaviour .

Occurring alongside the rise (and fall) of enforced compliance there has also emerged a new theorising - and necessary problematizing - of compliance, suggesting that there is much more to achieving effectiveness in community penalties than forced or constrained compliance with penal 'products'. The work of Bottoms (2001) has been particularly influential in this regard and was the first to outline a need to shift attention from the practicalities of enforcing compliance towards a more conceptual engagement with compliance as a complex and multi-dimensional dynamic (see also McNeill & Robinson, 2013; Robinson & McNeill, 2008). One of the key contributions of Bottoms' analysis lies in his distinction between short-term and longer-term compliance and his assertion that individuals and organisations involved with the delivery of community penalties 'are (or should be) inescapably involved in trying to maximise both' (p. 89). In outlining the important distinction between 'formal' and 'substantive' compliance, Robinson and McNeill (2008) reach a similar though no less important conclusion - that is, that the task of those supervising community penalties is: 'not just to establish formal compliance but to move beyond it into substantive and (then) longer term compliance' (p. 440). The above contributions proceed to map out the principal mechanisms underpinning the various dimensions of compliant behaviour, and in doing so begin to engage with the many and varied implications of this new theorising for those seeking to influence and support compliant behaviour (see also McNeill & Robinson, 2013). Building on the work of Tyler (1990, 2006), connecting theories of social order, and recent scholarship on tax regime compliance (Braithwaite, 2003; McBarnet, 2003), these new analyses highlight the limitations of our longstanding reliance on instrumental mechanisms of compliance (that is, the

building in of incentives and, more frequently, disincentives into the legal frameworks of community penalties), and point to the need to now also attend to other compliance mechanisms, and to the role of normative mechanisms in particular - that is, the influence of what citizens consider moral and just (Tyler, 1990).

Practicing compliance

Notwithstanding the significance of the above developments for the pursuit of compliance within and beyond community penalties it would be naïve to overstate progress made. Despite the clear co-existence of the two compliance narratives described, existing empirical evidence suggests that policy and practice developments in this area have continued to progress in a fairly straightforward managerial fashion. In the few examples where the impact of recent compliance thinking can be observed - in the form of a considered or applied compliance strategy - at best we can trace a move from 'enforced' compliance towards a practice of 'professionally-produced'[15] compliance. In both strategies, compliance is reduced to a short-term, formal and quantitative output, arrived at by state and professional manipulation, and those sentenced are reduced to the objects on which that manipulation occurs. Again, within these 'developments', opportunities for individuals to actively engage in, contribute to and progress their own substantive compliance journeys appear significantly constrained.

By way of example, consider the findings of a recent empirical study conducted in this area by Phillips (2011). Drawing on research observations and interviews conducted in two English probation teams, Phillips set out to examine the way in which 'offender managers' sought to improve 'offender' compliance. Importantly, the findings provide some encouraging evidence of a shift in focus from a culture and practice of

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[15] This phrase is used to refer to a process in which compliance is achieved through the managerial and sometimes discretionary strategies of supervising officers, with little or no input from the person sentenced (more of which below).

enforcement towards an appreciation of the importance of *supporting* and *improving* compliance in community penalties (and to the important place of discretion within that process). However, in examining how offender managers progressed this 'move towards compliance', Phillips observes that it was both driven and 'produced' through managerialist means. As the author explains:

> I noticed that increased compliance was being achieved through managerialist means such as targets which stipulate that "70% of orders and licences must be successfully completed". This meant that [offender managers] 'just have to get [offenders] through' the Order (TPO, Fieldnotes). (p. 1)

Phillips goes on to describe how compliance was most frequently achieved (and non-compliance avoided) by the various and creative strategies deployed by offender managers. The strategies described by Phillips - including arranging appointments on days convenient to the offender, conducting appointments on the telephone or at the offender's home, or sending text messages about appointments to make non-attendance less likely - are not unusual to those familiar with the methods sometimes deployed by workers attempting to build compliance, and might be seen as the effective and appropriate use of professional discretion. However, what is concerning about Phillips' account is that it describes a process in which compliance is achieved - and non-compliance avoided - not by the developing engagement, co-operation or commitment of those sentenced but by the enhanced and closed manoeuvrings of offender managers. As Phillips' concludes:

> What is key about both methods … is that they tend to happen behind closed doors with little or no input from the offender. (p. 2)

Though there exists a very limited body of research literature examining this aspect of practice, Phillips' findings are not isolated. Ugwudike's (2010) study, for example, reaches broadly similar conclusions. In exploring the nature and pursuit of compliance in probation areas in Wales and Jersey, Ugwudike begins by observing that, in the probation areas examined, 'a narrow definition of compliance prevails', whereby

'compliance is typically defined in terms of attending routine appointments' (p. 330).
More significantly, Ugwudike concludes that, within these area teams: 'compliance
[was] linked to a series of processes through which *officers manage* several structural,
situational and practical contradictions' (p. 330-332, emphasis added).

While then we can trace some impact of recent theorising about compliance in
emerging compliance policy and practice, at the time of writing the transfer of
knowledge appears partial, fragmented and dangerously incoherent. On the one hand,
the above provides some encouraging evidence of a shift from a practice of
enforcement towards a more creative and discretionary pursuit of compliance in the
practice of community penalties. On the other, the fact that this shift has been set and
progressed within a managerialist framework raises a number of important questions
about the place of those sentenced in this process, the nature and value of the
compliance achieved, and the extent to which the methods adopted to produce
compliance on these terms are in any way conducive to the types of processes
required to progress substantive and longer term compliance outcomes.

Progressing compliance, exploring co-production

How then can we progress contemporary compliance policy and practice from its
current preoccupation with securing short term formal compliance, or from the above
observed leaning towards a practice of professionally produced compliance? We
might begin by more explicitly acknowledging the nature and challenge of that task.
First, we need to acknowledge that the present (and longstanding) pursuit of short
term, formal compliance in community penalties is unlikely to wane. Short term,
formal compliance remains a primary and important measure of effectiveness in
community penalties. Moreover, the existence of just, transparent and consistent
systems of enforcement is considered by most to be critical to the credibility and
legitimacy of those penalties (Hucklesby, 2009; McCulloch, 2010b). In this respect, the

pursuit and progression of short-term formal compliance is reasonably straightforward (though see Hucklesby, 2009). Punishment is administered as a consequence of wrongdoing and strategies of enforcement are about creating transparent and standardised mechanisms of control to ensure orders are robustly enforced. The problem however arises when we expect and require these strategies to *also* produce substantive and longer-term compliance outcomes. Unlike short-term formal compliance, substantive and longer-term compliance is a much more complex outcome and process, as it relates not just to a penal product (in the form of managed or controlled 'offenders') but to a more complex and vexed process of rehabilitation. In other words, we can quite easily compel or require people to formally comply with the requirements of a community sanction (and invoke punishment when they fail to do so). We cannot however compel or require people to engage with the substantive and longer-term purposes of these penalties, that is achieve progression, desistance and change. As individual accounts of desistance attest, these outcomes, and the processes that support them, are achieved only when those sentenced (often with the support of significant others) commit to the pursuit and progression of those outcomes (Davies, 1979; Farrall, 2002b). Considered from this vantage point, the challenge facing those seeking to support formal, substantive and long term compliance lies less in questions of how can we manage or produce individual compliance within community penalties, and much more in questions of how can we create the environments, opportunities and relationships through which *people* might meaningfully engage in, take responsibility for, and progress their own 'compliance' journeys? Arguably, these questions move us beyond the relatively secure territory of compliance towards more complex and contentious territory of participation, co-operation and co-production. Though these concepts may well be in vogue in other areas of public service provision their place in the criminal justice landscape, and in the context of 'offender' sanctions in particular, is much less straightforward (more of which below).

There are many theoretical and empirical resources that might be drawn upon in supporting the shift in focus described above. The desistance literature, for example,

very clearly attests to the participatory and co-productive nature of desistance journeys and outcomes - and to the importance of co-productive opportunities in progressing *and* sustaining desistance from crime (Weaver & McNeill, 2007). The Good Lives model of offender rehabilitation makes the co-productive nature of the rehabilitative enterprise equally explicit. In this strengths-based model people who offend are constructed explicitly as human agents, with aspirations, rights and responsibilities (albeit sometimes unrealised) to live rewarding and offence-free lives. The role of those *supporting* this enterprise is seen then to lie in assisting people who offend to acquire the internal and external resources to realise and sustain those aspirations for themselves (Ward, 2010). The Recovery research literature (in relation to substance misuse and mental health) reaches notably similar conclusions and points to the deeply co-productive nature of individual change journeys – even when set within contexts of risk, constraint and compulsion. However, in the remainder of this discussion I wish to consider (briefly) the contribution of recent research findings relating to the concept and dynamics of normative compliance. Connecting with the research frameworks noted above, emerging findings in this area underscore the participatory and co-productive nature of substantive 'compliance', and in doing so provide further theoretical rationale for the policy and practice shift envisaged above.

Normative theories of compliance are primarily concerned with the influence of what people regard as moral and just on law-abiding (or compliance) behaviour. In this respect, normative theories start from a focus on the individual citizen and on his or her 'internal mechanisms' of compliance. Accordingly, normative compliance is often referred to as 'internalised obligations' – that is, obligations for which the citizen has taken personal responsibility (Tyler, 1990). In the context of justice, normative compliance might be considered as the ideal 'type' of compliance, in so far as it encompasses both the formal and substantive elements of compliance to which justice sentences purportedly strive. Looking more closely at the dynamics of normative compliance, Tyler (1990) distinguishes between two 'types'. The first is compliance that occurs through personal morality, that is a person's conscious belief in, or moral acceptance of, the norm in question (see also Bottoms, 2001). The second is

compliance that occurs through legitimacy, that is, 'the belief that authorities, institutions, and social arrangement are appropriate, proper, and just' (Tyler, 2006, p.376).

Tyler's study (1990) was the first large-scale study to explore the significance and dynamics of normative compliance with the law. The overarching conclusion of that study is that normative issues matter in compliance. That is, that people obey the law not only for instrumental reasons but *also* because they believe, or come to believe, that it is proper and just to do so. According to Tyler, the practical implication of this conclusion is that:

> police officers and judges who recognise and respond to people's normative concerns can exercise their authority more effectively; their rules and decisions will be accepted and obeyed voluntarily. (p. 178)

Though Tyler may be at risk of overstating the impact of normative mechanisms on individual compliance behaviour, in a penal climate simultaneously dominated, seduced and let down by the promise of instrumental mechanisms of control, recent attention to the role of normative mechanisms in compliance invites us to consider the ways in which those sentenced might be motivated and supported to comply, co-operate and co-produce for reasons beyond the instrumental, as well as the ways in which justice authorities might more effectively support this process.

One of the primary implications of normative theories of compliance is that those seeking to support compliance in the justice context need first to recognise the critical role of the person sentenced in that pursuit. If normative compliance occurs through the 'internalised obligations', 'personal responsibility' and 'voluntary actions' (Tyler, 1990) of the person sentenced then authorities concerned with the progression of compliance need (now on effectiveness grounds) to recognise those people as actors - not objects - in the compliance pursuit. This is not to negate the multiple constraints variously impacting on individual compliance decisions and actions, nor the role of professionals in supporting and where necessary enforcing compliance. Rather it is to

recognise that if compliance is to have any real or lasting value in late-modern justice systems (for actors and audiences alike) then it needs to be both constructed and progressed as a co-productive endeavour. That is, an endeavour that focuses as much on shared and collaborative processes of production – and the relationships and resources required to progress that – as it does on the outcomes and targets to be achieved (see for example, Beresford, 2002; Bovaird, 2007; Weaver, 2011).

Relatedly, normative theories of compliance suggest a need to more explicitly attend to individual understandings of the purposes and 'requirements' of justice sentences. Again, if those sentenced are to develop an internalised obligation to, personal responsibility for, or voluntary actions towards desired compliance outcomes (in the form of progression, desistance and change), then sentences need to be more explicitly orientated towards assisting individuals to understand what those outcomes are, as well as why they are deemed to be important. Though this may appear a reasonably straightforward observation, recent empirical research suggests that those sentenced (and sometimes those supervising) often have a very limited grasp of the broad purposes of justice sentences (beyond the retributive), such that, for some, substantive and longer term compliance outcomes - in the form of individual progression and change - were seen to begin outside of or on completion of a sentence rather than within it (McCulloch, 2010b).

With regard to Tyler's two 'types' of compliance, the idea of progressing compliance by appealing to or influencing a person's personal morality has received relatively little attention in the existing compliance literature (though the recent rise of cognitive behavioural approaches is clearly relevant here). As Tyler (1990) observes: 'from the perspective of the authorities … legitimacy is a far more stable base on which to rest compliance than personal or group morality' (p. 26). Though Tyler is right to acknowledge the limitations of the state in shaping personal or group morality, again, recent accounts of assisted desistance make clear that the journey towards substantive and longer term compliance very often involves a shifting and shaping of moral values (and/or compliance attitudes); a process that in turn appears to be

influenced variously and interactively by processes of maturation, the influence of significant relationships (formal and informal), and changing social circumstances (see for example, Farrall, 2002b; Maruna, 2001; McCulloch, 2005). Again, the message emerging from accounts such as these is that shifting or shaping an individual's moral values and obligations appears to depend less on what professionals do to 'produce' change and much more on the ways in which those sentenced, often with the help of significant others, engage with and make use of opportunities for change. The practical implication of this message is that if justice sentences are to become spaces in which people are enabled to develop and demonstrate normative compliance then they need to become more explicitly and practically orientated towards supporting rather than (en-)forcing that process.

Tyler's second identified type of compliance, that is compliance that occurs through legitimacy, has long been considered relevant to the effective exercise of authority and has typically focussed on understanding and influencing what 'the public' think about the legitimacy of the state and its various mechanisms of law enforcement (including for example the judiciary, police officers, lawyers and the like; see Beetham (1991)). Only very recently however has the concept of legitimacy been extended to include consideration of the 'internal' experience of justice sanctions; that is the perception and experience of a sanction as viewed from the person made subject to it. To summarise a developing and complex literature, the key message arising from this area of analysis is that people are more likely to comply, co-operate with, and commit to justice sanctions - and their purposes - if they perceive and experience those sanctions, and the exercise of authority within that, to be reasonable, fair and just (Bottoms, 2001; McIvor, 2009; Robinson & McNeill, 2008).

The implications of this conclusion for the pursuit of both formal and substantive compliance in justice sentences are considerable and far-reaching. Tyler's work for example highlights the importance of attending to issues of 'procedural justice' (1990), that is the exercise of fair procedures in supporting compliance with legal requirements; a finding echoed and expanded in McIvor's (2009) analysis of the role of

procedural justice within the newly established Scottish Drug Courts. Bottoms (2001), Ugwudike (2010) and McNeill and Robinson (2013) draw attention to the importance of supervisory relationships as a key site or resource within which legitimacy and in turn compliance can be built and developed. Further, McCulloch's (2010b) recent study highlights the importance of issues of social justice in supporting and sustaining substantive compliance, a finding also highlighted in Farrall's (2002a) analysis of the factors associated with non-compliance in community penalties.

Conclusion

The above discussion raises important questions about the purpose and potential of the contemporary compliance pursuit and of justice sentences more broadly. If the pursuit of compliance is to be about more than the robust enforcement and administration of punishment; if it is *also* about engaging, motivating and supporting those sentenced to develop and sustain the 'types' of normative compliance necessary for the progression and maintenance of substantive and longer term justice outcomes - in the form of progression, desistance and change - then there is a need to develop a more coherent, responsive and co-productive compliance strategy and practice. That is, a strategy and practice that starts from a more coherent engagement with compliance as a complex and multi-dimensional dynamic; that proceeds from a respectful and responsible understanding of the central place of those sentenced in progressing compliance; and that is both attentive and responsive to the multiple, interactive and counteractive mechanisms variously impacting on individual compliance over and beyond the life of a sentence.   The idea that such a strategy and practice can be produced or progressed independently of those required to demonstrate compliance is nonsensical; the extent to which justice services can provide the climate, conditions and content in which a more co-productive practice can be developed and progressed remains to be seen.

In the discussion that follows I provide a brief introduction to and review of co-production as an emerging model of service delivery. In doing so my aim is to explicitly connect the above inquiry and conclusions with the empirical research study that was developed from it.

Co-production: a brief and bridging review

In recent years, the term co-production has increasingly been used to refer to 'new' and 'transforming' forms of public service provision. However, though the concept of co-production has re-emerged in recent years it does so from more longstanding analyses of public (and private) administration and service delivery systems and related questions of effective and progressive service production, delivery and governance (see, for example, Arnstein, 1971; Hirschman, 1970; Marshall, 1949 and Ostrom, 1975). Amongst other things, these analyses have long underscored the centrality, complexity and potential of participatory relationships within the above fields of practice (see, for example, Giddens, 1996; Ostrom, 1990).

The more recent renaissance of co-production, like most social and policy reform movements, can be traced to a number of divergent and interacting political, economic, social and cultural drivers. These include a rising disenchantment with existing forms and mechanisms of liberal democracy, and associated calls for renewed democratic forms that create opportunity for dialogue, participation and citizenship at local and national levels (see for example, Giddens, 1996). They include the now well demonstrated deficits and escalating costs of provider-centric models of service provision – realities compounded by the challenge of an aging population, semi-permanent austerity in public finances and the recent global economic crisis (see Pestoff, 2013). And they include the equally well demonstrated capacities of citizen, user and community groups in progressing real and relevant outcomes for individuals, groups and communities (see, for example, Bovaird, 2007; Leadbeater, 2004;

Leadbeater & Lownsbrough, 2005; Needham & Carr, 2009). As Pestoff (2013) observes, while co-production does not present a panacea to these late-modern challenges it may present something of a 'silver lining' in the form of renewed opportunity for expanding the role of civil society and co-operative production of public services.

As a concept, co-production is noted for its 'excessive elasticity' (Beresford, 2012). Definitions abound revealing the richness, diversity and flexibility of co-production, as well as the various levels and dimensions on which co-production occurs in practice (Bovaird, 2007; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2008).   As Needham and Carr (2009) observe, all services rely to some extent on the productive input of service users - even if it is just in the form of compliance. However, central to more recent constructions of co-production is the emphasis on service users' *substantive* engagement in *shared* processes of production. Further, underpinning this construction is the developing recognition that effective public service provision depends as much on the (often unacknowledged) knowledge, assets, action and commitment of service users and others, as it does on the knowledge, assets, actions and commitments of professional providers. Reflecting these developments, Bovaird (2007, p. 847) defines co-production as:

> the provision of services through regular, long term relationships between professionalised service providers (in any sector) and service users or other members of the community, where all parties make substantial resource contributions.

Though, for some, the re-emergence of co-production has been seen to fit a little too neatly with broader neo-liberal government drivers towards 'the big society' and the 'rolling back' of the state in public sector provision (see Bovaird, 2007; Fergusson, 2007), at its most transformative co-production proffers to radically reframe the role of, and relationships between, users and professionals in public service provision. Specifically, co-production entails the redistribution of power between these two groups, and the liberation and mobilisation of users from 'passive recipients' of

services to important and active agents in the production of improved services and outcomes. Further, it is within and through these processes of redistribution, liberation, mobilisation and shared responsibility that the transformative potential of co-production is seen to reside. As Boyle and Harris (2009, p. 11) observe: 'where activities are coproduced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods [meaning communities of people] become far more effective agents of change'.

No doubt reflecting the elasticity of meaning associated with co-production, there exists some debate regarding the extent to which co-production is currently occurring in practice. Some recent studies suggest that examples of co-production within mainstream public provision - particularly transformative examples - are few and far between (see, for example, Boyle & Harris, 2009). By contrast, Bovaird's (2007) work highlights extensive examples of co-production occurring in the fields of health, education, housing and social care (albeit in various forms and dimensions). Certainly, there exist a growing number of promising and successful examples of co-production within and beyond these fields of practice. Similarly, clear strides have been made in moving the concept of co-production (as outlined above) into mainstream public service policy and practice debate – such that there now exist few areas of public policy that have not been re-written to incorporate government's new ambitions in respect of more collaborative and co-productive public services. However, most studies suggest that even within successful examples of co-production, practice is often localised and small in scale, dominated by individualised forms (that is co-production that involves and benefits the direct participants) and service-led (Bovaird, 2007; Boyle & Harris, 2009; New Economics Foundation, 2008). Further, as Bovaird and Loeffler (2008, p. 1) observe, despite rising interest and investment in co-production, as yet there has been no coherent attempt to bring together the evidence on the potential and limitations of user and community co-production of public services and public policies. These issues raise important questions regarding the extent to which current government ambition in respect of co-production is fully understood, far less practicable, within existing public sector cultures, structures and resource frameworks. As Boyle, Slay and Stephens (2010, p. 28) observe:

Overall, the challenge seems to amount to one clear problem. Co-production, even in the most successful and dramatic examples, barely fits the standard shape of public services … or the systems we have developed to 'deliver' support.

In the context of criminal justice services these issues and tensions are particularly pronounced. Though, as in other areas of provision, the co-productive insight has long been evident within various reform efforts occurring at the margins of mainstream provision (see, for example, Bottoms & McWilliams, 1979; Christie, 1977), the more recent rise of co-production has all but by-passed mainstream criminal justice policy, practice and research (see also Weaver, 2011). In a system increasingly reliant on the exercise of professional power, enforcement and control; that appears preoccupied with narrow and sometimes pathologising constructions of 'risk' and 'dangerousness', and that, perhaps for these reasons, seems locked into the privileging of short term standardised service outputs over the progression of individualised, long term and co-produced outcomes, the idea of progressing a model of practice rooted in respect for persons, devolved power, collaboration, reciprocity, risk taking and shared decision making is far from straightforward (see also Clinks, 2008). Beyond these system challenges, many of the core user and community requirements associated with effective co-production may be problematic in the justice context. For example, some recent studies underscore that the capacity of users and communities to co-produce depends greatly on the extent to which individuals and groups have access to the full rights of citizenship, to reasonable levels of human and social capital, and to resourceful peer support networks (Bovaird, 2007; Boyle & Harris, 2009). Such capital is often found to be in short supply amongst users of justice services and again underscores the challenge of co-production in this context.

However, none of these challenges negate the fundamental insight of co-production. That is, that effective service delivery and outcomes, in any sector, depends on the interplay of effort, commitment and contribution between users, providers and communities. Further, as has been demonstrated, there now exists a growing number

of criminological studies that support this insight, indicating that both the process and outcomes of co-production are critical to the progression of substantive and longer term justice outcomes (McCulloch, 2013a; Weaver, 2011). As significantly, in the last decade we have seen the rise of a small but growing number of 'user' led justice organisations, attesting, amongst other things, to a growing appetite and capacity for co-production amongst this group (Clinks, 2008; The Aldridge Foundation & Johnson, 2008; Weaver & McCulloch, 2013a). In a climate then where both the process and outcomes of criminal justice provision are, again, under intense and legitimate scrutiny, the need to engage with this (re-)emerging discourse, to explore its relevance, potential and limitations, and the implications that arise from that, seems particularly pronounced.

Part two. Research design and method

Introduction

In the previous section I have argued that fundamental to the process of progressing substantive and long term compliance outcomes with people who offend (in the form of, for example, progression, desistance and change), is the extent to which those sentenced engage with, commit to and co-progress those outcomes. There is evidence to suggest that this substantive, participatory and co-productive process cannot be enforced, managed or produced. Further, attempts to enforce, manage or produce such a process - and the outcomes associated with it - may be detrimental to the progression and realisation of those outcomes (see also McCulloch, 2013a).

In the current climate of corrections - where mechanisms of enforcement, offender management and professional control and authority are now standard tools of the trade - this raises important questions regarding the capacity of criminal justice services to support or progress substantive and longer term outcomes with people who offend (see also Raynor, 2012). Relatedly, noting recent drivers towards more personalised and co-productive public services (see part one) it raises important questions about the possibility and potential of co-production in the contemporary criminal justice context.

Reflecting the above, this inquiry starts from a concern to explore the relevance, possibility, potential and limitations of co-production in the criminal justice context. More specifically, noting the pivotal role of those sentenced in the co-productive process, I set out to explore this question drawing on the particular and collective experience of those who have been through the criminal justice system and found it possible to progress from that.

Starting points and purposes

As Shaw (2000) observes, positivist and scientific research paradigms typically seek to construct and represent the research process as an isolated, neutral and abstract activity, within which the primary task of the researcher, having identified a suitable research question, is to identify the 'best' and most rigorous methodology to answer that question. My own engagement in the research process progresses from a different starting point. Research seems to me to be far from abstract, disconnected or pure. Rather, my ideas, questions, ideological standpoints, method, knowledge and skill base both emerge from and are mediated by my particular identity, experience and values; some of which lies within my realm of knowing and some of which lies beyond it. In essence, my starting point in the research process is that my role as researcher - and the knowledge, skill, values, politics and biases that I bring in working out that role - cannot be abstracted from the social world in which I exist. The same holds true for those I seek to learn from and with. Set out in this way, the knowledge that I seek is not an abstract entity to be mined through the expert administration of methodological skill. Rather, the construction of knowledge becomes a collaborative and dialogic process, in which knowledge is co-constructed, interpreted and validated through reflexive, reciprocal and just social interactions (Guba &Lincoln, 2005; Shaw, 2000).

Interwoven in this construction is a recognition of the unequal and stratified nature of society and social relationships, and of the ways in which these inequalities are both endorsed and exacerbated in the research process (Christians, 2005; Oliver, 1992; Stanley, 1990). Recognising then the oppressive histories and potential of research practice, coupled with my unease with research processes that sometimes appear to produce more concrete and substantive gains for me as a researcher than they do for the people involved, my research practice also draws on a 'transformative' or

'participatory' research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) in so far as it is committed to the progression of equality and reciprocity between participants and for participants. From this constructivist-participatory standpoint, the rules of play, and arguably the game itself, are necessarily altered.

Reflecting the above theoretical, epistemological and ontological starting points, my purpose in the research process extends beyond the progression of knowledge to also encompass social justice aims and outcomes. These purposes were initially identified as follows:

1. To progress, in collaboration with people who have come through the criminal justice system, a research practice that is collaborative, relevant and progressive for all of the actors involved.

2. To explore, through such a collaboration, the relevance, possibility and potential of co-production as a mode of practice within criminal justice contexts.

Constructivist and participatory paradigms underscore that research purposes need to be grounded, developed and made meaningful through collaborative dialogue with the participant-researchers involved (Harding, 1993; Stoeker, 1999). Harding (1993, p. 56) describes this process as 'starting off thought' from the lives of marginalised people. The above purposes provided a starting point for those conversations; they were grounded, developed and made meaningful through the research design described below.

Research design

The research inquiry employed a co-productive research design (also sometimes referred to as collaborative or participatory research). Noting the diverse practices that

have developed under these banners, and the need to approach user involvement in research critically and systematically (Beresford, 2002; Hanley, 2005), the design drew on Beresford's (2002) 'democratic' model of participation - which places emphasis on changed and equalised processes of (research) production, on Bovaird's (2007) aforementioned definition of co-production, and on dialogue with the research partners (see below). Reflecting these sources, for the purposes of this inquiry, a co-productive research design is defined as follows:

> The production of research (and other outcomes) through regular and sustained relationships between researchers, service users and/or other members of the community, where all parties make substantial resource contributions.

In progressing the above, a research group was established consisting of myself and three members of *Positive Prison? Positive Futures* (more of which below). The group was responsible for steering the inquiry at each key stage and to this end met and communicated regularly throughout the inquiry process. The group adopted a flexible approach to co-production in which individual members participated in different ways at different stages, reflecting each person's expertise, inclination, and the time available to them. In this way we sought to avoid the 'tyranny' of participatory research processes, as described by Cooke and Kothari (2001). Within this flexibility the process was guided by Beresford's (2005) discussed principles for effective user involvement in research[16] and by the following values: respect for persons, transparency, choice, reciprocity, and reflexivity; each of which have been shown to be important in participatory research practices (see, for example, Errante, 2001; Mertens, 2005; Stoeker, 1999). As the inquiry progressed (and ethical tensions arose) Christians' (2005) overview of a 'feminist communitarian' ethical model of inquiry also served as a guiding framework (for an overview see Christians, 2005, pp. 148-156).

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[16] Identified as: ensuring connection and relevance; support for people to get together; equal opportunities for involvement; access and support; attention to arising ethical issues. See Beresford, 2005: 8-10 for an overview.

Recruiting co-researchers and participants

My activity to recruit co-researchers and participants was an overlapping activity and the discussion that follows reflects that.

Reflecting the inquiry's epistemological and ontological starting points, the research design, and its identified purposes, I employed a purposive approach to recruiting co-researchers and research participants. I wanted to explore co-production with people who had experience of co-production (or not) in the context of completing a justice sentence and as people who had come through the justice system. Equally, I wanted to explore co-production with people who had an expressed interest in this area of inquiry so ensuring relevancy for all involved. To this end I met with the co-ordinator of Positive Prisons? Positive Futures (PP?PF) to explore the relevance, possibility and practicalities of progressing a co-productive inquiry with PP?PF members. PP?PF is a recently established 'group of people who have been through the criminal justice system and found it possible to change their lives in positive ways and avoid re-offending' (PP?PF, 2013). Their stated purpose is as follows: 'We will use our collective experiences, abilities, skills, commitment and energies to reduce offending and reoffending in Scotland and to help build safer communities' (PP?PF, 2013). As an organisation then, PP?PF provided access to a group of people who:

- possessed experience and expertise directly relevant to the area of inquiry
- had demonstrated commitment to and capacity for co-production in the justice context
- had access to formal and informal support through the research process (through the peer support mechanisms of PP?PF)

The decision to co-produce with an established user group reflects Beresford's (2005, pp. 8-12) above noted principles for good practice in participatory approaches. Specifically, the recognised importance of:

- involving groups who are marginalised and excluded in mainstream policy, practice and research
- collective forms of co-production
- recognising and supporting the development of users' own independent groups and organisations

My decision to approach this group in particular reflected the fact that a co-productive relationship had already been initiated through previous participation in a PP?PF event, and so many of the core features of effective co-productive relationships - including respect, trust and mutuality - were in process.

Following an initial meeting with the PP?PF co-ordinator, an email was sent to PP?PF members that outlined the purpose and parameters of the proposed inquiry and invited expressions of interest (both as co-researchers/participants and as participants). No limit was imposed on the number of co-researchers though for mostly pragmatic reasons I identified a research group size of three or four as ideal. Noting the in-depth nature and modest scale of the inquiry a sample size of six was identified as practical in respect of research participants. PP?PF members who were 18 years and over were identified as eligible. Reflecting the design and ambition of the inquiry I was keen to attract a diverse group of participants - including participation from women, people from minority ethnic groups, and people with both prison and community based experiences. However, this ambition was mediated by the modest sample size and by a broader concern to promote respect, choice and access for all in the research process. Five people responded to my initial email. Following telephone and face to face discussion, three of the five elected to act as co-researchers/participants. Two elected to be involved as participants only.   One further participant was recruited at a later stage though before the research conversations commenced. This final participant was approached directly because it

was observed that he may have missed the initial email request and because it was observed that his experience would add to the diversity of the sample.

Features of the researchers and participants

The following provides important contextual data for the narratives and findings that follow.

Features of the co-researchers (who were also participants)

All of the co-researchers (myself excluded) were white British and living in the West of Scotland. Two were female and one was male, ranging in age from 39 to 51. Each was educated to degree level or above and two were in paid employment (though employment status for two of the three shifted through the course of the inquiry). All were actively involved in volunteer and/or paid work relating to co-production and all were active members of PP?PF. More detailed biographical and contextual information is provided within each individual's narrative (see part three: A, C and D).

Features of the university researcher

I am a Scottish-Iranian woman, aged 39 years, living in the East of Scotland. I am married with two children and employed part time as a senior lecturer in social work. Prior to joining the university in 2003 I worked as a social worker in youth and adult justice settings. In recent years my research activity has focussed on various areas of criminal justice social work/probation and includes a particular interest in the social and community contexts of progression, change and desistance, and in participatory and progressive approaches to that.

The above is offered in an attempt to 'surface' my relationship to the research inquiry. However, as Alcoff (1991) notes, this is only part of what matters here. Equally important is what the above 'means' and how it bears out in this research story. These are, for me, complicated questions, as I suspect they are for many of us. As a Scottish-Iranian woman who grew up as a 'half-cast', 'illegitimate' child of a single-parent in a mostly white working class Scottish community I have learned to distrust labels, categorisations and groupings. They are, in my experience, ill-fitting and misleading, concealing as much as they reveal. Equally, they can become badges, worn as a means of gaining entry into, or setting oneself apart from, oppressed or privileged groups as and when the need arises. As an English literature graduate these questions are further complicated by my developing relationship to post-modern theory. Even if I could pin point the interactive effects of the above-described biography the value of doing so is questionable when meaning is plural and deferred (Alcoff, 1991; Barthes, 1967/1977).

Acknowledging these caveats and problems, the above-described position does surface in the commitments, responsibilities and partialities that I bring to this inquiry. I come with an explicit commitment to seeing and valuing difference, and to challenging the power differentials that frequently follow and reinforce difference within justice research and practice. I come with a commitment to listening, to dialogue, reciprocity and collaboration, and to creating spaces within justice research and practice where these processes and outcomes can become possible and probable. Equally, I come with the partialities, biases and constraints that accompany my position of power and privilege as an educated social worker and justice academic working within a deeply hierarchical institution (including, for example, the bias of particular professional, theoretical and thus interpretive lenses). I cannot cast off these biases, any more than I can cast off these commitments. Rather, I have sought to surface and question each as I progress my research practice.

Features of the participants

All of the participants were White British. Five were living in the West of Scotland and one was living in the North East of Scotland. Three of the participants were female and three were male. Participants were aged between 32 and 60, with most aged 40 or above. All of the participants had attained qualifications (some later in life) and four of the six were educated to degree level or above. Four of the six were in part-time or full-time employment, though for two employment status shifted through the course of the inquiry. Most of the participants were actively involved in volunteer work. Most described meaningful and sometimes recovered relationships with family members (as parents, siblings, partners and/or spouses). All of the participants were active members of PP?PF.

Four of the six participants described experiences of mental ill health. All of the female participants described experiences of domestic violence and/or abuse. Three of the participants described significant difficulties with alcohol and/or drugs. Reflecting these experiences, three participants had considerable experience of using other health, care, and protection services, including mental health services, drug and alcohol services, and child care and protection services.

In respect of offending history: four of the six participants had only one conviction. Three had convictions for embezzlement; one had a conviction for a schedule one assault. One participant had a significant number of violence related convictions. One participant did not discuss the nature of her convictions. Three of the six participants identified a direct relationship between their conviction(s) and their experience of violence, mental health and/or drug and alcohol issues. For two participants the interaction of each of these issues was directly related to their persistence in offending behaviour.   Relatedly, the remaining three participants identified a direct relationship between their very limited offending behaviour and the absence of significant personal and social problems.

In respect of sentencing experience, five of the six participants had completed periods of incarceration, three of which were short sentences of one year or less. Four of the six participants had completed community sentences, including community service, Probation, and/or periods on licence (two participants had also breached community sentences). Five of the six participants described post-sentence experiences that support the view that penal sentences – even single and short ones – extend well beyond the period imposed by a Court.

Five of the six participants had a significant history of volunteerism, social or political activism and/or user involvement. Participants were united by an explicit commitment to social justice and/or the expression of humanitarian values in their life and work, a commitment that was reportedly born or rekindled through their justice experience. Many of the participants demonstrated a distinct and conscious humility.

We might observe from the above that the participants involved in this study are not 'typical' of the offending population - though we should note that participants were not recruited on this basis. Nonetheless, some participants, particularly the women involved, share many of the life histories known to lead people into the criminal justice system (see Scottish Government, 2012). The research sample represents then a diverse group of people united by common experiences and ambitions - that is, by their mostly obstructive experience of the criminal justice system, by their ability to progress from that system, and by their desire to use that experience for good. They are 'to an extent'[17], a resourced, accomplished, socially committed, ambitious, generous, generative and humble group of people. Though it is important to note that for most of the participants it was not always this way, and it does not always feel this way. In this respect the participants have much in common with what we know of the vacillating, challenging and progressive experiences and journeys of those who make their way out of the criminal justice system and into something good (Farrall, 2002a; Maruna, 2001).

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[17] This phrase is taken from F's narrative where it is used to underscore the 'in progress' nature of F's developing identity and achievements.

Inquiry planning

In the inquiry planning phase group members met face to face on three occasions over a six-week period and communicated regularly by email and/or telephone. Through this process the group developed a working relationship, refined the purpose and practice of the inquiry, developed more detailed research questions and decided upon methods of data collection and analysis. The agreed research questions broadly reflected the inquiry focus identified above and were developed to explore four key areas, namely: participant starting points (who were they and how did they get here?); the meaning of co-production; experiences of co-production, and what matters within that; and how to progress co-production. Throughout the inquiry decision-making was iterative and flexible and sometimes involved reviewing and revising what had previously been agreed. This reflected the shifting circumstances and commitments of the research group as well as the evolving nature of the research inquiry and process.

Methods of data collection

Reflecting the inquiry emphasis on understanding participant experiences of co-production, and on facilitating purposeful, reciprocal and just dialogue, the inquiry employed in-depth loosely structured interviews. Our use of the term interview draws on Fontana and Frey's (2005) conceptualisation of the interview as a 'negotiated text' and sought to move beyond the hierarchical and highly structured exchange that often typifies the interview process and project. Accordingly, interviews were constructed and progressed as exploratory dialogic conversations between people who, representing particular and constituent groups, shared an interest in exploring the concept, practice and potential of co-production in the criminal justice context. In

adopting a 'loose structure' for the research conversations we sought to provide a supportive framework for discussion and analysis (connecting with the research questions), while also allowing participants to lead the direction and pace of the conversation and subsequent analysis.

Each research conversation was preceded by telephone and email communication that allowed for early discussion relating to the purpose of the research inquiry, methods of data collection and analysis, and the focus of the research conversation. Participants were also provided with a copy of the proposed conversation discussion areas in advance.   Our actions in this area reflected our commitment to the above discussed values and to empowering and supporting participants to engage as informed partners in the research process (see for example Mertens' (2005) discussion of the methodological implications of transformative designs) . The proposed framework and identified discussion areas for the research 'conversations' are outlined in appendix 1.

During the data collection process many of the research conversations took a distinct narrative turn. Almost all of the research conversations opened with the question: 'Can you tell me a little about yourself? Who are you?'[18] Mostly, this question was intended to allow participants to identify their particular starting points and points of connection with the research inquiry. Inadvertently it allowed for the progression of an explicit narrative approach within the research conversation and inquiry. What I mean by that is that many of the participants narrated life stories (or parts thereof), within which they located, reflected on and made sense of their experience of co-production. Moreover, there emerged within these stories a distinct narrative voice, whereby the narrator - and his or her story - moved to the centre as I in turn moved towards the margins. I discuss the implications of this shift in more detail below. For now it is necessary to acknowledge that the emergence of a 'narrative turn' in the research conversation was an unexpected one and introduced subtle but important shifts in the data collection and broader research process.   Specifically, I learned (with some errors) to recognise and respect the narrator's lead - to attend more to their story and

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[18]   In two conversations, where the participants took the lead, this question followed later.

less to my own. I learned to listen more and talk less. I learned to attend to the particular and the complex and to hear these complexities in context. Most importantly perhaps, I learned to trust the narrator and their story. Initially this felt risky and uncertain: what about the questions that went unanswered? What about consistency in the research process? What about 'what works'? At the same time it felt right, just and co-productive. As Chase (2005:660) observes:

> The stories people tell constitute the material that interviewers need if they are to understand how people create meaning out of their lives. To think of an interviewee as a narrator is to make a conceptual shift away from the idea that interviewees have answers to researchers' questions and toward the idea that interviewees are narrators with stories to tell and voices of their own.

Data collection took place between March and May 2013.   Six research conversations were conducted by the researcher. Three of these took place with members of the research group and three were with other PP?PF members. Five of the six conversations took place within university accommodation in Glasgow. One took place in the participant's home in the North East of Scotland. Conversations were lengthy and lasted between 2.5 and 3.5 hours. One conversation involved a follow up conversation (lasting two hours) and others involved follow up discussion via email and/or text. Research conversations were recorded digitally and transcribed in full by myself. This decision reflected a concern to maximise the authenticity of the research findings and to minimise researcher bias. Put simply, I wanted to hear and attend to what participants said rather than to my summary or interpretation of that. Observations and reflections by the researcher were added as field notes, as were any follow up communications from the participants. As noted, reflecting the design, ambition and values of the inquiry each of the research conversations occurred as part of a broader and longer term relationship and conversation. This allowed for meaningful dialogue around issues of consent, participation, confidentiality, privacy, authorship and dissemination. It also allowed for recursive negotiation, development,

and refinement of the research meanings and findings (see, for example, Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Harding, 1993).

Data analysis

In the planning phase of the inquiry we agreed to employ a multi-stage thematic analysis and at that stage the most perplexing question was around whether to use an electronic software tool to aid that approach and process. As data collection progressed and data analysis began I found myself immersed in new questions: questions of power, of voice, of interpretative authority and of representation. Like others before me (Alcoff, 1991; Chase, 2005; Fine, 1998) I found myself asking: How do I hear these stories? How do I respect them? What does it mean to hear the other's voice? To what extent can these narratives speak for themselves? How should I represent these voices and stories in my written work? The account below presents something of our response to these methodological questions.

Data analysis occurred in two distinct but overlapping phases (as does the representation of those analyses). First phase data analysis was conducted mostly by myself and blended a thematic approach with elements of narrative analysis. This approach is sometimes described as 'thematic narrative analysis' (Riessman, 2008) however I use this terminology with some caution. Narrative inquiry is a broad and developing field, and views differ on what is and what is not narrative analysis (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2006; Riessman, 2008). Chase (2005, p. 651) defines narrative as retrospective meaning making, and narrative inquiry as an: 'amalgam of interdisciplinary lenses, diverse, disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them'. Relatedly, Clandinin (2006, p. 45) defines narrative inquiry as the study and analysis of the stories people tell to represent and make sense of their experience. These broad definitions provide a basis for the

blended approach adopted.   As already outlined, the inquiry was concerned to explore and illuminate participants' particular and collective experience of co-production, in the context of their lived experience as people who have come through the criminal justice system and made good. Individual biography, narrative and identity connects closely then with the phenomenon being explored.   Further, and critically, the inquiry was committed to empowering participants as equal partners in the research process - as narrators of their own story, and as co-producers of our collective story. Narrative analysis, and the representation of each research conversation in a single yet connected narrative form, provided a more transparent space for that co-productive process.   It provided a means of affording (or attempting to afford) participants voice, authority and representation – not merely in the research conversation but in the process of analysis, representation and dissemination that follows that (Chase, 2005; Fontana & Frey, 2005). Further, in conducting, transcribing and analysing the research conversations it became apparent that participants' experience of and insight into co-production occurred in context - as part of a particular, broader and connected story. In analysing and coding that data it seemed false (and sometimes impossible) to deconstruct and disconnect that story through a standardised process of thematic slicing. Again, the analysis and representation of the research data within a single yet connected narrative form emerged as a partial solution to this tension.

It is worth noting however that there were limits and particularities in the analytical approach adopted (particularly in my use of narrative analysis). For example, reflecting the research focus and questions, my analysis centres on what participants told, and does not attend explicitly to questions of 'how' participants told, to 'whom' or 'for what purpose' (Riessman, 2008). Further, in analysing and representing the narratives I elected to adopt an analytically 'light touch'. What I mean by that is that I wanted to resist rewriting these stories and sought instead to provide a supporting space and analytic framework within which the narrator's story could be heard, understood and represented – in context and on their terms (see Fine, 1998; hooks, 1990). My decision making in this area reflected the participatory ambitions and design of the study, the strength and significance of the stories told, the significant

under-representation of user voices in justice research and related decisions about my own 'voice' and stance in the research process. Chase (2005, p. 665) describes this analytical approach as adopting a 'supportive voice'; that is a voice and stance 'that pushes the narrator's voice into the limelight'. However this was about more than supporting participants, it was equally an attempt to interrupt the 'authority' and 'dominance' of the analyst (as discussed by Alcoff, 1991; Fine, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; hooks, 1990). Earlier I described the experience of learning to attend more to the participant's story and less to my own – a process that necessarily involved me and my story moving towards the margins. This metaphor is also relevant here. In seeking to create a space and analytic framework within which the participant's story could be heard my role as analyst necessarily shifted (albeit temporarily). It became less about authoritative interpretation and more about deep listening, understanding, representation and dialogue. Working with lengthy transcripts this analytical approach necessarily involved extensive editing and reduction (more than I would have liked). It involved a progressive connecting and ordering of the data gathered - in a manner that connected both with the research questions and with the integrity and complexity of the story. And it involved framing and focussing the stories collected, in much the same way that the margins of a page frame and bring focus to the content within it. It is worth noting that hooks (1990, p. 151), in discussing the role of researchers in speaking about the 'other', describes this marginal space 'not [as] a site of domination but [as] a place of resistance'.

The approach described here is, for some, vulnerable to the criticism of over-attending to the 'small story', to the partial and the particular - and in doing so for its neglect of the broader social, cultural and environmental contexts in which narratives, and the experiences they recount, are produced (see, for example, Squire (2013) and Phoenix's (2013) discussion of these issues). The narratives presented – and our analysis of them – challenge that representation. Individually and collectively they attest to the deeply individualised and contextualised nature of individual and social experience. They invite the reader to hear and attend to the individual while at the same time drawing the reader outwards – that is, to attend to individual experience within the political,

social, cultural and economic contexts in which it occurs and is produced. As the narratives, analysis and conclusions that follow make clear, in this inquiry the individual and the social are not in tension, they are intricately and necessarily entwined (see also part four).

There remain other particularities, tensions and paradoxes in the approach progressed and what emerges in the narratives that follow this section is a collection of co-produced, negotiated, situated and, perhaps, challenging texts (more of which below). Nonetheless, it was important to me that participants could recognise their story within our story and that our co-produced stories were represented in a way that was respectful of the lives that they represented. As Clandinin and Huber (2010, p. 15) observe: 'narrative inquirers understand that a person's lived and told stories are who they are and who they are becoming and that these stories sustain them'. It is for these (and other pragmatic and political) reasons that we adopted the blended approach described.

In practical terms, the above-described approach meant that each research conversation was approached, analysed and represented as a narrative whole. Individual narratives were kept intact as far as was possible and themes were identified from within the narrative rather than across narratives (Riessman, 2008). From this foundation, individual narratives were analysed using thematic content analysis, which occurred in four overlapping and cyclical stages. I began (and progressed) by reading and re-reading each narrative - a process of immersing myself in the data while attending to the voice, content and meaning of the narrative(s). Through this process each narrative was coded thematically, starting from the thematic structure adopted for the research conversations. This was followed by (and overlapped with) identification and coding of additional themes that emerged, including identification and coding of themes within identified themes. This overlapping, cyclical and reflexive process led to a progressive refinement of the narrative text and of emerging themes within that. As outlined, care was taken throughout this process to limit and de-centre my interpretive 'voice'. Rather my

method, in this stage, was to create a supporting framework within which the narrator's voice and story could be heard.

The results of each analysis were presented to each participant/co-researcher as a 'draft narrative' for dialogue, edit and approval[19]. This mostly occurred through face-to-face meetings and involved correction, questioning and collaborative refinement of the narrative and emergent themes. Here and elsewhere the process of involving participants and/or the research group in the data analysis process was critical. Driven by a commitment to sharing the power and process of analysis and representation in the research process, it provided a form of accountability, opportunity for further dialogue and a means of testing and refining the 'authenticity' of the emerging narratives and findings (see Alcoff, 1991; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

The second phase of data analysis involved identifying themes, patterns and relationships across the six research narratives. This phase was conducted jointly by a member of the research group and myself and employed a thematic analysis. Our approach – progressed independently - followed the four-stage analysis process outlined above. In adopting a thematic approach effort was made to attend to the particular, complex and multi-layered nature of the research themes and findings though this was inevitably compromised by the summary approach adopted. On completion of this process we met to review and bring together our respective analyses, following which I wrote up the analysis drawing on and connecting with existing research. Space does not permit detailed discussion of this important process - nor the insights that emerged from it. However, it is worth noting that though the content of our analysis broadly converged we noted differences in language, narration and emphasis - reflecting our respective social, professional and cultural positions and

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[19] This occurred with each of the participants with the exception of F, who was not contactable following our conversation.

biases[20]. The results of this analysis were again brought to the research group for final review, dialogue and refinement.

In this phase of analysis the voice of the analyst(s) returns to the centre – positioned alongside, I hope, the voice of the participants. Mostly, this decision reflects our observed role and responsibility as researchers. The research inquiry set out to explore and answer clear research questions, and to do so in a way that might contribute to existing knowledge and understanding in the justice field. However, there remain for me significant questions and tensions in the approach adopted as I grapple with the challenge of progressing a just, empowering and experimental research practice within the constraints of academic research expectations (more of which below).

Throughout the research process the above described decisions relating to method, analysis and representation were guided by reflexive consideration of Guba and Lincoln's (2005, pp. 205-209) 'criteria' for assessing the validity of social inquiries progressed within a constructivist tradition; specifically, their attention to the importance of 'authenticity', 'ethical relationship', and (though to a lesser extent) the progression of 'resistance' and 'transgressive forms' within the research process and outcomes. For a full discussion of these criteria see Guba and Lincoln (2005, pp. 205-209).

Research ethics

The research inquiry starts from and is rooted in a commitment to ethical inquiry. Guiding ethical frameworks and values, the methodological practices adopted in response to those values, and the tensions that emerged in their implementation are

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[20] For example, A's analysis was brief and concise with limited interpretation – reflecting perhaps his experience and approach as an accountant. Mine on the other hand was more wordy, interpretive and 'social work-y' (A's words), reflecting my observed role and responsibility as a researcher.

thus interwoven in the above discussion. For these reasons the following provides only a very brief outline of the ethical approach adopted.

Prior to commencing the inquiry, ethical approval was sought from the University Research Ethics Committee. Reflecting the inquiry's 'unusual' nature approval was granted iteratively as the research focus and methodology evolved.   Ethical research practice emerged and evolved in much the same way: iteratively, collaboratively and reflexively, as we sought to make meaningful the inquiry's ambitions, purposes and processes. For example, though issues of consent, privacy and confidentially were discussed and agreed at the outset they were also returned to and re-negotiated as and when they became meaningful for the people involved. My own recurring dilemmas around respect, voice and representation were negotiated in much the same way – iteratively, collaboratively and reflexively. Though there were many valuable academic sources of direction and support as we negotiated these issues (including many of the academic texts cited above), few were as valuable, or tangible, as the co-productive relationships developed through the research process. Within these imperfect relationships there emerged an open, honest, accountable, supportive and generous space, where we learned to voice our ethical ambitions, concerns and uncertainties and work these out together.   This did not make for a perfect inquiry, nor a perfectly ethical one; but it did make for a more mutual, dialogic and hopeful one[21].

Limitations

There exist many tensions and limitations in the inquiry described – some of which have already been noted. However, before attending to these limitations it is

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[21] The above described approach connects closely with a feminist communitarian ethical framework and practice, as discussed by Christians (2005).

important to make some comment about the nature and status of the findings that emerge from the inquiry.

Reflecting the inquiry's constructivist/participatory foundations, the research design, and the focus and form of the inquiry, the insights that emerge from it are inevitably partial, situated and temporal – reflecting as they do the particular, situated and temporal experience of the participants and researchers, as well as the particular, situated and temporal social relationships through which these experiences find voice. However, as noted, as a constructivist/participatory inquiry the validity of these insights does not rest in their objectivity, neutrality or completeness, but in the authenticity, ethicality and transgressiveness of the research process and outcomes (see above). In this section I have sought to map out the what, why and how of these processes, and in the chapters that follow I present the outputs and outcomes that emerged from them.   The task then of judging the quality, validity and usefulness of the research findings rests ultimately with the readers of this inquiry, including the participants themselves.

Connecting with the above, I make no claims here in respect of the representativeness of the research sample, far less the generalizability of the research findings. Rather, as a small sample, the value of the insights presented rests in their capacity to provide a rich, in-depth and particular insight into the (user) experience of co-production in the justice context. As Clandinin and Huber (2010, p. 14) observe:

> The knowledge developed from narrative inquiries is textured by particularities and incompleteness; knowledge that leads less to generalisations and certainties … and more toward wondering about and imagining alternative possibilities.

My purpose here is not to negate the significance or potential applicability of the knowledge and insights presented. Rather it is to acknowledge that questions and considerations about the broader applicability of these findings are just that – they are questions and considerations that we need to engage with as we consider how these

findings connect with broader representations of co-production in the justice context[22]. As Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 298) observe: our role as enquirers ends (and begins again) in 'providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgements possible'.

Research ideals, realities and resource (the gaps between dreaming and doing research)

In writing and submitting the inquiry proposal I discussed the 'demand' of co-productive/participatory research designs and the importance of balancing research ideals with the realities of doing research and the resource available. I went on to describe how we would manage these tensions in the research process. As I conclude this inquiry – and note the limitations of and constraints upon it – I wonder what I understood of these tensions at the outset.

This inquiry began as a small scale (even pilot) inquiry that sought to explore and progress a co-productive approach in exploring the meaning and potential of co-production in the justice context. As the final of three 'projects' conducted as part of my Professional Doctorate, at the outset it had a notional word count of 20,000 and a projected time scale of nine months. What evolved was a much more substantial, involved, and lengthy project and process. For example, the quality of relationships developed made for research conversations that lasted on average three hours or more – producing a wealth of data that was challenging to analyse. The data analysis strategy that evolved in response to the data collected (and the relationships within which that sat) was, similarly, a more detailed, protracted and reflexive process than initially envisaged. And the practice of doing co-production was more emotionally, ethically and intellectually demanding than I had envisaged - often creating tensions between the moral, methodological and practical demands of the inquiry. Of course,

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[22] We return to this issue in the conclusion.

as is common in participatory inquiries, what occurred here is that the inquiry began (naively) as one thing and evolved (meaningfully) into something else. The learning through that process has been invaluable and has had a transformative impact on my developing thinking and practice as a researcher. However, the gaps between the demand of the inquiry and the resource available has been a site of on-going tension and has constrained my capacity to engage as thoroughly, ethically and reflexively as I would have liked. For example, building relationship, sharing power and working creatively is not easy when all are juggling 'projects' and working to deadlines. Relatedly, mostly I have been 'learning by doing' and it is only in these final stages that I find myself discovering, or making sense of, the illuminating theoretical guidance and instruction that I wish I had grasped at the outset. In part this reflects a level of idealism and naivety on my part as I embarked on an inquiry of this nature and scale. It also reflects, I suggest, the gaps that exist between *dreaming* and *doing* research in the real world.

Equally, this inquiry is limited by the modesty of my/our co-productive ambition and imagination. Exploring co-production in the justice context, one of the participants (E) describes co-production as 'a new set of connections', where there is 'no blueprint' and 'no standard way of doing things'. He (like others) went on to explain that co-production works best when there is a reasonable degree of autonomy and innovation, of trust and respect between actors, trial and error, risk taking, and being able to 'work out how we go'. Reflecting on these insights it strikes me that this applies equally to co-productive research practice. Though there were elements of the above in the research process, in leading the inquiry (as I inevitably did) there seemed to me to be limited space for autonomy and innovation, trial and error, risk taking, and of 'working out how we go' (though my co-researchers are more optimistic). Specifically, there seemed limited space for the co-production of new research forms and outputs, as might be expected from the 'new set of connections' developed. Rather, much of the time I have felt under pressure to make what we were doing and discovering fit within a pre-existing and pre-validated research form. In part this reflects my limited confidence as a researcher and my reluctance to take risks in an assessed process. At

the same time it reflects the force of research tradition (Pease, 2002), the constraining criteria by which mainstream research is assessed and validated (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), and the tensions experienced in moving between research 'fields' (Clandinin, 2006). Had I been braver - or more transgressive - the outputs of this process may have looked different. Almost certainly, participant's narratives would have been longer and less edited, containing more of their voice and less of mine. They would be less straightforward, less smooth, less bounded. Relatedly, the 'write-up' of the inquiry may have taken different forms (I hope it still will). I am not suggesting here that these differences would have produced 'truer' findings, but they may have produced more authentic, ethical and transgressive ones. As Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 211) observe:

> One way to confront the dangerous illusions (and their underlying ideologies) that texts may foster is through the creation of new texts that break boundaries; that move from the center to the margins to comment on and decenter the center; that forgo closed, bounded worlds for those more open-ended and less conveniently encompassed; that transgress the boundaries of conventional social science; and that seek to create a social science about human life rather than *on* subjects.

As the authors go on to note: 'experiments with how to do this have produced 'messy texts''(p. 211) so explaining my reticence in this area. As we as a research group progress the dissemination of the research findings and look to next steps I hope we will be able to do so with a greater sense of the freedom and innovation that co-production inspires.

Privileging user voice?

The methodology described and presented here may be criticised for its 'privileging' of user/participant voices. Discussing these issues, Atkinson and Silverman (cited in Fontana & Frey, 2005) warn that researchers should not replace a false god (the authorial monologue of classical sociology) with another (the monologue of a

privileged speaking respondent). Relatedly, Fontana and Frey (2005, p. 697) caution that: 'researchers should not privilege any ways of looking at the world … but should instead continue to question, question and question'. This is important instruction. However, in a policy, practice and research context that remains powerfully neglectful of user voices (in terms of what, why and how user voices are included and represented) it is a perspective that merits debate, discussion and experimentation - not least because it is generally acknowledged that we remain some distance from genuinely privileging user/participant voices. In this inquiry we have deliberately sought to create a space in which participant voices can be heard (alongside other voices) and we have done so for clear reasons.   However, we have also sought to engage critically and reflexively with these voices, attending to Fontana and Frey's call to 'question, question and question' (though we would argue that this questioning needs to be respectful, sensitive and on-going). The approach adopted reflects then the moral and methodological aims of this inquiry. Further, it is offered as an experimental practice, and like most experimental practices it is one that, at times, makes particular demands of the reader (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). For example, as a collection, the narratives presented in part three are detailed and lengthy. Relatedly, it not always easy for the reader to hold onto the multiple and diverse insights that emerge from within and across the narratives. Certainly, the narratives require a more participatory role of the reader in hearing and interpreting the research data than is perhaps typical in research studies. However, these are, perhaps, some of the conditions and consequences of developing research practices that strive to create space for other voices, as discussed by Alcoff (1991) in 'The Problem of Speaking for Others'. Ultimately, the merits of the approach adopted are for the reader to reflexively assess.

Conclusion

The research design and methodology described here reflects a modest, ambitious, pragmatic, experimental and reflexive attempt to combine just participation with authentic inquiry, in the form of a co-productive research practice. Some might argue that such purposes should not be combined. I would suggest that all research studies are textured by the particular ambitions, partialities and commitments of their authors. A key difference in this inquiry is that these commitments, and the practices and tensions that follow from them, are made explicit in the research process and product.

Part three. Research narratives

Introduction

This section presents the six narratives co-produced from the research conversations[23]. The structure of each narrative connects closely with the research questions - which sought to explore participant perspectives on the meaning, relevance, possibility and potential of co-production in the criminal justice context - and with the focus and structure of the research conversations. Reflecting this focus, the narratives that follow are structured around the following areas of analysis, though there is clear overlap across these areas:

- Biography
- Defining co-production?
- Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence
- Experience of co-production as a citizen (or 'ex-offender')
- How to progress co-production?

As outlined, in presenting the research conversations in this way, our aim is to connect the stories offered with the identified research questions while also giving voice to the identity, experience and authority of the narrator. The narratives that emerge from that process are, in our view, engaging, insightful and, perhaps, challenging -

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[23] The names of the participants have been changed as a means of respecting each person's right to confidentiality. However, the content of the narratives means that some of the participants can be identified. Participants have elected to present the narratives with these identifying features.

particularly in a context where the user's voice is yet to become a valid and valued voice in its own right. In affording the narrator's voice primacy the narratives allow the reader to hear for themselves the insights that emerge from the research inquiry and to hear and attend to those insights in context. Further, they allow for representation of the research 'data' in a form that reflects the 'new' relationships, connections and discursive practices through which they were produced (see, for example, E's discussion of these issues).

As discussed, these new forms have implications for readers and research audiences. They invite us to think differently about how and why we listen. They are, perhaps, not best read in a single sitting. They do not easily lend themselves to efficient extraction and assimilation. However, the decision to present the narratives in this form is about more than the presentation of research 'data'. It is also about the presentation of people, with voices, power and potential of their own. In sum, the approach adopted here is a political and experimental one. It is not offered as a finished or perfect product. Rather, it is offered as an experimental attempt to find new and progressive ways of speaking with rather than for others in research practice (see Alcoff, 1991).

Finally, as outlined, the narratives presented here do not stand alone. Rather they stand alongside the analysis and discussion that follows in part four. In that section we consider what we can learn from these narratives as a collection and the arising implications for criminal justice policy, practice and research.

A

A is a white English woman aged 51 years. She lives alone and has two adult children. A has considerable experience of using services and of user involvement across a range of health and social care settings. A became involved in the criminal justice system in 2003 following a conviction for embezzlement. She completed a 200 hour community service (CS) order in 2005. In 2011 A completed a degree in criminology and until recently was employed as a restorative justice worker. A is actively seeking employment.

Biography

A opened the conversation with the following narrative:

> I have had a different life to most people in terms of, had lots of difficult things that have happened in my life; in terms of my own, situations that I've been in, in terms of bad marriages, domestic violence, raising a child with special needs. Each of those are life changing events. But probably one of the biggest life changing events was coming into the criminal justice system, which came about -. Although I'd previously used services - in terms of child care services for children with special needs, mental health services, I'd used health services - becoming a recipient of criminal services was a whole new ball game to me. When I came into criminal justice I just felt that out of all of the services that are out there whether it be health or social work, probably criminal justice is the one where you least have a say in anything. And my life has always been revolving around having to use services whether - purely just because I'm one of these people who's been through so many different events in my life.

> … I had a normal upbringing. I was abused as a child but I don't see that as having an effect on anything else that's happened. It was just an event that

happened in my life as a child. But then I suppose giving birth to a child with special needs you suddenly become much more aware of the different services that are out there. And then it always seems to have been one traumatic experience after another from that. Lot of my friends have said to me: how have you coped with going through so many traumatic experiences in your life? Think it is that each one has become a learning experience and I've used that in a positive way rather than a negative. Maybe that says something about me as a person.   Though I may not think it at the time but I probably am a strong person. Had moments in my life, very low points, ended up using mental health services, in-patient and out. But come through the other side and in some ways I feel that has given me the strength to cope with probably a lot more than what most people can cope with. Life has been very much a roller coaster. Just have to keep going on, keep moving with it, deal with whatever comes your way.

A goes on to narrate a life shaped and disrupted by relationships in which there was a 'total imbalance of power'; relationships in which power inequalities variously manifest themselves in abusive, controlling, punishing, coercive, frightening, traumatic disempowering and/or unhelpful ways. These relationships – past and present – include A's relationship with the person who abused her as a child, a violent partner, health services, disability services, mental health services, child care and protection services and criminal justice services. They are the background and foreground to significant and often traumatic life experiences and events, including: domestic violence, raising a child with special needs, periods of mental ill-health, the accommodation of her children by the local authority, separation from her abusive partner, and the death of her son. Though A is able to distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate use of power within and across these relationships, the experience of power inequality and disempowerment is a connecting theme - as is the experience of inadequacy, dependency and fear that follows from those experiences. A introduces this theme in the early stages of the conversation. Describing her relationship with public services:

Turbulent at times, and a lot of that has come about feeling whenever you use or become a recipient of services I've always felt that there was a power imbalance. You are using the services and therefore you have to be grateful for what you are being given. Particularly when I had my child with special needs. Telling what you need and why, then hearing you can't have equipment because there's no resources doesn't help me. What I wanted was someone to listen to me, walk a mile in my shoes, to understand why I feel the way I feel is one of the hardest things throughout any moment in my life when I have had to receive services. To me it's all about you can read through all your theory books, you can have as many degrees as you like but until you've experienced it first-hand you will not know how I feel. That was the thing that I felt came across when I had to use disability services for my son, mental health services for myself and within the criminal justice service especially – total imbalance of power.

Describing her entry into the criminal justice system:

When you become part of the criminal justice system you feel that you don't have a voice. Well you can have a voice, you can shout as much as you like but nobody actually takes any notice of you.

I was scared stiff as a criminal justice service user - to say what I wanted to say. Knowing that I was on a statutory order and that I had to do something. … I was scared stiff because I knew they had the power over me.

Describing her experience of domestic violence:

When you're in a situation like domestic violence where you - a total imbalance of power - where you are the lowest of the low, you know you don't have a say and if you do try to have a voice you are usually shut up by some means. You are certainly not listened to anyway. …You know, being told constantly that you are stupid, that, you know, all of the words under the sun, and feeling totally just like something that you would wipe off the bottom of your shoe.

Located alongside this sometimes dominating narrative of abuse, trauma and disempowerment is another narrative of empowerment, agency, capacity and survival. In this narrative A tells of important relationships, life events and achievements that have been and continue to be supportive, affirming, empowering and transformative. These include: relationships with workers, family members and friends; experiences of meaningful user involvement; completion of a degree in criminology; the experience of meaningful employment and, perhaps most significantly, the ability through these experiences to recover and reconstruct a positive sense of self, of life, and of purpose. In telling her story A moves between these two narratives, revealing in what and how she tells the challenge of moving forward and not being dragged back. Like many of the participants, for A recovery and reconstruction is ongoing and sometimes challenging. Nonetheless, in telling her story A asserts herself - as much to herself as to me - as a survivor, a strong person, an intelligent person and a capable person:

> I wouldn't be where I am now if it hadn't been for that particular supervisor … and if it wasn't for a few words said by them about: you are intelligent, you are articulate, you can do this … I probably wouldn't, well I certainly wouldn't be sitting here now. I don't know where I would have been …

> And constantly having that encouragement made me think very carefully about, well did I actually want to spend the rest of my life being this frightened person? Then I knew that I was, I suddenly thought that I was capable of doing something else. Didn't happen overnight. Took me a good two years before I acknowledged and moved forward. But if those people hadn't of said what they did. And encouraged and supported me. I probably wouldn't be where I am now. And that, I have to be grateful for them too. Yes, I admit I am probably unique in terms of that I didn't have a history of offending behaviour, but never the less I still committed an offence of which I was guilty of and for which I was punished, and did my time. But, you know it was really the support from those people on the outside that gave it, that helped me to move forward. And again it's something inside me. When you start looking back on

all the other things you've experienced in your life, that you realise that you can change, and you can move forward, sorry [A pauses to recover her emotions].

Don't get me wrong it's a very hard battle and it certainly wasn't easy and I'm still faced with challenges because once you have that label, whether you are an offender or an ex-offender you will always have that label. Whereas you can choose not to - you don't go round with it tattooed on your head [but] there are certain situations and certain times in your life where your past will always be there to haunt you and that will always be there.

Defining co-production

For A, co-production was a relatively easy concept to define. However, it was a difficult concept to reconcile in practice, particularly in the context of criminal justice services:

> I think it's a very difficult phrase because there is user involvement, which means that you are involving service users within the planning, delivery, evaluation of services. But co-production to me really means that everybody should be on an equal playing field. Whether you are a service user, an ex-offender, a social worker, a service manager, that means you are all equal players if it's co-production. And I suppose there is a bit of me that thinks well, within the criminal justice system can you have co-production if you have people that are on statutory orders? Because they are there because they have to be there. They are not there because they want to be there. So there is this bit about, is it possible to have co-production when everybody is going to be treated as an equal? But if someone is on a statutory order they are not equal.

A's difficulty with the practice of co-production in the justice context revolves principally around the issue of power in relationships, and of who has it. If co-

production requires equality amongst actors then the statutory context of criminal justice militates against that. Yet, considering co-production in the more particular context of her own justice experience A is ambivalent:

> So was the CS order co-productive? Well, no because when you are on an order - the supervisor was 100% brand new; listened to me, supported me, made me feel, made me feel as an equal person, didn't - was very non-judgemental, didn't judge me for my conviction. So in some ways you could say well maybe it was a bit of co-production there. But also as the supervisor she had the power.

Returning to this relationship later in the conversation, and to what got her through the trauma of her justice experience and the obstacles that followed, A reflects:

> The words of those professionals nine years ago. Even now when things are difficult I can still remember those words. I can still think back to those words: you are a strong person … About co-production - that probably is, because that is me and this other person working together on a phrase, on a sentence.

A remained ambivalent about the potential of co-production within justice sanctions – an ambivalence that reflects the juxtaposition of the power-laden nature of statutory justice relationships and the diverse people and practices sometimes encountered within those relationships. Notwithstanding this ambivalence, A was unwavering as regards what matters in co-production, summed up as: 'the sharing of power'. For A one of the most important ways that professionals can do this is by listening to, hearing and respecting service user experience. Consider, for example, the following:

> What I wanted was someone to listen to me, walk a mile in my shoes; to understand why I feel …

> … Having done an honours degree, and read 'the books', some very good books, there was always this element when I was reading it of saying, well hang on a second, that's not actually what it's like in reality. And reality is different for each person as well. … if talking about health it's almost that you have to

be pigeon holed. You have to fit the boxes to get the diagnosis. Same in criminal justice, they have the theories and because you can tick a few of those theories then you can be labelled. But you know, everybody is an individual. I just sort of feel that sometimes, as with everything, when you've actually experienced it first-hand it can sometimes change your view point.

A is not suggesting that that those who haven't experienced 'it' have nothing to offer. Rather, that they don't have everything to offer; professional knowledge, insight and experience is partial: 'you are the ones that hold the clues to how a planner/provider can, you've got the final piece of the jigsaw'. For A, this mutuality, interdependence and reciprocity lies at the heart of co-production and effective service delivery, in any sphere. When professionals fail to recognise and respect mutuality what is experienced is: 'a total imbalance of power'.

Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence

As outlined, for A the defining feature of her experience of health and social care services, and of justice services in particular, is the 'total imbalance of power'. Describing her criminal justice experience:

> Wouldn't have dreamt of the relationship being co-productive. I mean, I may have been asked what I thought about something but at the end of the day they were the ones calling the shots and therefore they can listen to me but probably not change anything or take on board what I am saying. And I felt also that, this is where I go back to the beginning, about where service users are themselves within their own lives and how they feel about what is happening or what has happened. And it goes back to, when you are on a statutory order there is that power imbalance. Somebody can ask you and aim to support you as much as they like but it's all about this thing that they have the hold over you.

The above (and earlier) excerpts indicate that A does not identify her justice experience as a co-productive one. However, without negating the force of this message, the above also alludes to a relationship between a person's subjective experience of an order (or service) and what he or she expects from that order based on their formative experience of services and/or life. As touched on before, A's relationship with criminal justice services sits within the broader narrative of her life – a life that for a number of years was characterised and shaped by abuse, violence, domination and fear. It is possible to speculate then that A's experience of justice (and other public) services is shaped both by what goes on within the service experience and by what is going on around that.   Add to this the punitive rhetoric that frames justice interactions, and the language and labels imposed on people on entry to the justice system, and A's perception, expectation and experience is entirely logical.

Yet, amidst this dominating narrative, as A unpacks her justice experience we begin to observe a more complex picture, a picture that points to the diverse dynamics of justice relationships and to the opportunities that can occur within these relationships. At times the relationships depicted are not only *not* co-productive, they are actively distancing, dismissive and disenfranchising. Yet, there are also moments when co-production is at least emergent in the relationships described.   The following excerpts, capture some of that diversity, as well as the aids and obstacles to co-production within that:

> Because there was so many other things going on my experience really from the police was, I can't fault them in any shape or form. They were 100% supportive, 100% acknowledging and understanding the situation in terms of my mental health and in terms of my domestic violence. So that was very positive and I would probably say did verge on a form of co-production because whilst I felt: yes, they were the police, I actually felt they were listening to me, I felt respected, I felt on an equal playing field.

> In terms of the actual court experience: No. And I think that is just the nature of our legal system in terms of court procedure. I had a good solicitor but PF

services are there to do their job as well and I felt they had a total lack of understanding in relation to domestic violence. The Sheriff - obviously there was no co-production there because the Sheriff isn't there to work with you. The Sheriff is there to dish out a sentence. In my view I felt the Sheriff probably was understanding of the situation that I was in but he's there to do a job and the job says what he has to do and so there's not co-production in terms of -. The system within the court doesn't allow co-production.

Moving onto being sentenced, in terms of what happened after I'd been sentenced: no co-production I would say. Was I listened to? I was listened to but I wasn't understood. I think that was the difference. I can't fault the social worker in terms of prior to sentencing and doing the SER. They listened to what I had to say but they're doing that every day, all day; I was just another person. They were things that I felt that could have been - I could have been offered more support but they were just missed in terms of well, I'm just doing this report for the Sheriff.

And then, after being sentenced it was: 'you turn up, on this day, at this time. There's your leaflet. Go away and read about it'. I was a number in a system, and I felt quite unsupported, misunderstood and treated - this is going to sound really silly but, treated like a criminal. I know I was a criminal but it was that whole thing that you are now a criminal and therefore because you've got this label, you do not deserve to have the same rights as somebody that is not a criminal: 'I've told you, you come this day, this time, there's the leaflet, there's the door'.

R: So little sense of you and the worker using that opportunity for something positive, constructive?

No, it was very much a sense of: this is the order, this is what you have to do, you will do it. When you've done it, goodbye.

A's experience of the women's group attended as part of her CS order provides one or two counter experiences to those recounted above. In introducing these A is keen to point out that this more positive and co-productive opportunity came 'not by the social worker' but by the person supervising the CS order 'who was not a social worker':

> I was very lucky that [area] council have a very good women's group who are there, most of the women that are in that group are there for protection. … I felt safe in that respect because I knew that whilst I was doing the CS, I wasn't going to have to face abuse. It was good in terms of what I did was therapeutic … therapeutic in terms of rehabilitative - yes, because it gave me the opportunity to reflect on my personal situation. I knew what had caused what I did, why I did what I did and this was allowing me and giving me the opportunity to talk about that to somebody who genuinely listened. They weren't a social worker they were the supervisor, but sitting round in a room this size with other women who also were equally being given that opportunity to talk about their lives … Why they engaged in what they got engaged with and were they at a stage where they wanted to change their lives. Sadly a lot of them weren't at that stage because of other factors coming into their lives that were preventing them from making that change. I was fortunate that I had managed to get out of the domestic violence which was the one thing that was causing all the issues. And yeah I had a lot more issues to face having got out of the domestic violence, because the threat was still there and there were lots of other things that were still going on. But I had the support from, not from criminal justice social work, but from other social work teams.

Explaining how the worker encouraged co-production:

> Because the worker put herself in a situation whereby she would instigate and encourage the conversation. And acknowledging us, not just me, but other service users that were within that group; treating us as individuals, as people, respecting us and not treating us as criminals, as offenders - which we were.

But she came across as if she was one [of us] ... She wasn't but she made you feel that we were all equal in this group together. There was no: you finish this now, you do that now. There were times yes when she would have to say no, but … she was very encouraging, discussing not probing about why we did things … It was all about: this is your time to talk, but you talk when you want to talk [and] about what you want to talk about. There wasn't: 'so why are you here? Why did you do it? And, are you going to change?' The finger wagging stuff, there was none of that. It would always sort of pop up in conversation. … That made people in the room confortable and made them feel open and able to talk about what they wanted to talk about. And that to me made my CS a very positive experience - probably unique.

Lastly, A describes how this experience contributed to her decision and capacity to co-produce, make progress and turn her life around:

100%, because I wouldn't be where I am now if it hadn't been for that particular supervisor, along with somebody from a visiting voluntary org. And if it wasn't for a few words said by them …

Underscoring the mutual nature of that process:

When I speak with others what they say is: well all they did was point you in the right direction. You're the one that made the changes and you're the one that did it all. And yes I do agree with that. They didn't lead me by the hand. It had to come from within. But also, when you've spent a number of years being emotionally and physically and, well every sort of abuse possible, then sometimes all you actually need is someone to believe in you for you to make that change. And if you are constantly being labelled as a junkie, an alchie, an offender, a criminal - whatever you want to label somebody as. If you are constantly being reminded that that's what you are then how can you make that change?

We might conclude that co-production is neither fully present nor entirely absent in A's justice experience. What is clear is that co-production occurs - or emerges - in empowering relationships, and in spaces where there are opportunities to develop empowering relationship. It occurs when A feels supported, acknowledged and understood, and when she feels genuinely listened to, respected, and treated as an equal. It occurs when she feels safe to talk and make sense of her situation, her life, her self and her future. It occurs when she experiences affirmation and encouragement, and when through that affirmation she discovers and recovers capacity and agency. And it occurs when there exist other supportive and affirming relationships and when her life circumstances are conducive and supportive. The obstacles to co-production are essentially the inverse of the above. Specifically, the experience of being a number in a system that is overcrowded and responsive to other and others' priorities; listening without understanding; being labelled, treated and dismissed as a criminal; statutory, authoritarian and disempowering relationships; coercion and control; and the existence and interruption of significant personal and social problems.

Experience of co-production as a citizen

What?

Discussing her experience of co-production as a citizen, A drew on recent experience as a restorative justice worker, a children's panel member, an active member of PP?PF and as the criminal justice representative on a social work education user group. Mostly, A discussed these activities with enthusiasm and pride while also attending to the challenge and constraints of co-production within these spheres – specifically the challenge of realising equality within these relationships. Discussing this, for example, in the context of the social work education user group:

> …. But is it co-productive? No, because you see the university is calling the shots on this.

Or, in the context of her employment as a restorative justice worker:

> The difficulty comes in when you - as someone who has previously been in the system - you have a certain amount of empathy and a large amount of understanding of where that person is. And whilst that is good because it aids your role … you also become very much ruled in this: I can identify with this person, I know what level of support this person needs but I have a full set of rules and procedures and I cannot do that. So again, it's a bit about, almost, the balance of power again comes into it because you are wanting to do so much with this person, encouraging them, but your role says you can't do that … it's quite hard.

Notwithstanding these challenges, in all but one of the areas discussed A was acting in a voluntary capacity and thus choosing to co-produce. I invited A to explain why? A responded drawing on her experience with PP?PF.

Why co-produce?

Like many of the participants, A describes her initial engagement with PP?PF as serendipitous. Though her reasons for remaining involved are clear and considered - linked to her 'rare' experience of equality and empowerment, and her desire to use that experience for good:

> I didn't really know what it was about. I just assumed it was a meeting about service users to voice their opinions. Had never heard of it. It was quite a surprise for me when I went to a meeting, purely on the basis to see service users who were still service users, they were people who were currently receiving services and people that had also been through the criminal justice system - whether prison or on statutory orders. And having an opportunity to speak in what I saw as a safe environment, where you could say what you wanted to say without fear of somebody banging a pair of handcuffs on you or making notes about you, to me was really an empowering experience. I didn't know really whether it was gonna go anywhere or if anything was going to

happen but I actually did feel that maybe this was something that I would like to explore further. … I felt this was something that I would like to be involved in.

Describing what mattered in that experience:

> When you become part of the criminal justice system you feel that you don't have a voice – well you can have a voice, you can shout as much as you like but nobody actually takes any notice of you. The whole thing about being in a meeting with other service users who have a whole range of offences – low to high – behind them, and yet everybody in my view in that room was equal … and had an equal say. And it was that feeling of: hey, you know, whatever we've done it doesn't matter, we're still people and we can still voice our opinions here, and people actually want to listen to us and -. I think that was the key, that people wanted, genuinely wanted, to listen to us. That was a big thing for me, to be able to speak freely and knowing that somebody was listening.

Noting A's progression and extensive user involvement background I was surprised to hear A place such value on a very recent experience of feeling equal, valued and heard. A responded by highlighting how rare and significant this is as an 'ex-offender':

> … I still feel sometimes, through work or other meetings that I've been asked to go to, particularly [meetings] I've been asked to go to as the token 'ex-offender', you sometime feel that your views perhaps are not as valid as other people's views. Yet in PP?PF, my view is as valid as anybody else's. Different but still valid. And that's why I want to be involved in PP?PF, because I do feel listened to, and there is this thing that if users can get together then many voices is much stronger than one voice on their own. There has to be a complete sea change in peoples attitudes but I believe change can happen although it takes a long time and can only happen when people become more receptive to listening to the views of people that are using services.

At the heart then of A's reasons for co-producing is the experience of being treated as an equal, of being able to speak freely, and of being heard; experiences that, as an 'ex-offender', are valuable because they are rare.

Yet, within this optimism and clarity, at other points there emerged a distinct ambivalence and unease - a wrestling with the 'why' of co-production in the justice context. Exploring this unease we eventually hit upon the obstacles of culpability, punishment and shame:

> I can put it like this: I can stand up on a platform and talk about my experiences of child sexual abuse because it wasn't my fault. I can stand up on a platform and talk about my experience of mental health because it wasn't my fault. I can talk about the fact that my children were placed in care because their father couldn't care for them when I was ill, so that wasn't my fault. I can talk about raising a child with special needs, cos that wasn't my fault. But actually, my experiences of the criminal justice system? Only one person to blame - well debatable because of … . But at the end of the day it's viewed as being my fault. So, that's hard to acknowledge.
>
> … I suppose what I wrestle with is that unlike other care groups, criminal justice is based on this foundation of punishment, that's how people come into the criminal justice system, and, it's hard to accept services that are punishing you. You wouldn't choose to go to a service to be punished would you? And that's I suppose where the wrestling I suppose for me comes into it. It's well, why do I want to be involved in criminal justice user involvement? … probably only because of my involvement in other user involvement stuff.   If not for that, going into the criminal justice system would have been: Start, do the punishment, get out of it. Forget it. It never existed.
>
> But … running alongside that there is this element of: well, could I make it better for other people? And I have a belief that services could be better but the only way to achieve that is by contributing my experiences.   But I still, I

suppose it still doesn't sit well with me because even though it's several years since I've come out of the criminal justice system it still has that element of shame attached to it.

At the heart then of A's ambivalence is a desire to move on from the 'system' - and the experience of shame that involvement with the system still triggers - and a simultaneous desire to reclaim and use that experience for good.

How? (Aids and obstacles)

In addition to illuminating the ambivalent and contradictory nature of A's relationship to co-production, the above excerpts also underscore the aids and obstacles to co-production - identified respectively as: equality, voice and genuine listening, and: culpability, punishment and shame. In an attempt to explore these dynamics in more detail I invited A to recall her best and worst experience of co-production. What is interesting about the examples offered is the similarities between them. Though A's best experience highlights the importance of: choice, respect, autonomy, support and resourcing, in common with her worst experience it also highlights the messy, uncharted and contradictory nature of co-productive relationships. In this complex and uncertain territory the risk of tokenism, parading and exploitation is high and the experience of shame and inequality close. The following recounts A's best experience and describes being invited by the local authority in which she completed her order to research user experiences of CS:

> … last year, I did some research myself. I was asked to go back to [area] council to do research on how service users - their experience of doing CS orders basically. It seemed weird going into the offices, being introduced to - my old social worker still worked there. There was very much total respect. Now they probably found that easier to cope with than I did. I suddenly felt: oh my God, I'm back here and it's all the old feeling about being the underdog I suppose. But, actually doing the research and having a social work assistant doing the scribing for me - basically taking orders from me. I was in control, it was a reverse relationship.

…They approached me but it was up to me how I did it. It was my decision. I took control of it. I was the one who did it all but I had the support of social work in terms of they provided someone to scribe for me in the group meetings. They provided an office base for me to write it all up, and gave me the opportunity to present it. … and the majority of social workers that I was introduced to didn't even know that I had previously offended.

Then the story turns:

… The team manager, who basically engaged with me to do it, obviously knew me – and they have done everything they can to support me. And invited me, and it's gonna sound really cheesy but actually invited me along to the community payback awards. Almost as if: 'well look what we've done, we've got this offender'. And the sad thing is, they didn't change my life. I changed my life.

R: did you feel it was a bit of parading?

Yes, not until they asked me to go to the community payback awards with them. And the thing was [they said] if we do get an award then I want you to go up and get it and at that moment I thought: well this doesn't sit well with me.

The tension for A is the intent to represent her as an 'ex-offender' – a label that is not only uncomfortable for A but shaming.   A returns to this theme when describing her worst experience, which details her experience as a member of the reference group for the recent Scottish Government Commission on Women Offenders:

Last year had an event where I felt quite, I don't know if patronised would be the right word. But when I was on the reference group for the commission of female offenders and I sat in this hotel - great big posh hotel, one of these great big board rooms - you know bloody great big mahogany table and you've got Dame [x], along with other people who are very high up within the Scottish

Exec, along with leading psychiatrists, Sheriffs and, all these highfalutin people. And here I was, the token service user, sat at this table. I fiddled with my beads and all my beads scattered all over the table; I just thought God. I wanted the ground to swallow me up. But also it was listening to the conversations, and I, wanting to chip in but suddenly feeling very inadequate - which was stupid because educationally I was probably just as well qualified plus I had the experience. But I suddenly felt like a service user, in service user mode and [I] felt very inadequate. And then I did get the opportunity to talk but I - and that was even worse, suddenly having all the eyes bearing on you; I was like, now it's like being in a court room. But I was able to say what I wanted to say but afterwards I felt: I didn't say that right; I sounded like a service user. But I thought - I am a service user! But it was about, I wanted to put my point across as an equal, using all the terminology and all the long words, because I felt that is how I should have put it across. But I didn't. I just put it across in common language, including a laugh and a joke about it but that was my way of putting it across.

And then several months after that … I was invited to the launch. … I went and then afterwards I - there was all this buffet type thing and you're wrestling with eating your posh canapés and holding your orange juice and not throwing food down yourself; sorry but that's how it is for me, I'm just a normal person. And this woman came up to me and she said: oh, and who are you? Cos I had my label on but she obviously couldn't read it properly. And I said, and I suddenly thought: how do I introduce myself? And I said: 'I'm [A]'. And she is obviously waiting for me to say I'm from social work, I'm from blah blah. And all I said was: 'I'm from the reference group from the commission on female offenders'. And she said: [adopts a posh tone] 'I know', she said, 'you've been in the criminal justice system. Oh I think it's wonderful how people like you can contribute to something like this'. And I wanted to say: what do you mean people like me? But I was just so taken aback that, I just couldn't say anything. And it was: 'you've done marvellously, I just think it's so wonderful that you can

come to an event like this'. And I felt like saying, aye, but I've got to go back in the handcuffs when I get out of here.

I just thought aw?

The above is a complex insight. It is however an important one as it illuminates the obstacles and costs for people co-producing in the justice context. At the centre of this insight sit issues and experiences of power, inequality, social stereotyping and shame; and the expression and trading of these within social relationships. Reflecting on these issues A concludes:

> It's become socially acceptable over the years for somebody in a wheelchair to go into a pub. … it's becoming acceptable that one in four of the population will have a mental health problem at sometime. You know about it and you accept it. It is still not socially acceptable to say: I'm an ex-offender. … And I'm not different from anybody else. People - all of us - feel threatened by the label.

From here the conversation returned to what helps, identified as: breaking down the barriers, breaking down the labels, readiness for co-production, realistic expectations, relevant training and support, and collective opportunities – where people who have come through the system do not stand (or speak) alone. For A it also requires a willingness, on all sides, to share ownership, to trust, to take risks, to get it wrong and to learn with and from each other. Finally, it takes time:

> Like anything it takes time for it to be embedded and maybe in twenty years' time when we have a whole new different people within the system that have been brought up with user involvement, things will be - it's forever evolving I think.

Looking forward: How to progress co-production?

Considering the question of how to progress co-production, A discussed three key areas: the importance of understanding co-production, the importance of listening, and the need for a change in social attitudes:

> I think it's about people understanding what it is - on both sides. Where does it come from? Why are they doing it? What are they hoping to achieve?

> … To me it's about listening. What *is* possible is listening to service users experiences. Acknowledging that you might not be able to change the service but it can change how you view people if you listen to their experiences.

> … Biggest issue for me is that sometimes, that people have got to get away from this stigma. When you approach somebody who is the chief exec of a national organisation that promotes preventing re-offending and who says: 'no, I'm not gonna participate in that', something that promotes ex-offenders and let's them have there own movement. You know it's at all levels. Everybody's got to take this on board.

> R: anything else?

> Just, whether co-production can work or not you still have to do it. Just because something, just because you think something is gonna be unachievable, have so many obstacles, doors slammed, that's not a reason not to do it. Whatever you do you will make an impact somewhere.

> Someone said this to me and it has stayed with me: when people not used to listening [listen] to people not used to talking then real change can begin.

These are important words. They assert that those who have come through the justice system have much to contribute to our developing understanding of what co-production is, why it matters, what it requires and how we might progress it in the justice context. We will return to the many insights and implications that emerge from

this narrative in the discussion that follows in part four. For now, the principal challenge of this narrative is perhaps its call to listen - that is, to create space within justice policy, practice and research in which service users can speak and find voice and in which professional actors can hear. This, in A's view, is where real change begins.

B

B is a white Scottish woman aged 32 years. She lives alone and maintains close relationships with her family. B is employed full-time as a receptionist in a local hotel and is a member of PP?PF. In 2007 B was convicted of a schedule one offence and was sentenced to four years imprisonment. B completed her sentence in 2009 (having served two years) and completed her licence in June 2012. B has no other convictions.

Biography

B's biographical story first emerged in the correspondence leading up to the research conversation.   In response to my email inviting participation in the inquiry, B introduced herself as follows:

> I made a mistake and went to jail. It totally changed me. Got qualifications[,] closer to my family, have been home for two years and have been in my job two years next month. I am a receptionist in a hotel which I love. I never had a lot of confidence. I just want to help people who were in my situation.
>
> You can get a second chance.

This concise introduction sets the stage for the stories that followed. B led the conversation from the outset and her biographical story – or what she chose to tell of it – emerged in bursts and fragments. The emphasis was on the present and on B's accomplishments with little looking back.

The research conversation opened with B talking excitedly about her job, her home and her new start – all with an immense sense of pride. In doing so, B located herself immediately and assertively within her present and within what she has achieved. This is contrasted momentarily with her pre-offence experience within an abusive relationship. However, the explicit focus of this opening story – like most of the stories

that follow - is not what (or where) B has been, but what she has become. B's opening and central story then is one of agency and accomplishment, of taking responsibility, and of making good. As B explains proposing that we meet at her home: 'I am so proud of how much I have achieved so like to show it off'.

Discussing her prison experience, B recounts her fast track progression through the various units of the prison; her positive, respectful and trusting relationships with prison staff: 'Yes, I have to say the officers are great ... it wasn't like the stereotypes'; and her co-productive and mutually affirming relationships with fellow prisoners. Within these stories B is quick to recognise the aids and supports in her journey (including the support of family and friends, prison staff and tutors, and employers 'willing to give you a chance'), but the principal actor in this story is indisputably B:

> Not everybody is as, looks at prison as I did. I'm not going to say that I loved it but I took a lot out of it. I became close to my family. I actually liked myself after coming out of an abusive relationship, I got qualifications. I was determined to get a job.

> Do you know what? I kind of thought, well for the two years I could have sat and looked at the walls, or I could have - do you know what, it's not gonna go any quicker - or I can do something about it. Because some people ... there was a girl I met. She got ten years and I was like: 'how long have you done?' (thinking eight or something). 'Yeah, I've done thirteen. I keep misbehaving so they keep putting time on'. I think: Oh my God, do you want to get out?

> ... The fact that I came out and within six weeks I got a job. And I didn't just wait for [area] city council to find me a flat. I got off my backside. I joined a housing association. I bid for this myself. I got all the - yes I got a small grant and I put it towards money for my washing machine, but I got everything else myself. Yes I got this sofa from a charity, but everything else I did myself.

I think it helps that I had a really good family. But, and I think I was also really determined. You know I'd been in a bad relationship and I thought: no, I am gonna make a fresh start.

… I think because, I was so focussed on like doing as much as possible. If I wasn't, like determined to do things, like education and all that, [I] can see how damaging it would be sitting in a room all day, a cell.

… I'm really proud of myself.

Entwined with this agency/accomplishment narrative is B's observation that she is 'different' from most prisoners. In her opening story B moves abruptly from showing and telling of her pride in what she has achieved to contrasting her experience with that of others who have had less positive post-release experiences. This is a recurring juxtaposition and tension within B's narrative. On the one hand B is keen to show what can be accomplished and overcome through personal agency and determination; yet her insight into the experiences and obstacles faced by others requires her to recognise that people's starting points and thus opportunities, are not equal. This observed tension gives rise to the third and final theme of B's narrative: the need for more support.   These three themes intersect and jar throughout B's narrative:

… and my kitchen's quite quirky … and my living room, and my bedroom and …and I just love it. And I'm just like, it just goes to show.   But I, cos I've met people, and I've known people, and I've bumped into them in town in and they're like: 'aw, I'm still waiting to get my methadone'. And I'm like: 'but if they know you're coming out (cos obviously I wasn't on drugs) but if they know you're coming out do you not get it straight away?'

... I just think there could be more, I don't know, I definitely think there could be something to help people. Because, even people who are not on drugs, when you come out - I said to my social worker, there is no way I could have waited until August to get a job. And she's like: 'but you managed to get a job'. I was like: 'I know, but some people need help'. Some people don't know to go

to the job centre and look in the paper. Some people don't know. I mean, to wait from February to August[24] - it may not seem long but it's a long time to sit in a flat all day.

They do try when you're inside ... we used to do life skills courses. And I, cos I was classed as a 'good' prisoner shall we say, I used to help with this. And there were some girls that were due to get out –there was one girl and she'd been in for maybe eight years this girl. And I was like: right, so. But she didn't even know how to make (she came in when she was sixteen) she didn't even know how to make a bit toast. She didn't know how to put the washing machine on, really simple things. She hadn't done literally nothing for eight years.

Or some of the things that I used to hear: a girl would come to the library. You were only ever meant to take out one book and this girl would say: 'B, can I take out two books?' 'Eh, yes, but why?' 'Well am out in three weeks' time and it's a set. And all my mum, my dad, my sisters they're all on drugs an', if I go home and start reading they'll make fun of me'.

And I just thought: aw, God?

Or you would hear a girl saying: right I want to go home and am gonna go home and make a fresh start and am gonna go to college. But, they can't, because like, their family and friends, they're all like.

For B, these observations and insights were new - produced through her experience and opportunity of getting alongside other prisoners and hearing their stories.

B's story emerges then as a collection of positive, poignant and amusing anecdotes. Assembled together they tell the story of B's agentic and atypical pathway into, through, and from prison. They are mostly positive, progressive and optimistic stories.

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[24] B is referring here to the time lapse between her registering for support with employment and accessing an initial appointment.

But they are also moral stories: stories of what can be accomplished when you get, and take, a 'second chance; when you are a 'good prisoner'; when you are 'really determined'; when you are supported; and, perhaps most importantly, when you are resourced.

Defining co-production

R: What does co-production mean to you?

B: Honestly, I wasn't really sure what it meant. I think it means like the community helping, but I'm not really sure, I hadn't heard of it before.

It was clear from the above and related exchanges that the term co-production meant little to B. It was not a term B had met or considered in her justice experience. Yet, both the concept and practice of co-production is at least emergent in B's story, progression and success. As outlined, B's story is a story of individual progression and accomplishment; accomplishments achieved as a result of the active, participatory and co-productive approach adopted by B in progressing her sentence, her resettlement and, ultimately, her life. While then the terminology of co-production meant little to B, the concept and practice of co-production emerges as a transformative feature of her justice experience. The arising questions then are: how and why did it come to be so? What made it possible? What made it work?

Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence

B's story reveals experience of co-production in two key areas. Firstly, and significantly, co-production occurs in B's progression of her sentence, rehabilitation and resettlement. Secondly, co-production occurs in B's activity to support and help others within the prison. In unpacking the dynamics of B's co-productive activity it was

my intention to explore B's experience of co-production in these areas separately. However, as will be evident, the two are clearly connected.

One of the key messages to emerge from B's narrative is that co-production is possible within a justice sentence, and more specifically, within the prison environment. Certainly, it is a particular and qualified form of co-production: B does not, for example, describe relationships with prison staff where both parties are on an 'equal footing' or 'without hierarchy'. Rather, she describes positive, humane and reciprocal relationships that take place within clearly defined roles and boundaries (more of which below). Nonetheless, at the core of B's narrative is a story of what B has accomplished through, and not in spite of, her justice experience.

Why co-produce?

B's reasons for co-producing emerge insouciantly and sometimes forcefully from her narrative. They emerge mostly unprompted and often seem as obvious and straightforward to B as the reasons for not co-producing seem baffling. Consider again B's account of her straightforward yet atypical progression through the justice system:

> Do you know what? I kind of thought - well for the two years I could have sat and looked at the walls, or I could have - do you know what, it's not gonna go any quicker - or I can do something about it. Because some people - it's when you speak to people. There was a girl I met. She got ten years and I was like: 'how long have you done?' thinking maybe eight or something. She was like: 'Yeah, I've done thirteen. I keep misbehaving so they keep putting time on'. I think: oh my God, do you want to get out?

The above introduces three inter-related reasons for co-producing, that of: opportunity, capacity and reward. Firstly, there is a sense that B co-produces, that is: 'do[es] something about it' because there is opportunity to do so. For B the prospect of two years imprisonment presents itself as a space, 'time to think', 'a second chance'

and an opportunity to 'make a fresh start'. Picking this up later in the conversation B asserts:

> It helps that I had a really good family, but I was also really determined. I had come out of a bad relationship and I thought: no, I am gonna make a fresh start.

Secondly, the above excerpt introduces what I would refer to as B's normative capacity for co-production. Throughout the narrative B's co-productive 'stance' emerges as a natural, logical and moral response to the situation she finds herself in. It appears to be intrinsically bound up in her identity, in her view of the world, and in the life experiences that have brought her to this point. This is further revealed in B's frequent contrasting of her experience and progression with that of others. The message emerging from these reflections is that B co-produces because it is natural and possible to do so when you possess the requisite capacities and supports. In B's case: when you possess basic life skills, when you are not drug dependent, when your mental health is intact, when you can hold down a job, when you can maintain relationships, and when you have support from family and friends. In essence, when you are 'lucky' enough not to share the traits, characteristics and backgrounds of many persistent offenders.

Finally, the above excerpt reveals instrumental reasons for co-producing, that is recognition of and responsiveness to the incentives and disincentives that exists in relation to co-production. Trying to make sense of a fellow prisoner's failure to progress B wonders if she wants to get out. For B, co-production - whether in the form of compliance, co-operation, co-production of her own sentence, or co-productive activity to help others - was the recognised means to progression, both within and beyond the prison. On entry to the prison it was the means by which she could 'make a fresh start' following an abusive relationship. It was the means by which she survived and progressed from the chaotic, coercive and tightly controlled admissions block to the freedoms, safety and rewards of the open community. It was the means by which she secured the trust and respect of fellow prisoners and officers, and

through which she recovered esteem, capacity and confidence. And it was the means through which she gained qualifications, secured various positions of employment, secured early release and completed her licence. B chose to co-produce not simply because she ought to, or because she could, but because she recognised, valued and experienced the rewards of doing so.

The above discussion centres mostly on B's reasons for co-producing in respect of her own sentence and resettlement. However, as outlined, B's narrative also provides numerous examples of B working directly with fellow prisoners and/or prison staff to help others, as well as one or two examples of co-production as a citizen. B's reasons for co-producing in this sphere echo those already outlined, identified as: opportunity, capacity, and reward. However, discussing her co-productive activity as a 'provider of services', B identifies a further reason for co-producing, that of helping.

Like others, B's motivation for helping is located initially in her acquired insight into the multiple obstacles faced by those caught up in the system, and in her appraisal that more, accessible and relevant 'help' is needed:

> ... I just think there could be more, I don't know, I definitely think there could be something to help people.

> … I think because - I was quite lucky, [but] some people did have a bad time in prison. I would like people, things, to be in place so there is more support for people. And I would like there to be more courses in prison. So if you make a mistake your life is not over. You know, I came out and I've got a good job. I would just like more support for people - easier to get flats, and like Apex, and just different things like that. Cos some people haven't got any friends or any people. And like their social worker is like really busy so they can't always give them all the attention, does that make sense?

However, B also discovers the process of helping to be a reciprocal and rewarding process. Helping others helps B recover the esteem, capacity and confidence the she needs to move forward (capital eroded through her abusive experiences leading up to

the offence and through the criminal justice process that followed that). Consider the following excerpts:

> … because it was a child, at first I got a hard time in prison. But then, a few people were like: B, you've helped us. Cos like I was helping them with their reading, just basic stuff. And they were like: you're not a horrible person. …They said: I believe you. And they were like: we're really sorry B. We think that you are ace. And that was it. Still one or two who didn't like me but.

Discussing the relationship between helping others and her journey of progression:

> I felt that it, it helped me to realise that I wasn't a waste of space. I could give something back. I could do something to help people. And even just helping somebody do a shop sheet or write a letter, you were like, do you know what? You *can* help. Your first pass is helping them but you are helping yourself as well in a funny sort of way. …It was little things.

Aids and obstacles

There is a natural overlap between the above-discussed reasons for co-producing and the identified aids in that process. As the above indicates, co-production is aided when there is recognisable opportunity, capacity and reward for co-production. However B's story highlights another important aid – the role of relationships.   B's story of co-production and progression is littered with references to positive, humane, respectful, supportive and affirming encounters and relationships with others – spanning relationships with prison staff, fellow prisoners, family, friends, employers and others. B describes the esteem, affirmation, hope and confidence derived from these relationships (both then and now), and the relationship between this affirmation, esteem and confidence and her capacity to co-produce:

Describing an early encounter with a prison officer, B recalls:

> I remember one night when I was in Bruce [admissions block], a really cold night. Because of my asthma I need two thick pillows. I went out of my room

… I was a bit scared. I was like: I wonder if I could have another pillow. And it was like: no problem.   … It wasn't at all like the stereotypes.

Recalling the progression of those relationships:

… and sometimes I would come back [to the admissions block] and they [officers] would be like: 'Oh hello B, it's nice to see you' … And they would be like: 'B, have you got a few minutes? I need a favour. I need you to come and visit [another prisoner], have a wee talk to her'.

B describes similarly affirming (and affecting) relationships with people outside of the prison. In respect of her family:

They were amazing. They used to come, write me letters twice a week. They would come down once a month, my brother and his wife, my other friend. Yes, absolutely. And some [people] don't have anyone to phone. It makes all the difference.

In respect of her employer:

You hear people saying: 'oh but B, once you've been a con … . And people were like: and you'll never get a job wi' a criminal record. And I was just like: no. And I remember going for a job and they're like: and you've got a criminal record? And I said: Yes, I'm just out of jail. But they said: you know what, you were honest, and your personality shone through, you'll be great on reception.

… and do you know what, my boss, everyone, everyone has been really good

Lastly, describing her first experience at a PP?PF event:

I was like, not going to say nothing.   … And there was someone that I was very impressed with and she was very impressed with me. And she asked me what differences I would make … And she was like: 'oh that's really good'. And I was like: 'my God, you're listening to me and I'm an ex-con'. It gives you such a buzz … it's good to know that people want to hear what prisoners have to say.

However, as B recognises, the role of relationships can cut both ways. On more than one occasion B refers to the value of her 'apartness' from others within the prison:

> And because I didn't know anybody else, if that makes sense. I'm not like one of these people who've like been in [prison], and all my friends and all my family. So I didn't really know anybody else there. Which was a good thing, so I didn't have any one else who could pull me back.

Again, there is a sense in the above that B's ability to form positive and co-productive relationships depends partly on her apartness from her fellow prisoners. The tension here is not simply that B is an atypical prisoner, it is that her co-productive opportunity and success appears to depend, at least partly, on that atypicality. Reflecting on the differences in *her* relationships with prison staff and those experienced by others, B concludes: 'If you give them respect they give you respect. If you've been taught like that'. For B affording respect to those in authority is a relatively straightforward process. For others it is a requirement that is entirely at odds with the experiences that have brought them into the justice system.

Obstacles

Rarely does B give voice to the obstacles, tensions or struggles associated with her co-productive journey. As outlined, hers is a positive story: a story of pride and accomplishment and of overcoming the odds. In this story (or at least the telling of it) the occasionally apparent obstacles and tensions are either silenced or quickly passed over. For example, recalling briefly the pain of the first six months of her sentence B offers only: 'for a good six months people were really horrible. Looking back it was ridiculous. It was horrible', before moving quickly on to discuss the struggles of a fellow prisoner. Similarly, connecting and at once disconnecting to a question about shame, B begins to share an experience but quickly trails off with the words: 'blah de blah'. The message that emerges through the conversation is that, having physically and psychologically moved on from the pain and shame of her criminal justice experience, B is reluctant to go back.

Briefly, B touches on the issue of security as an obstacle to her ability to engage in peer forms of co-production:

> Was going to train to be a listener. Was going to do it but I was going out to the houses (open prison). Couldn't come back in. [I] had to choose between the two, it was a security issue.

This tension between personal progression and co-production (in the justice context) also surfaces in B's brief discussion of her relationship to co-production as a member of PP?PF. Again, while B expresses a clear desire to use her experience to help others involved in the system, she communicates an equally clear desire - and perhaps need - to move on from that system. Recalling her first and last attendance at a PP?PF event (attended 18 months earlier whilst still on licence), B reflects:

> I was like, my God you're listening to me and I'm an ex-con. It gives you such a buzz. I haven't been to another one since.

Relatedly, reflecting on her developing (and arguably ambivalent) motivation and capacity for co-production post release, B recalls:

> When I first came out if I was asked to talk about my experience – never, never in a month of Sundays.
>
> R: Why?
>
> Shame, I just wanted to run from it. I didn't want to talk about it.

As the telling of this story indicates, now, three years on, B is willing and able to talk about her justice experience – a result of being 'happy now, … much stronger, … proud of myself'. Yet, B's telling of that story suggests that co-production, as a citizen, remains a tricky and ambivalent process.

Mostly, B gives voice to the obstacles and tensions of co-production through her frequent reference to others. In these stories the identified obstacles to co-production (and/or self-help) in the justice context revolve repeatedly around: the

personal, familial and social problems experienced by those around her, the absence of relevant and timely support in the face of these obstacles, the learned helplessness associated with the prison regime, and the absence of relevant or recognisable opportunity or reward.

Experience of co-production as a citizen

Beyond her initial attendance at PP?PF's first consultation event for women, and her participation in this inquiry, B has not been involved in other co-productive activity in the justice context. This is perhaps about time and distance - B works full time and lives outside of PP?PF's main area of activity.   Though, as discussed it also appeared to be about the challenge and cost of co-production in a context that you want and/or need to move on from.

C

C is a white Scottish-Irish male, aged 46 years. He lives with his wife and seven children. Prior to his conviction C worked as an accountant. In 2012 C was sentenced to six months imprisonment for embezzlement. C completed his sentence in December 2012. He is an active member of PP?PF and is actively seeking paid employment.

Biography

> I was one of these fortunates - or unfortunates - in [home town]. I went straight from school to university. I was somebody who skived through school; was a bit, a bit of a tear away but no enough to get into serious trouble. So you go to university, you come oot, there's no work in the area. And, I got involved with this campaign – at the time we were trying to get an enterprise zone status for [home town]. Somebody was haranguing me [to do it]. … And it was a product of Thatcherism at the time, it was a product of the social environment, but it was also politics and particularly on my part. I was very politically aware, even at uni[versity]; I got involved in various things and that continued when I left. And I spent a lot of time just messing aboot as an activist, em doing a lot of political things, which was fun. And then … I went to college for a bit - just because it was better than going for a job, cos at the time I was single, living myself, nae responsibility, so I could pick and choose and dae what I want. So went to college for a bit, did a course in multi-media computing…. Went back to college again - for an HNC in Quality Assurance of all things … still being very active doing other things. And then, as usual, you meet a woman and then you start to think: I'd better get a job somewhere. So started looking for work. Got a job wi' a company and the first day in there I managed to secure 60% funding for my wages plus all training costs in the first two years. They had no

idea what that was aboot. That came out of the blue for them. But I had set it all up and got it running, just because of previous involvement in stuff. Worked with them for about fifteen years, and then awarded myself a pay rise which the boss didn't approve of and ended up in jail for it. That's essentially it. But in the process, aw through that, became a qualified accountant. Managed to get an MBA from Oxford Brooks Uni[versity] and, and also got a certificate in International Financial Reporting Standards – which sounds a lot more impressive than it wis.

If you are looking at the offence itself there's a triad of reasons why people commit blue collar crime: there's need, there's opportunity and there's the ability to rationalise your behaviour. Need – hmm, there's seven weans [children] so you can always use a few more pounds. Opportunity – I was controlling quite literally millions of pounds on any one day ... and the rationale for behaviour: well, if [he] can steal money from his own company so can I. If he's gonna short change me ... not pay me the going rate. … So, all these rationale thoughts at the time which then play out to be quite fundamentally wrong. And you think, oh God?

C goes on to recount the events following his offence including his eventual arrest, conviction and sentence. In doing so he draws upon a mixture of description, anecdote and analysis, each told with a degree of detachment and wry humour. In the main, C describes a managerial, distancing and disappointing regime, dominated by depersonalised, prison-centred and tick box processes (more of which below). Within this C very occasionally acknowledges the trauma of his experience for himself and his family:

…So from there you go straight to jail. Do not pass go. Into Low Moss [prison], which was a bit of a culture shock. …

It's a new jail, there's nae regime in it, nae overall strategic management control. I think the jail's running them as opposed to them running the jail. I

say that coming from an MBA background. I can sit and look at processes and systems, inputs, outputs; what's the gap between expectation and what's being delivered? And there's a lot of problems which are beyond the teething problems at the moment. They talk a very good game at Low Moss but they don't implement it.

…When I lost the job, the hardest things I had to ever dae was tell the wife what I'd been up tae and what was going on. That was hard. That was mair o a trauma than anything. And she was gutted for ages. Don't think she's quite got over it yet, she hasnae. But that's mair to dae wi' the prison side, than it is mair to dae with what I was up to. … I wasnae the one being punished. Sending me to jail had absolutely no effect. I'm nae different noo. Other than I've got a bit of experience of what the inside of the jail's like.

A recurring theme within C's narrative is the experience of the justice system as a passive, distancing and meaningless process. It is perhaps not surprising then that, post-conviction, C's story turns for the good at the point at which he reclaims and regains agency. Coincidentally or not this is the same point at which C discovers PP?PF:

At the time when I got out - Dec 12th, just before Christmas - I was on the tag for two weeks so you are very restricted in what you can and cannot do with that thing on. It was heid up your arse time. Your back into it, you've been away, some of the weans didnae know where I was. … So it was just trying to get back into the swing o' it. And you were really going through the motions to an extent, you were'nae truly involved wi' anything for that first month or so. Up to the point, on the 5th of Janurary - that's my birthday - I decided: right, fuck this, need tae dae something. I've had enough fucking time feeling sorry for myself, had four months inside doing that. Right, what can I dae? Right, I remember, the murderer, promised him I'd get him to sell his art work. … I'll deal with that first, I'll get prisoners in Scotland selling their art work. … And I started to read up a lot of stuff about the criminal justice system, volunteering,

looking for volunteering opportunities. A lot of it was English based, London, Leeds or whatever. No really a lot of opportunity in Scotland and what there wis you sort of got put off by the bureaucracy, the CRB checks, everything like that. … And then, on the 5th of January, in the Glasgow Herald there was a report on some aspect where Labour says they're all bastards; Tory's agree; Lib Dems, who cares what they say. And at the bottom there is this guy [PP?PF co-ordinator (E)] talking a bit of sense.   … Sent [E] and email and that's, that's how I got into it.

Defining co-production

In common with others, at the point of our initial contact the term co-production meant little to C. The concept however was familiar:

Co-production?, the terminology was new to me, the concept was something I had experienced maybe over 20 years going back where in the dark distant past I was involved in a youth action project and we were very much people who designed our programmes in conjunction with young people. Because we were relatively young ourselves - I was early twenties - we actually took on board the youth action model fully and we got criticised and harangued and harassed, by people in social work and community education, for doing certain things which they didn't like.

… It is really about what we were practicing twenty plus years ago. It's a genuine attempt at equality in terms of designing, delivering, producing services. The fact that it's taken them twenty years to catch on to what we were doing in the youth action project? The Christie Commission was a big push on it. Redefined how public services should be delivered when fiscal resources are under pressure. It's a political question, it's a resource allocation question, and for it to be efficient and effective you need to involve users and the people who are going to be taking part of the service in actually designing it

and actually delivering it. Many examples where it works and works well but also many examples where the tag co-production is used and it is treated in a very tokenistic manner.

It involves ideals, challenging. That's the danger for something like co-production. It becomes the buzz word. It becomes the issue we are looking at at this time of the year because that's what the politicians want us to do. It comes doon fae on high. ... And it's the cost thing which is the main driver at the moment in an age of austerity. But, I would slightly turn that on its head and say you really should be involving folk at as early a stage as you can. ... If you truly involve people and don't patronise people or do it in a tokenistic manner you'll get a far better response and a far better service that meets the need of communities than it does meet the needs of the grant application form, or the single outcome agreement that the council operates to.

As the above reveals, C's engagement with co-production starts from a clear awareness of the appeal and challenge of co-production in the current climate. Discussing co-production in the particular context of criminal justice the challenge runs deeper - causing C to question the possibility of co-production between 'offenders' and statutory providers:

To me there is a big disconnect between theory and practice. Theoretically co-production means to co-plan, co-do, co-evaluate. In the system there's not much opportunity for planning or getting involved in your sentence. In fact the exact opposite is the case. SER recommendations are dictated by professionals or service needs, no attention was given to my views. You are on the bottom rung. In prison the purpose of the sentence is to put you in your place - as an 'offender'.

... Co-production for offenders is quite difficult to achieve given the power relationship between the providers – the prison service, and the service users –

prisoners. Security and incarceration is the overwhelming concern and all other issues are subject to that.

… cannie involve prisoners cos that would be political suicide.

… if you were to suggest that prisoners should be involved in the running of the jail they would laugh you all the way to a headline in the Daily Mail.

For C the opportunity for co-production sits instead with 'ex-offenders', with people who have 'crossed the threshold':

But there are inroads; there is scope for it in organisations like PP?PF. … For some ex-offenders their experience of the system can lead them to participating in things that are designed to try to improve the system. That is one of the fundamental driving forces behind PP?PF. We are using our collective experience of the system - social capital, knowledge, asset, or any other bullshit bingo term - to try to make improvements to the system. It is perhaps indicative of the progress made thus far by PP?PF that they were invited along to the SPS operational management group meeting looking at the asset based approach. … It is also perhaps indicative of a new ethos that is being progressed within the SPS itself. I would argue that this is as far as the SPS might want to go at this point in a political sense. Whilst it might be acceptable for the service to engage with ex-prisoners, the step whereby it could be construed that prisoners are engaged and helping to run prisons is a Daily Mail headline that no one interested in criminal justice wants to think about.

Though circumspect regarding the possibilities of co-production within the justice context, for C the meaning and mechanisms of co-production remain clear:

It doesnae matter what level you are doing it on or what system you are involved wi', it's about giving people a voice who would not otherwise have that say. Co-production formalises it and talks about equality, getting out of

the silo mentality. When you are in the public sector there is a hell of a lot of empires and silos being constructed and inherited in some cases, and co-production tries to smash through that by saying: first step is let's recognise we are equals.

Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence

As indicated, C does not recall his prison experience in co-productive terms.   So far was C's experience of prison from his understanding of co-production that he struggled to imagine the possibility of co-production in the prison context. Rather, C described various experiences that led him to conclude that the overriding purpose of prison is security: 'keep[ing] you on that side of the wall'; and punishment, through humiliation: 'to put you in your place, as an offender'.   In C's view the prison's espoused rehabilitative and co-productive effort was entirely theoretical and thus 'on the ground … a load o' pish'. This perception is illuminated in the following accounts (the first of which describes C's booking in process). Here we observe some of the reasons why someone, for whom co-production (pre and post sentence) is a relatively normal activity, might in the prison setting choose not to co-produce:

> Eight months was my sentence, got a third off for pleading guilty. Technically I could have been out in ten weeks. Didnae happen because I'm a -. Getting booked in the guy [booking-in officer] says: 'nationality?' And I of course went: 'well, technically I'm Irish, ha ha'.   And the guy went: 'in this jail you are either British or you're fuck all'.   [C:] 'Oh is that right? Well put me down as Irish then you prick'.   Again back up politics, history - so that put me in as a foreign national which meant that I wasn't entitled to the home detention curfew tag … it kept me in for another eight weeks.

Describing his experience of the prison's positive impact programme:

The whole Positive Impact … it was a tick box process. It was led by prison officers who I don't think had any real insight or understanding or empathy wi' what folk were going through. It was tick box: here, you've done this course, you've says you're no gonna do drugs again, that's excellent, on you go back to your cell. An' the, the boys who – I used to work with them twenty years ago and they would tell you: 'social workers are fucking idiots. You tell them what they want to hear and they believe you'. And it was the same translated twenty years later into Low Moss.

Lots of things like that were quite entertaining. It was an interesting thing to see first-hand how it's meant to work and how it disnae.

Yet, within this dominating narrative C describes a few counter experiences which, though not necessarily co-productive, reveal the threads and potential of a co-productive relationship. Describing the first of these encounters:

R: So were there any co-productive experiences within the prison?

C: None. No, no that's not true. Certainly within the educational context … you ha[d] the choice of computing or art or social studies. … The social studies thing, the guy who took that was very much, em, a politically aware like-minded soul; who didnae stick to any agenda as such but he let a free ranging discussion go back and forward. Now, in my mind it was very productive. A lot of the time it was dictated by things that we said, or other people in the room said, not necessarily him. But it looked at a lot of people's offending behaviour, particularly some of the younger boys who were starting out on their career of crime. There was a lot of good stuff done in that environment, where behaviours were challenged. Not in a threatening or overbearing or tick box manner. But the agenda was pushed by the person who was talking at the time, who says as much or as little as they wanted to and other folk would comment on it. Now in terms of a group work programme that social studies group was phenomenally successful I would argue in terms of getting folk to think about

what they'd done and why they did it. But he got punted. He, his job was going in January because he was not meeting his key performance indicators for getting assessments through. Then it got to the stage where he was forced into trying to get folk to do modules and write stuff for him.

R: it sounds like he was engaging with you as people?

Exactly. He seen beyond, em, the offender. But still being aware of where we were and trying to make a difference to people. That was really the only bit that was genuinely co-productive; because of the attitude of the person who took it on board that there but for the grace of God I could be sitting on the wrong side of that table.

C offers two other examples of officers treating him as a human being; treatment that involved: 'a bit of banter', 'humour' and 'respect', and that in turn invited and encouraged engagement, co-operation and respect on the part of the person completing the sentence. Reflecting on these experiences C observes:

But that's where it works, where they treat you as someone that's human. You cross the prison threshold and you become a number. You are, people joke about it. You do become another face, another cog in the wheel. But there are some officers who can make a difference and it's a discernable difference.

Yet, as C goes on to make clear, co-production needs more than the occasional offer of humane treatment, it also requires a level of trust and a sense that it is safe to respond and co-operate (that is, co-produce). Describing an encounter with one of the officers who made a 'discernible difference', C recalls:

There was one day one of the visionaries[25] on the wing says to me: 'what's up with you, you don't look too happy today?' And you know that way you think: I'm no happy. It's my wedding anniversary and I'm stuck in here. But I'm no

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[25] Visionary was the term used by C to describe prison officers who 'treat you like a human being'.

gonna tell you that cos you might say it to somebody else that will use that against me. So you just laugh it off. But I was feeling like shit and she picked up on that. Now that's the sort of folk you think: good.

R: did you respond or were you too self-protecting?

Very much self-protecting but also very much aware that if she mentioned it to someone else who was not a visionary in that sense then they would come back at you.

R: so even when an officer who is trying to work in a more just way or a more humane way …?

There is still an us and them attitude - to keep yourself safe. And that again is the barrier to co-production within the jail between prisoners and officers.

Notwithstanding C's self-protecting stance within the prison setting, we can observe within the above both motivation and capacity for co-production when the conditions are conducive to that. For C this motivation was linked less to a desire to progress through the system - this appears to require ability to respect and trust the system; rather it comes from a basic need for, and responsiveness to, humane interaction. Discussing his motivation for the social studies group:

It gets you out of yourself, it gets you thinking, it gets you talking. And you're no sitting there kicking everything over in your mind. And behind that door that is all you can dae and the most trivial issue can bounce around and knock ninety shades of hell out you.

Aids and Obstacles

The aids and obstacles to co-production within C's sentence are mostly evident in the above. For C what matters is being treated as a human being and not as an offender; finding a 'likeminded soul'; humility and empathy on the part of workers; and opportunities for choice, participation, positive interaction, shared ownership and joint

decision making – even when this occurs within the obvious constraints of a sentence. For C the obstacles to co-production are 'everywhere'. They exist the prison's priorities - experienced as security, punishment and humiliation, and in the regime and role constraints that follow from that. They exist in the gap between service aspiration and operation, and in the absence of expectation and trust on the part of those sentenced:

> I think the jail's running them as opposed to them running the jail … They talk a very good game but they don't implement it.

> … even people who aren't politically aware know that it's a bit of a tokenistic gesture and that they're at it. They are just trying to make their life easier and keep their bosses happy. If you could get genuine engagement - and by that I mean people recognising that they are in prison but [with] the perception of prison before they go there that it could be a positive place. This is where the title PP?PF comes from, it doesnae necessarily have to be a bad experience.

> … [There are] numerous limiting forces at play within the prison service. One it's security, two it's politics, three it's public opinion. They are the main limiters because as much as you want to work with prisoners and engage with them and treat them as humans - I would say that to treat them like humans or give them something to do, or let them buy sweets or crisps for themselves, that's a basic human thing - but that can generate such a backlash as we have seen on numerous occasions. It's a problem with wider society. That's the biggest thing, because people don't appreciate what a prison should be about. And I think that's a problem within the prison service as well. There is a lot of 'old school officers' was the phrase that an officer used with me – which basically means he's a complete bastard; and that was the justification: prison is where you come to be punished. Well, no, prison *is* the punishment, you are no in there to be added to it. And that, even that small thing about the punishment aspect, it's: you're there, that's the punishment. Anything else that goes on inside should be about encouraging you back as a human and as a

member of society. That is a debate which needs to be had fully from an informed view point.

Experience of co-production as a citizen

What?

Our focus here is on unpacking the what, why and how of C's co-productive activity as someone who has come through the justice system.   However, it is important to make clear that C's experience of co-production neither starts nor stops with his entry into, or exit from, the criminal justice system. It was present twenty years ago when he was involved in the youth action project, it was present in his employment as an accountant, and it is present in his activity and endeavours post prison. For C then, co-production - that is the constructive process of bringing one's knowledge, experience and skill to a project or task that requires or invites others to do the same - emerges as a fairly normative process. As C observes:

> Can lose sight of it but a lot of that is just the nature of the business you are
> involved with. Don't wake up and think what can I co-produce? I know, I'll co-
> produce breakfast for everybody. It's not something that you think about as
> the defining characteristics of what you are doing. There are a lot of reasons
> that you get involved for and co-production is just a process and a mechanism
> which can be effective in designing something which would deliver the
> objectives that you were trying to achieve.

In the justice context C's opportunity for co-production occurs mostly through his membership of PP?PF. In the relatively short period of his involvement C has responded to evidence calls from the Scottish Government, participated in a Scottish Government focus group on the redesign of community justice services, represented PP?PF at a local Community Justice Authority meeting and acted as a co-researcher on this inquiry. In addition C has participated in PP?PF local meetings and has recently

completed the mentoring training that will enable him (and others) to act as peer mentors within one of Scotland's prisons.

Why?

C's motivation for co-production is clear. As his opening narrative reveals, co-production is the mechanism through which he moves from being a relatively passive recipient of punishment - and the 'heid up your arse' phase that followed that - to someone who, having come through the system, is actively engaged in rebuilding a purposeful life. It is the means by which he is choosing to do something positive (and political) with his prison experience, it is the means by which he is choosing to support others still in the system, and it is a means through which he is hoping to find opportunities for meaningful training and/or employment:

> What am I looking for at the moment? I don't know. Getting involved in a lot of stuff with PP?PF at the moment because a) it fills time; b)it gives you a focus and something to dae; c) ultimately you are hoping that somebody somewhere is gonna take on board - he's come out of there, he's got involved with that, he's a different guy or whatever. And d) it fulfils my needs 'cos I need to be doing something. I cannae no dae stuff. … There is a purpose behind it. It is ultimately to get employment but in a field that I'm happy working in; no in something that I don't really like. So that's, there's a lot of that in it. Self-actualisation, that's what it's about [final sentence spoken in a part-mocking tone].

Other more political reasons include:

> The object behind it is that there will be one less biased person in the world talking about prisoners and offenders.

> … It's my misplaced sense of social justice, which has affected me … drives a lot of the things that I do. It's a political motivation. It's where society is very much skewed in favour of people who have assets and who have this persona of alleged power and it's trying to do what you can for those who are otherwise

deprived of that. And it's possibly worse when you are deprived of that in a prison. …because there's nae votes in being nice to prisoners. There has to be a counter arguement to that.

… I now have had a new experience which, am no gonna just sit and complain aboot or moan about or feel sorry aboot. I'm gonna change it and do something wi' it. And PP?PF allows that outlet at the moment because stuff that they are certainly talking about is the way my mind was going in terms of the support and what was really missing from the whole prison/through care project.

… Ultimately it's got a society benefit … hopefully it all meshes together into very much a positive for everybody involved in it. It should also be good for SPS, recidivism rates should come down and we are hoping that by going doon this mentoring model we can show that if you put money into it and intervene early enough wi' people you can stop the revolving door of prison.

There remain other personal and political reasons that can be added to the above. What is clear is that C brings with him considerable motivation and capacity for co-production in the criminal justice sphere, specifically for co-production that is respectful, meaningful, purposeful and transforming – for all involved. In part, C's investment in co-production speaks to the perceived opportunity and potential that resides there, and to C's capacity to act on that. Equally, it speaks to the struggle, isolation and obstacles that C, like others, faces in achieving respect, re-integration and redemption post prison. As C explains:

You can get to feel a sense of self-worth by participating. You can feel you are doing something positive; you can enhance your employability prospects; you can get a renewed purpose and direction; you can just feel good about something. All of the preceding are personal experiences and are similar to others with whom I have spoken. The personal development in intangibles

should not be underestimated or ignored in evaluating co-productive measures.

The above should not lead to the assumption that co-production is an entirely positive experience for people who have come through the justice system. Though less prominent within C's narrative, there remain traces of the vulnerability and disappointment often associated with co-productive efforts - for example, when C appraises that he has not been heard, respected, understood or acknowledged. Arguably such experiences are part and parcel of participation and joint working within emergent relationships. However, when these obstacles occur amidst the already difficult esteem, identity and life building processes that typically follow penal experiences, they perhaps merit particular consideration.

Aids and Obstacles

Notwithstanding the emergent nature of C's co-productive activity in the justice context, C was clear regarding what mattered in that process. For C 'the most basic and important elements of co-production' are 'equality and voice'. For C, this does not necessarily mean equality of role or even power, but recognition that each person contributing has an *equally valid* perspective – emerging as it does from that person's particular experience of the system. C describes this as: 'a feeling that your view is useful, [that] it matters, and that you can effect change in the process you are examining'. C adds that professionals *and* 'users' need to recognise and become comfortable with this construction.

Relatedly, C highlights the importance of securing credibility and respect within co-productive relationships. Noting PP?PF's dual relationship with those 'caught up' in the regime and those directing and delivering it, C is alert to the challenge of this task. For C the key to maintaining credibility with both parties lies in citizens recognising, having confidence in, and holding firm to the particular experience and contribution they bring. For C, this is the basis for equality and credibility:

There is an equality there because we've been there, seen it and done it. We understand the pressures, the hassles, the upset. Until you're on the wrong side of the door it's really hard to explain what it feels like when the door slams shut at night. It's not something you can ever get from a book. Until you are actually sitting there the first time when it slams on you you don't really understand it, you don't really appreciate it. That's where I think PP?PF scores highly. We've been there, seen it, done it; we've experienced aw that. And we're also people who, having experienced it have decided we're no going back into it. That in itself is a key element. People who have decided that the system's bad and don't want to engage with it again.

The above also reminds us that citizen co-production does not – or should not – require all parties to be saying the same thing or speaking the same language (though some participants experienced a pressure to do so). Rather, co-production requires each person, from their particular position, to feel safe and secure enough to speak, listen and collaborate from those positions and starting points.

C's narrative also underscores the value of personal interest, affirmation and follow-up in successful co-productive relationships. Like other participants, C placed considerable store on positive and meaningful feedback from partners. Similarly, when feedback or follow up was not forthcoming C questioned the value and validity of his contribution. While the ideal of co-production is to secure equality and voice within co-productive relationships – whereupon feedback and affirmation perhaps becomes less critical - it would be naïve to assume these ideals exist already. Rather these are ideals and outcomes progressed in and through successful co-productive relationships.

Identified obstacles to co-production broadly resemble those identified earlier, summarised as: security, politics and public opinion. For C, these powerful and interactive obstacles constrain not only 'what' occurs in co-productive terms but where, why and how it occurs. For example, while C, like others, is finding opportunity to co-produce through PP?PF, opportunities for co-production in other paid and

voluntary capacities remain elusive - on account of C having been an 'offender'. Discussing, for example, a recent job advert for a prison throughcare support worker - within what is described as an 'innovative social partnership model of support' - C notes with dismay: 'the job advert stated that the position would not be suitable for someone with a conviction so it appears that there is a limit on co-production within a prison'. Relatedly, though C's accounts of his co-productive activity with service providers is optimistic and expectant, there remains a clear acknowledgement of the power inequalities that dominate and define these 'opportunities'. This may reflect the emergent nature of co-production in the criminal justice context, but it is possible that as these constraints – and the messages they convey – recur and become familiar citizen motivation and capacity for co-production may also become constrained.

In addition to the above, C drew attention to the issue of 'silos and empire building' within the service delivery sphere, the pressure to perform and 'produce results', and the challenge of working with the system while remaining apart. Discussing the issue of silos:

> The biggest hurdle to overcome, prevalent in many public sector places including criminal justice services, is the attitude of silo and empire building. These little fiefdoms prevent and/or undermine real attempts to collaborate on projects. The professional attitude and fear of being put out of a job can also hold back participation.

Discussing the pressure to perform - and maintain credibility - in the context of PP?PF's peer mentoring contract with a Scottish Prison:

> We are no in a position where we can afford tae fuck up … if they are gonna gi' us their worst reputed offenders who nothing's worked for and say: 'here, deal wi them', then you're up against it from the word go. … If we can keep them out for longer than their normal recidivism period, does that work? … The research has been done on the prevention aspect and how it's viable financially and the benefits, but these are more longer term things.

Finally, discussing the challenge of working with the system while remaining apart:

> Always a danger in an organisation like PP?PF that you end up becoming part of the establishment as it were. … Allows [them] to tick the box: we are co-productive - we've got PP?PF working jointly with us. You become the face of acceptable engagement with users. Danger with that is you become part of the system and you become sucked into. Before you know it you are going to meetings about God knows what … We are setting ourselves up to try and, no to subvert it and undermine it, but to work within that system but still to maintain that separation between the us and them … And the danger with engaging mair and mair with the prison service - which you have to do to a certain extent because if you don't engage you don't get in – [is] they are still in control. They can still dictate what we can and can't do.

At the point of our conversation many of these obstacles were discussed with a commitment to overcoming them, albeit over a prolonged period of time; a conviction that appeared to be supported by the collective capital and hope accessed and produced through PP?PF relationships. Noting the emergent nature of C's relationship to co-production in the justice context it would be valuable to return to this discussion a year or two into his journey and experience of that.

Looking forward: how to progress co-production?

Looking forward, C identifies considerable potential and capacity for co-production amongst those who 'have come through the system and decided they are no going back'. C identifies particular opportunity and potential in the context of peer mentoring (between those who have come through the system and those completing a sentence); in citizen contributions to the design, development, review and evaluation of justice services; and in countering 'the hype and the rhetoric that makes it difficult to do anything positive'.

For C, progressing these opportunities will require: 'a recognition of the social capital accrued by ex-offenders and that they have their part to play in developing new services and approaches', a task that in C's view 'could be less of a political hot potato than involving prisoners directly'. It would also require: 'a fundamental examination around what prison is about':

> There are a number of concerns about key performance indicators and recidivism rates but this does not address a more fundamental issue - what is prison for? Recent publicity and political pronouncements clearly show a lack of understanding about the purpose of prison and are really pandering to the fear agenda. It is a simple concept but the idea that prison and deprivation of liberty *is* the punishment needs to be restated so that the fear agenda and the push for more punitive measures can be countered.

C adds that this will require all of us: prisoners, citizens, professionals and academics to re-engage with prisons and their potential. Discussing this in respect of those 'on the outside':

> Equally, on the outside, academics and others should be willing to engage with the prison service, and particularly the officers, to try to develop a system that benefits all. This is something that the SPS [Scottish Prison Service] chief executive has already hinted is part of his vision for the future.

Further, C identifies a need to develop and defend an approach 'that focuses on the needs of the individual prisoner as opposed to the societal need of keeping them outwith the community'. Interestingly, C follows this by observing that community sentences may provide an interesting test ground for a co-productive approach:

> Further work in co-producing community sentences might be beneficial in achieving the independent verification that they can work in practice, that prevention is better, and that prison for short sentences is really a waste of time, money and effort without a radical re-appraisal of its purpose.

Finally, C proposes that we need to engage more thoroughly with the question:

> Does co-production actually work? There have been a number of examples
> that I have read that tick the correct boxes but I wonder if they were asking the
> right questions and if it was true participation rather than tokenism.

D

D is a white Scottish woman, aged 39 years. She lives with her son and is employed part time as a drug and alcohol support worker. D became involved in the criminal justice system in 2004 following acute mental health and addiction issues. She has endured short periods of incarceration and two probation orders. D started her recovery in 2009.

Biography

D's narrative tells the story that has brought her to co-production. She begins by outlining her journey from having everything in place to everything falling apart. From here D introduces her shaming, disempowering and disorientating experience of justice services, which coincided with and exacerbated her experience of 'falling apart'. From this (almost literal) dead end D describes the genesis and journey of her recovery and the processes central to that. As her narrative reveals, D's commitment to co-production is rooted in each of these life altering experiences.

R: can you tell me a bit about you. Who are you? What's brought you to this point?

I became involved with [PP?PF co-ordinator] quite a while back, just purely by chance. And at that stage of my recovery - because beforehand I had experienced addiction issues and experienced quite acute mental health difficulties; and I had been through the Criminal Justice System in quite a big way. And as you know I was a criminal justice/children and families social worker. That was my role and I had everything, everything seemed to be in place in my life. Although I came from a very difficult kind of childhood, which I was trying to deal with, which left me with a lot of emotional, mental health difficulties, which I tried to just get through them myself. And then all of a

sudden I felt like my whole life had started to completely and utterly disintegrate. And I found myself in a position where I was somewhere where I never thought I would be. And that was losing my job, or actually resigning from my post, from social work. And being very disillusioned about that whole, you know … . But I found that when I started to experience my own mental health difficulties, my behaviour became quite, quite crazy, you know. There was no real explanation for it. I had no explanation for it, clinicians had no explanation for it and, certainly my work at that point had kind of brought me in and says to me: 'Well?', you know. I said: 'well, I'll need to go?' But I had absolutely no idea what was happening to me. And then spent periods of time in psychiatric hospitals, still no knowing what was happening to me. And just basically my life just completely fell apart.

So in 2009 I started a recovery and that recovery became stronger and stronger. But that was after I had been on two probation orders, had been remanded in [prison] - I found myself in the cells probably on a weekly basis, and never knowing what I had done. Never knowing what I was suffering from as well. Of course it was the alcohol; it was the alcohol and drugs. I saw that as something to numb out what had happened you know. But it was a big cycle for me. There was so much that I hadn't dealt with in the past. I had put that all in my wee cupboard, put it all in the back of my head and when I was 32 it all started to come back out.

But, my experience of the two probation orders: I felt ashamed of myself. I felt as if, you know, I just felt absolutely lost. And the whole experience wi' probation was very much judgemental, very much a - particularly because I had been a practicing social worker - you know. I was ashamed of myself and that shame and that guilt was really enforced to me. It could have been different if it was a different probation officer or a different set up but I just found that the culture at that particular point was, never a realisation of, you know, that there's definitely something wrong with you. And the fact that you've been 32

years of age beforehand - I didn't even have a parking ticket. And then all of a sudden I'm finding myself in a complete volcano and all these things are happening and I've got deferred sentences, probation orders, the whole thing. You know, everything was just piling on top of me and I just felt that was an added stress, an added burden and difficulty. Not support.

I can always remember my probation officer. I would go down and - you know the nature of addiction is that you will lie. You know you'll lie 'cos you're in that cycle of complete denial. You know, I would go doon actually half-drunk and would appear at court half-drunk because I needed that substance, I really needed that. But it was always a case of - never a look at why that was happening. It was just - I felt complete condemnation. And also I felt that there was a lot of things that had happened in my past that I had shared with my worker. You know, there was a lot of abuse in my past that I had shared and that was quite graphically put into reports you know with very little sensitivity at all. It seemed as though it was just cut and pasted. Various different workers had access to it and I just thought it was shocking. But at that time I felt that I had to accept that because of the person that I thought I was. And I think that co-production - that was the reason that it has brought me in this direction: I realise, at that particular point, these people are so - there's that big word and I don't like using them - so disempowered. There are no, there's no, very little of: well, wait a wee minute here, there are offences being committed, there's something wrong; that you as a person need treatment. And I think that's the role that a probation officer should be looking at; you know, rather than just having solely to, em, to govern that probation order.

From here D's story emerged in conversation. Key excerpts are assembled below. In telling her story D returns to and elaborates on the theme of being 'lost', 'vulnerable', 'disempowered' and 'at the mercy of the system'. D recognises that she is still working through the effects of these experiences. She is however committed to using these

experiences - and her recovery - for good.   We return to D's story at the point where she explains this commitment:

> Because I lay in a cell and, without being overdramatic - I'm no meaning to sound that way - but I lay in a cell, was completely naked and was demoralised and was lying in my own faeces and was trying to strangle myself with a bra, and that was the point that I came to. That was the point of nothingness that I came to. So basically, if it takes me … I would go to any lengths because I've felt that. And I can look at that other person, that other human being and I can see that person and say: my God, that person, they are in the hell that I was in when I was lying on that floor and I thought somebody come in and shoot me 'cos I cannae take what's going on in my head anymore. So I would run from here to hell for that person because I know it's somebody's son, it's somebody's father, somebody's mother. I don't see - sometimes it's too my detriment because I don't see, you know I'll never be some high flyer in some executive job, it just doesnae interest me. I just see that person needing whatever they need at that particular moment. If I've got it then they'll get it.

Discussing her recovery:

> The only person ever ever tae engage, which I thought was the start o' it - was the start of the thought process in my head - something started to happen and it was a lawyer I was seeing. And I was in the cells this weekend, as I usually was, and at this point there had been quite a hefty [police] assault and I had a lot of bruising all over me and I had a black eye.   … And I had shouted for this lawyer that I had never seen before, and he came down and he sat and he said to me - he actually looked at me as a person for once. Everybody else, you know - again I don't like to be [critical] because everybody does a job, everybody has a part to play - the psychiatrist, doctors, who we would look about in co-production, had very much labelled me as a drunk, as an addict, as an unfit mother; all these big bubbles had been placed round about me. This man had come down and looked at me and asked how I was. And I was quite

taken aback by him. And he said: 'when did all this start to happen? Because I see that you were a professional, you're a mother', and aw these different things about who I was. 'You were somebody's daughter you've obviously been part of a family. What happened? When did it start?' And I knew that he was like on the same wavelength. Something clicked at that point. And then, I had probably about four deferred sentences at that point and a whole load of outstanding as well, and so conversations wi' him, maybe four of five times I had met him and then. Some of the things he used to say to me, now in hindsight when I look back I think: that's quite amazing. He focussed on me as a person and I hadn't seen that for years. As far as I was concerned I was non-existent. So he then kind of brought me into that way of thinking, of: well, you'll be alright and everything will be fine as long as you seek to get better. And then it was purely, well, I just call it a spiritual experience that I had that brought me into, what got me recovery from addiction – which was AA (alcoholics anonymous) and NA (narcotics anonymous). I was brought into that, but that's when the whole process started. But before that I just felt as though the psychiatric side, I was very much just labelled as, at one point I was labelled as a schizophrenic, then I had displacement. I had all sorts of different terms, all within this big big system. But nobody had actually said to me: what, where do you think this is coming from, where do you think this stems from?

R: so little sense of trying to understand together?

No. No. It was: let's section you under the Mental Health Act. We'll detox you and we'll put you back out and we'll see how you cope; but when you try to drive yourself off the Kingston bridge and kill yourself we'll bring you back in again and we'll section you and we'll. You just end up becoming, you become - I only now feel, four and a bit years into my recovery, I only now feel that I can see small glimpses of who I am. I had no idea who I was but now I can see that I'm a good mum and I'm 'worthy' of doing these things. But that whole time in

the system, all that really did was just anonymise me.   … Yeah, you go into hiding. You need to discover 'worth'.

Finally, describing her recovery from the system:

> I'd say 40% of the stuff that had brought me into that way of living was severe trauma. Then by the time I had left the system 60% I would have attributed to having to recover from the system. If they'd got me at 32 and said: oof, wait a wee minute here; you're going off the rails; there's something wrong here. There is something inside her that needs resolved; we need to talk to her about this. Then I wouldnae be left with the 60% that leaves me waking up in the middle of the night and wondering: am I in my own bed? Is my son there? Where is he? Oh my God? And that's a separate recovery in itself, which is underestimated.

D's story speaks to the unjust, traumatic and disorientating life journeys that often bring people into the criminal justice system; and to the unjust, traumatic and disorientating treatment that can follow within the system. At the same time, it speaks to the strength and potential that often resides within individuals, and to the co-productive and transformative potential of humane, responsive, accepting, affirming and – when located within these important parameters – challenging relationships. It is a story of two starkly different responses to the problems that often lead to offending behaviour, and of the outcomes that frequently follow those responses. To suggest that there is much to learn from D's story is to understate the obvious.

Defining co-production

Like other participants, D's relationship to the term co-production was ambivalent and contradictory. As a term - used and populated, often casually, by professionals and politicians - it invited caution and cynicism and was described as an example of the

'bullshit bingo' D frequently observed in public service policy and practice. But in its meaning, and potential, it provided a point of connection with who D is and what she is about. As I came to know D it became apparent that co-production was not just an interesting or innovative approach. It was a deep, normative and costly commitment – it was a way of life.

The above noted gap between service rhetoric and service delivery is evident in D's attempts to define co-production – which typically involve D contrasting what is needed with what is. For D, in the context of justice services, the meaning and value of co-production emerges mostly from its absence, in what does not happen or what ought to happen. Consider, for example, the following:

> But it was always a case of - never a look at why that was happening. It was just - I felt complete condemnation. … And I think that co-production - that was the reason that it has brought me in this direction: I realise, at that particular point, these people are so - there's that big word and I don't like using them - so disempowered. There are no, there's no, very little of: well, wait a wee minute here, there are offences being committed, there's something wrong …

> My ideal view of co-production [is] working together holistically to bring about change and growth in another human being experiencing difficulties in life. Enabling him or her, and their families, in recovery in whatever means possible. Actual[ly], what's really happening [is] enforcement which only serves as authoritative and punitive and in turn stigmatises and fails to promote worth in a person and can deny a chance of healthy recovery and participation.

A few weeks after our conversation D added to this with the following text:

> Just thought I would share a wee observation on how co-production is working my end. Mix up with social work, young guy remanded because of a mix up with a social enquiry report: he appeared on the wrong day. Letter from social work to sheriff, sheriff decides, due to the level of others not attending it's a drain on taxpayer's money. Instead of arranging an appointment there and

then with court social work he chooses to remand him. Lawyer didn't appear
to give a monkeys. System failure from start to finish.

The system failure referred to here is the failure to recognise and respond to those
caught up in the system as legitimate and equal human beings – a recognition that for
D sits at the heart of co-production.   For D then co-production is about the system –
and those within the system - recognising and responding holistically and justly to the
realities of those caught up in the system. It is about building relationships that are
necessarily flexible, responsive, participatory and empowering, and that seek to
understand and facilitate an understanding of what is going on. Sometimes it is about
breaking the rules and going beyond one's perceived duty, particularly when that is
narrowly conceived. It is about getting alongside people: caring and helping. It
involves using the system and its resources for good. And it is about doing no harm
when one has the power and capacity to do so. Alert perhaps to the controversy of this
perspective in the justice context, D reflects:

> A lot of workers that I've spoke to, they'll look at me as if, how dare you say
> that. That's no what we're about. Well of course that's what you're about. It's
> about flexibility. And whether you think it or no, whatever your remit, if that
> person is lying out the game, if they're rattling and rolling because they cannie,
> because they've just had a hit or whatever. There could be a multitude of
> reasons of why they havenae come in to see you. Why don't you go and find
> that out? And they're like: 'well that's not my responsibility; he knows he's got
> to be here'. I know he knows, but?

D's vision of co-production is an ambitious one; some might even say 'airy-fairy' (D's
words). It is also honest and brave, informed as it is by her experience of what she
needed, and what she sees others needing, for progression, desistance and recovery.
Setting this vision out simply, D concludes:

> Basically it's just sitting down with another human being and saying: right,
> you're basically in a bit of a rut the now, let's look at the factors that are

keeping you in. It's like Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Let's look at the things that you need in life. Then you will reach self-actualisation and then you will stop what you are doing. But we need to open it up. But I think workers are frightened to get to the nitty-gritty, they are frightened to talk the same language: how do we get you out of here? How do we create an open and honest relationship where you're able to tell me what's going on? But instead we stick to the formal language.

Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence

Recounting her experiences within the criminal justice system D describes an experience that was condemning, punishing, disempowering, depersonalising and disorientating – resulting in (or contributing to) a process of 'utter and complete' withdrawal and despair.   There is no sense of D as a conscious or co-productive actor. Rather, she emerges as an absent protagonist caught and lost in a 'big cycle', 'a tidal wave', 'a complete volcano':

… and I had been through the criminal justice system in quite a big way.

… and then spent periods of time in psychiatric hospitals, still no knowing what was happening to me.

… I had been on two probation orders. I had been remanded in [prison], I found myself in the cells probably on a weekly basis and never knowing what I had done. Never knowing what I was suffering from as well. Of course it was the alcohol; it was the alcohol and drugs. I saw that as something to numb out what had happened you know. But it was a big cycle for me … I just felt absolutely lost.

… Of course it could have been different … I just found that the culture at that particular point was never a realisation of, you know, that there, that there's definitely something wrong with you. And the fact that you've been 32 years of

age beforehand - I didn't even have a parking ticket. And then all of a sudden I'm finding myself in a complete volcano and all these things are happening and I've got deferred sentences, probation orders the whole thing. You know everything was just piling on top of me.

… you are a very ill person but you are at the mercy of the system. Basically I felt as though I was just going along in a tidal wave and just basically what's gonna happen next?

Cos, for me the thing that kept me going back, the thing that when I woke up out a black out and had remembered where I'd been or what I'd done, all I wanted to do was anaesthetise myself again.

Summing up this experience and its relationship to her journey of recovery:

I just felt as though criminal justice, child care and protection, probably psychiatric services as well - although they probably didnae mean that - they were all more, how do I put it? They were all kind of, rather than me becoming positively conscious of myself, they were all hindrances. Because they were all - criminal justice was a horrific experience which has left me mentally scarred with that whole thing. And kind of, mental health again was very much kind of - you wouldnae have believed it but it's almost quite punishing in itself the mental health system. They were all more kind of, almost to keep me in check by force, by forceful means, never allowing me to see myself as a person. Always heaping - the criminal justice system, social work, child protection - there is all a negative guilt-based approach to that. So how can anybody ever get better if that's? It's almost as if: well you've done wrong, there's a wrong, you've no done that right. Whereas when I started to go to AA, and other things that I've been doing as well, the judgement was taken right out it.

As is clear, D does not recall her experience of the criminal justice system as co-productive. Rather D describes her experience of justice, psychiatric and child protection services as a direct hindrance to her ability to co-produce.

Obstacles

For D the obstacles to co-production in the justice context are everywhere. They exist in the culture, routine practices and priorities of statutory criminal justice. They exist in the mental health, addiction and other life difficulties that people often bring into the system, and they exist in the judgement, shame, despair and denial produced through the clash and interplay of these two cultures. The following excerpts describe the cumulative effect of this clash and interplay:

> It was, it was [just processing]. I can see one of the probation officers - turnkeys. I [was] … right in the middle of my addiction and the traits that came with that. It must have been very difficult to work with me anyway. Because at that point I was in complete denial and what I was trying to do was just duck and dive the whole thing. And that changes you completely cos then you try to go underground with it. … And that was partly due to myself because the system had made me become that person almost. I couldnae possibly open up to somebody that was writing a report to send off to a Sheriff for sentencing.

> Criminal justice services [are] designed basically to, by the very nature of it, just designed to punish. They're designed, you know from the court system to the police, from that whole system there is ... I was actually thinking about it before I came in this morning. Sometimes I'll actually wake up in my bed [feigns panic then relief] and I'll say: thank God that I'm in my bed. Because the system was so traumatic, for somebody dealing with what was going on in my head. And I saw others like me. It was promoting extreme fear - which was already there, and it was just adding to that.

D also draws attention to the unrealistic expectations and requirements of the justice system, to the system's limited capacity and resource for relevant help in the face of an individual's troubled and troubling behaviour, and to the tendency in these circumstances to prioritise achievable and less meaningful targets.

D's narrative also underlines that co-production is not just about service users developing capacity. Recalling a recent interaction with Children and Families services D describes an encounter which, four and a half years into her recovery, she experienced as coercive, stigmatising and shaming.   Here, the obstacles to co-production are systemic. Co-production is difficult - for both parties - because of the imbalance of power that defines the relationship; because of the ever present threat of statutory intervention; and because of the system's narrow and necessary categorisation of D in the context of her case history, her deficits and her risk. Co-production is also difficult because, for D, interacting with the system on these terms remains frightening and traumatic:

> It can become, you're labelled. Your labels stick with you regardless of what people tell you, it always always sticks with you. Choice is taken away from you.   But, see that whole day it made me feel, it brought back feelings of what I was like before. It brought back feelings of inadequacy, of low self-esteem. I felt really tearful. The impact that it had on me was quite unbelievable. That was how that made me feel.

Co-production beyond justice services

Located alongside the above is an experience of co-production that sits mostly outside of criminal justice and statutory services more broadly. D's experience of co-production – referred to as 'my recovery' - is triggered initially by a series of interactions with a lawyer; interactions that in turn trigger D's entry into and recovery through AA and NA.   In this starkly contrasting story D demonstrates that co-production is possible even in the midst of extreme difficulty, disempowerment, disengagement and despair. D's account of the genesis of her recovery (see, p. 184) provides insight into what makes that possible. Here co-production occurs within – or emerges from - the discovery of an empowering relationship; a relationship where there is mutual respect and where there is recognition of and interest in the other as a

person – beyond and before the labels. It occurs where there is affirmation and hope, when there is an interest in understanding how the person came to be where they are, and when that interest prompts and assists the person to understand themselves.   It occurs, perhaps most significantly, when the formerly 'non-existent' person [re-] discovers themselves, and in turn the hope, worth, faith and capacity required to share responsibility and move forward. As D sums up: you need to discover 'worth'.

From here D goes on to describe her experience of co-production in the context of AA and NA. Here co-production takes the form of structured mutual aid – a process through which D embarks on, progresses and sustains her recovery through the mutual assistance and support of a community of people who have been or are going through a similar experience. Below, D articulates what it was about that process that helped her co-produce. It is, in places, a complex response moving as it does between D's experience of AA and her experience of 'the system':

> There is no judgement there. There is a full acceptance of – almost, with addiction and mental health, and then coupled with the shame and guilt of actually having to go through the criminal justice system, which is you know it's a horrific experience in itself, to find yourself within that whole, that whole system, wi' all the other poor souls that are sitting there. Then all of a sudden you are taken into this fellowship where there are doctors, lawyers, nurses, psychiatrists, teachers. It's - you know there are no, it's no the Glasgow green man with the rope round his coat and a bottle hanging out his pocket. There are people there who are telling you that they did that because of; you know you begin to understand what you were suffering from. You begin to understand that, you werenae just the most wretched person in the whole entire world.
>
> But then there's an added bonus because there is a certain level of responsibility that you have to look at yourself. So it gives you that time to understand why that happened. And then there's a payback period as well that you can look back and say: well, the destruction in my life and what happened

within that period of time - I mean times when I would be in the cells from Thursday to Tuesday and my young son had to be uprooted - you know the guilt, I didnae, I didnae do that for a laugh. It allows you then to almost to make amends. And it almost allows that, that every - how would you categorise that - ex-offender, offender, or *person*, who feels that their self-esteem and their self-worth is non-existent, it allows them then to have that grow. And then to say well - cos for me the thing that kept me going back, the thing that when I woke up out of a black out and had remembered where I'd been or what I'd done, all I wanted to do was anaesthetise myself again. The programme then allows you to look at yourself honestly without any bullshit. It's no about: it's his fault or her fault. It's honestly looking at yourself and saying: I was responsible for that. And I need to make sure that the people that I've hurt along the way, I need to say sorry to them. It's like a whole, a healing, therapeutic, non-punishment model that you can then say: well, I know who I am now.   And see the amount of people that I've seen getting better and healing and families healing. It's phenomenal, it really is.

We can extract from the above that what matters in successful co-production (as in progression and recovery) is: full acceptance; the absence of (retributive) punishment; the experience of affirmative community - including the discovery that there are people like you; the existence of therapeutic, nurturing and nourishing relationships; opportunity for self-analysis, forgiveness and growth; and opportunities to take responsibility, pay back and make amends - processes that for D are painful without being punishing.   The above also highlights that these processes are interactive and interdependent. For example, taking responsibility and paying back is possible - and productive - because of the opportunities for growth, esteem and healing (that is the acquisition of capital) that precede and occur alongside it. Similarly, hope is possible – and meaningful – because there are people around you, helping you, who have got better. D goes on to highlight the importance of mutuality, inter-dependence and reciprocity – that is, the experience of simultaneously giving and receiving help; the

importance of other services and resource in progressing and sustaining change, and the importance of on-going opportunities for self-development.

Notwithstanding the significance of these insights, D's narrative also reminds us that the above does not tell the whole story. The following exchange subtly highlights my attempt to pin down 'what works' in co-production, and D's gentle resistance to that:

> R: so for you it was AA and NA?

> D: I would say I was *brought* to that; because at that particular point of, you know, I found that - and this is kind of fellowship jargon but - I felt that no human power was able to relieve me of that and therefore I had to then develop my own faith, and that's what happened to me.

In addition to drawing attention to the spiritual element of co-production here (an aspect that bears further analysis) the above also points to the thoroughly individualised and interactive nature of D's co-productive journey; a process that cannot be reduced to, nor replicated as, a series of 'dos and don'ts'. Though then the above has much to tell us about what matters in co-production it also gently reminds us that meaningful co-production is more than the sum of its parts. Relatedly, D's narrative underscores that co-production is not a panacea for justice services, nor does it work in isolation. As D concludes, referring to the relationship between AA - and its co-productive approach - and her particular journey of recovery: 'it's not the be all and end all; it's the source, if you are willing to accept it'.

Experience of co-production as a citizen

D has considerable experience of co-production as a citizen.   She describes individual, group and collective forms of co-production in the context of her membership of AA, NA and PP?PF; in voluntary and paid roles with the Scottish Association for Mental Health; in her work as a restorative justice worker and as a drug and alcohol support worker; and in the context of her role as a mentor within a Scottish prison. Also, D

devotes much of her time doing what she describes as 'outreach work' – a voluntary process of using her experience, capacity and resource to get alongside and help others who need it.

Why co-produce?

D's reasons for co-production are broad and overlapping. Co-production emerges as a natural and necessary expression of who D is, of her life experiences and of her belief system and faith. It is a moral, political and just response to the injustice she has experienced and continues to observe. It is an expression of the humility, grace, gratitude and generosity that D has found and cultivated through her own journey of recovery. And it is a means of remembering how far she has come and the costs of slipping back. Each of these reasons are expressed in the excerpts below:

> Cos I've been through the system and experienced it to be full of prejudice, judgement and labelling. I believe there is a place for people like me to put my views and experience across to help others still in that.

> … the system brought me to continual humiliation. That's what the system did for me, it humiliated me time and time and time again. And it tore everything away fae me. To the point where I had to say to myself: well, this is my purpose here. … Although I can be critical of the system, and that's in a constructive way, I look at it and I say: thank goodness I went that road because I've been gifted now with something that I can understand. It's like going an' speaking to a user or an alcoholic or somebody who has been through the system, somebody that's been sexually abused or somebody with different traits; that I've been actually gifted wi' that in order that I can go and understand another human being and where they are. And I can use that.

> … If we can get that in our mind set - that it's no okay to just walk by somebody. It's about seeing it as our responsibility to say: is there something I can do? Is there anything I can do to make your life better today? What is it I

can do? But these basics are all squeezed out of services because it's all targets, all KPIs.

… The way I see it is that my recovery was given to me freely and I have to give that back.

… There is another thing as well. What you do is you share with people and you do that quite frequently. I go into the schools as well and I speak to the youngsters about alcohol and drugs. I go on the phone lines as well and hopefully into prisons as well. It's almost, it's like a revolving door. Because the whole nature … it's almost like a merry go round where when you are feeling pressure or struggling and someone comes in the door who's bleary eyed, like a rabbit in the headlights, doesnae know what's happening to them. Just oot o custody or whatever and they are totally bamboozled with what's going on. And it constantly just brings you back. Sometime you think to yourself, wee glass o wine would be lovely, course it would. And it brings you back to, that's what happens. That's what happens when that enters my life again.

Aids to co-production

Identified aids to citizen co-production mostly overlap with those discussed earlier. Others identified here include: the absence of stigma and shame, being able to be honest and authentic, and humility. Discussing the first of these in the context of her involvement with PP?PF:

I see it as an organisation that is *completely* breaking the mould on how they are approaching [co-production]. You know there's people, there's no stigma. There's people there who have been lifers, there's people there who are just out, and there isnae that usual kind of - that I find with local authorities and things like that - where there is that huge, where people will accept you at face value and then they'll find out what your all about and then it's: 'oof! Wait a wee minute here'. So I think PP?PF, it's totally free. It's wonderful.

…The good thing about PP?PF as well - I thought it was fantastic - was that when you got involved, or when I got involved [E] took my number and my email address and that was it. … There wasnae this big questionnaire: 'what happened? How many offences have you got? Do you present a risk to anybody?' It wasnae like that.   … There is no big framework.   It's just a case of: what's that about? That sounds good. Magic, I think I'll dae that.

Discussing the importance of honesty and authenticity:

So if you can mentor and be honest. Come on let's face it it's time that people were able to say -. I know if I do outreach, I had a young guy in the throes of it and I says to him: 'I'm gonna look into a couple of rehab places, I'm working with this other place'. And he says: 'well what would you know about it?' An' I says: 'I've done it, and I know it. I've been where you are and I understand'. And he says: 'I thought you were actually talking shit, but now that you've spoke to me like that, aye, you can come down and see me'.

Mentoring then, I think, that whole way of saying to that person - maybe the local authority are working basically by textbook. You're then mentoring somebody and saying: 'see where you are, you feel absolutely hopeless the now, you've lost your kids, you feel as though nobody's listening, you've got no help, you don't know what to do. I was there. And this is maybe a suggestion of what you can do in order to make you feel better. This is a suggestion to help you get your family back', you know? There are professionals there that have got a bit of savvy and can genuinely help but this is something else.

And again, in the context of co-production with justice providers:

Just being able to go to local authorities, to go to Sheriffs, health whatever; to educate them, what the deal is. And there's a huge, it's societal, there's a huge stigma.

People are listening because a lot of the people who are involved in it are no bending to the old corporate side, they're no wanting to sing and dance and give it the old: 'oh my goodness me' and that kind of thing. They really are wanting to talk, they're really frank, they're really honest and they've really been there. … It's no … like other organisations I've seen … where it's almost: … we've got something coming up that we've got to involve user involvement. It's to be in our KPIs … and you can sense that. … PP?PF on the other [hand], when we sit in meetings, when we go to different things there is a genuine drive, there is no, as I've said, there's no bullshit bingo, there's none of that. It's just straight talking: this is how it is, this is how to change it, in fact get us on to the board, and this is how you make decisions. And there's almost like a, a nice militant side to it. And proactive, rather than just the kind of user involvement, it's user led.

R: what is it about PP?PF that brings authenticity?

It's about the people that are involved. … we were on that mentoring training last week and being in a room wi', and I mean really genuine down to earth people who have got no - there are people there who have served short sentences, who've been on remand, in the cells, had life sentences, and everybody talks the same language.   There is no egos, no battles for prestige. I think if it became like that I would be shooting the crow because it's no about that.

For D, the absence of ego contrasts with the power play sometimes experienced within organisations (professional and user alike) and connects with the final variable deemed important for successful co-production, that of humility:

There has to be a level of being humble and having humility in your life. … I could have stayed in that almost protesting, rebellion, negative frame of mind - full of hate and revenge. But, that doesnae serve anything, that just keeps you in the mindset, that hateful, vengeful mindset … . If I held that anger or any

negative emotion then I wouldn't be able to help anybody in that position because I would be too busy with my own ego, my own agenda. Rather than just saying that we need to change a lot, a lot of policies and procedures and that's where your energy goes into it.

Obstacles and costs

When I invited D to discuss the obstacles and barriers she encountered in co-producing, D responded to this in the context of her individual outreach and mentoring work. In doing so D focussed entirely on the obstacles facing those she sought to co-produce with, that is the people 'in the throes of it':

> There are obstacles for that person from the minute they open their eyes in the morning. There is an obstacle presented to them because there is an obstacle of whether they get their fix. Do they do it legally or illegally? Then there are other obstacles in respect of their confidence, their self-esteem in dealing with agencies - which are very powerful. You know sometimes *I* find it difficult dealing with housing, with benefits. I did it last week and the guy was half-cut and he had been refused his employment support allowance.   … He flagged me down and I said: right come on we'll go up the now.

> The obstacles are that you'll go up … and that separation that occurs as soon as we walk through the door. That person is viewed completely differently from me. I've got to try and change that attitude and teach them: look, lets get down to base levels here. This guy is looking for something from you. Don't make it difficult for him.   I'm with him, I'm gonna advocate for him because I can speak, he cannae. So we'll get down to business and we'll try and get him some money.

> Then there's obstacles with housing. This [other] guy had done a seven day lie in in Barlinnie [prison], came back out [and lost his tenancy]. He goes down to housing and it's a minefield a total minefield. For someone that's sitting, who's strung out, who's got anger problems, difficulties in respect of the

establishment, doesnae want to deal with these people, finds it frustrating, loses the rag, starts shouting, gets barred. Then there's obstacles when he maybe missed his appointment with his psychiatrist or his addictions worker cos he's too busy trying to get a roof over his head. So he's trying to juggle all these different things and there's probably about ten obstacles in that particular day.

And you can go in - like a wee man I was working with - he's in Addiewell [prison] the now - and he said to me: even a simple thing like going to a bank. Because they say, here he comes: 'right, out you go' as if he's a bad smell. Someone else goes in, speaks on his behalf, doesnae take any nonsense, gets it done. So the obstacles are phenomenal, from just doing the basic thing, getting up in the morning to getting something done.   They are unbelievable.

Importantly, it is not that D does not face obstacles in co-producing; rather, for D, her obstacles seem insignificant when set alongside the phenomenal obstacles she observes in the lives of those she is seeking to assist. Amidst the many insights then that emerge from this response (including the sense that 'universal' services appear either unable or unwilling to accommodate the obstacles that those involved in justice services frequently bring) what we observe in the above is an approach to co-production that starts not from the needs, priorities and perspective of the person 'providing' support, but from the needs, priorities and position of the person in trouble. As D observes in respect of co-production in the justice context, this - more 'personalised' approach - would require a fundamental shift.

D goes on to discuss the obstacles and costs experienced when trying to co-produce with and within the system. Like others D highlights the role of stigma, prejudice and fear that operates as a barrier within citizen-professional relationships, a barrier that often prevents those who have been through the system from working within it (particularly in a paid capacity). Equally, D describes how being part of the system (again in a paid capacity) can constrain one's capacity for meaningful co-production. Below, D describes being asked by her former justice employer to stop offering

voluntary help to a group of young men who had recently started using the services of the agency:

> I found it so frustrating. I felt as though, as though my wings had been clipped a bit, because it was all paperwork.   It was all: you can't have that man in your car. And I said to my manager: look, lets agree to disagree because if I, of a Saturday night, if I'm out and I see that man lying in the street, as I usually do, and I need to take him home and feed him and see that he's all right. I'm not stopping that because I'm employed by you or because there's a risk, or because. And there is a fine line but I think people are just going absolutely bonkers wi' it. Again operating from, well what am I gonna do? Am I gonna ignore that man while other people step over him and he's choking on his sick and he's, am I gonna say well, do you know what, I cannie take him in the back of my car because of health and safety? Away and give me peace. I left that meeting that day, and I was told that if you do do that then [the agency] will take a dim view of that.

Discussing how D worked through this obstacle, and others like it, the conversation concluded as follows:

> R: So the cost of that then is your job, your life?

> D: Yes, but it's a duty.

The picture that emerges from Ds narrative in respect of co-production is a personal, challenging and complex one. It describes a form of co-production that is appealing, radical and elusive. Talking with D I was struck as much by her commitment to co-production as I was by the array of obstacles to progressing that in the justice context. For D what appears to hold these extremes in balance is seeing and experiencing that co-production, in its various forms and dimensions, matters. Co-production is the means by which D accesses, progresses and sustains her recovery. It is the means by which she finds herself, forgives herself and others, and by which she successfully rebuilds her life. In her relationship with others co-production is a means by which D

can connect, break down barriers, overcome stigma and prejudice and cultivate legitimacy, equality and respect. It is a means by which she can offer relevant, meaningful and constructive help and it is a means by which others can receive that. For these and other reasons co-production is, for D, a practice worth grappling with.

Looking forward: how to progress co-production?

Exploring how to progress co-production in the justice context, D identifies the need for:

- a fundamental and cultural shift in the service's identity, purpose and values
- significant investment in education and training
- investment in 'real' support services

Discussing the first of these, D places great value on the concept of criminal justice services as *public services*, on criminal justice workers as *public servants* and on people who commit crime as *equals*. For D, these basic parameters provide the baseline for the 'huge cultural shift' needed within justices services. Specifically, D calls for the reconstruction of offenders as people - with complex needs and difficulties, and for the re-orientation of services and resources to better reflect that construction:

> But wouldn't it be really sensible if, instead of creating more damage, if they, the system could then catch it at that early point and say well, as well as the nurses who treat, the addiction workers who prescribe, we now have, rather than having that harsh authoritarian almost fascist view of how to deal with that person, we have to be nurturing as well. And wouldn't that be an absolute laugh going into Tulliallan [Scotland's police training college], and saying you are a public servant and you need to have a nurturing attitude towards these people. If trainees at Tulliallan were to be told: 'see that heroin addict that you see as a piece of shit. Well that person is your equal and it's your job to help him'. It would take retraining.

…You need to dae that. That's maybe what I was trying to put across, maybe a lot of people or some people would say to me [D] that's airy fairy stuff, that's unrealistic. But that's what I was saying: when somebody takes on the position of being a nurse, of being a police officer, within that whole system, they *must* have that thought in their head. They cannie then be clouded by, well I have to dae this or that or their egos come into it. They have to be able to look at that human being and say: I've got an obligation to help that person, you know?

For D, the means of supporting this shift is through training and re-education – a process that needs to involve and be partly delivered by people 'who have been through the system and people who have … reached some form of recovery and have some insight into what's needed . [It] needs to be a completely different approach to deliver that training'.

Lastly, discussing the need for real, relevant and timely support services:

In order for it to work … I think we genuinely need, for the people that are going through the system … if there were actually services; you know realistic services. No the stuff if I look in the directory just now - it's just the same old same old. … Again by people who have been through the system, offering that and giving people who are maybe at the start of their offending, at the start of mental health, at the start of addiction, half way through it realising they've got a problem. You know there has to be services appropriate at every single stage.

Because we know - we can cover it up, we can say: oh there are services and all the rest of it but they don't come the 'gether, they're no cohesive. … Housing are battling wi' social work, social work are battling with addiction and it seems to be that there's no one service there that can actually say: right let's look at the social needs – counselling? Ok. Bereavement? Maybe sexual abuse in your younger days? Maybe the damage that the system has done to you? There

needs to be real services and people who can deal with that. … Somebody says to me: 'aw but we're no paid to do that'. Ah but you are I'm afraid.

What D seems to be describing here is the development of genuinely relevant, personalised and responsive public services. Again, we will return to the implications of these important insights in part four.

E

E is a white Scottish male aged 59 years. He lives with his partner and has five adult children. For most of his adult life E has been employed as an architect. In 2005   E was convicted of embezzlement and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment. During and since completion of his sentence E has been engaged in various co-productive roles and activities. He is currently employed full time as co-ordinator for PP?PF.

Biography

The narrative below is a much-reduced version of E's response to my opening question: can you tell me a little bit about yourself?[26] Constructed in three parts, it tells the story of E's personal and professional journey from his 'solidly middle class' upbringing to his present 'opportunity' as co-ordinator for PP?PF. Authoritatively and selectively it describes E's journey to the point of imprisonment, his journey through prison, and his progression from prison.   A striking feature of E's narrative is its coherence.   As the opening lines suggest, there is a strong sense here of everything connecting and 'coming to fruition'.   In part, this is because life events have come together for E. His is a story of progression. But it is also, I suggest, a clear reflection of E's agentic intent and capacity, that is his intent and capacity to be the author of his life story: past, present and future. Like many of the narratives assembled, E's narrative highlights the way in which we can use narrative - that is the process of constructing and telling our story - to (re-)construct, make sense of and progress our 'self'.

> I think I've probably reached the stage where everything that I've done in my
> life is at long last coming to fruition. Always been a late developer but this is
> ridiculous.   It is also, this opportunity that I'm part of at the moment, is the

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[26] A 4824 word E's 'opening' narrative is too lengthy to reproduce here.

fulfilment of what I set out for myself when I was in my prison cell. I would never have known that it would look like this.   So I'm able now to bring together a number of parts of my life that I didn't ever see as being connected; to be a single operational human being as one, with no side to me I suppose you'd call it. It's just me. And I really, em, I can't believe my good fortune actually. It's not an ideal career path but for me it's been the way to get here, and that is tremendous.

I was brought up in a solidly middle class family. My dad resigned from the conservative party over Suez but he maintained that view of life all of his life. We were brought up in Edinburgh, comfy posh part of town, went to a comfy posh school. I didn't really get it at all. I got through stuff, but I didn't get it.

Went to university, studied architecture, and I loved it. Looking back now I can see that there were a certain number of things I did, and decisions I made or whatever that, if I'd joined those dots up with a level of self-awareness, I could have prevented later what happened for me. I was a bit headstrong and I went into being an Architect with a fair amount of enthusiasm, but also not wanting to build new buildings that were going to belittle people. I ended up working for housing associations, mental health care work and that sort of stuff. But I might have been a perfectly good architect but I was a crap businessman. Got married and had children way before I was grown up enough to do that in retrospect. I messed up a lot of things there. I never quite got a balance between my determination to do things and the practicalities that have to go round about that - the stuff you've got to do. And so I was pretty bad at relationships; I was very bad with money; I was very bad with alcohol. I was in a bouncing around stage. I could put a front on things really well but I was still a mess inside. I never really addressed that properly. Marriage collapsed. That was horrible and painful for everybody; four children, very hard on them.

Moved on, started a new relationship, had a fifth child. Life moved on reasonably well. My work - architectural work - was growing again, that was

really good. And then the bad businessman side of me reared its ugly head. I overstretched on buying a house, big enough for all of us, and I ended up using somebody else's money to make things work. And I was quite rightly found out and quite rightly convicted and sent to prison for it.

Part two details E's 'shocking', 'disorientating' and directed journey through the prison regime, his 'serendipitous' discovery of a safe and secure place within that and, from that place of safety, his active and inter-active journey towards co-production, recovery and reconstruction within the prison. For reasons of space this part of E's narrative is presented later where we explore E's experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence.

Part three details E's progression from prison. In part it tells the story of E's determined and persistent efforts to secure and sustain meaningful employment, and the challenge of doing so in the face of prejudice and injustice. At the same time it tells the story of E's route into co-production in a formal capacity, detailing the what, why and how of that journey. Again it is a particular, detailed and integrated narrative that does not easily lend itself to reduction and extraction. Like other narratives it highlights the pivotal place of purposeful activity and employment in individual journeys of progression, the significant obstacles to that, and the extent to which purposeful activity and employment - co-production included - can be an important means of re-establishing a positive sense of identity, worth and integrity, both on a personal and public level. Reflecting on the seven year 'process' that followed his release, E concludes:

> From the moment I left Edinburgh prison, I [decided] that whoever looked at it, whatever I did, they could look at it from any angle and see that it was for a good reason - which sometimes leads to complete chaos. But the idea was I had to re-establish my integrity. Not just within myself, I knew I could do that, but it had to be evident.

Defining co-production

When we first met to discuss E's participation in the research inquiry the term co-production meant little to E. Though keen to help, E was reticent regarding the relevance of his experience in light of the stated research focus. When we met two months later E was at ease with the concept, the research focus and his capacity to contribute. At this meeting E defined co-production as follows:

> In simple terms I see co-production within criminal justice (and elsewhere) as people working together in a practical and even-handed way towards a shared understanding for a way forward. This requires all involved to recognise individual skills, qualities and responsibilities alongside a lack of personal hierarchy - no one is more or less influential.

Discussing co-production in the context of justice services, E was alert to and involved in various forms of co-production, spanning individual, group and collective forms. However discussion centred on E's vision and passion for co-production in the context of peer mentoring relationships – that is, between people completing a sentence and those who have been in that place and come through it. Central to this vision and commitment was a belief in the innate worth, capacity and potential of each person to do good things, followed closely by a belief in the transformative potential of co-productive relationships in assisting individuals to recognise – perhaps for the first time – their worth, potential and capacity for good.   The detail of this vision is explored more fully below.

Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence

E's experience of prison is not easily delineated in co-productive terms. On one level E describes an experience that is decidedly *not* co-productive. He describes 'literally being dropped' into a shocking, baffling and total institution (see Foucault, 1977); depersonalised, ill-explained and tick box interviews, assessments and 'opportunities';

and 'routes' through the prison (personal and spatial) where agency, choice and collaboration is not only not encouraged but for security reasons made practically impossible. As E explains describing the route to education:

Don't know if you know how things work, move in prison?

R: No

Well I was told that if I was to go to education I would go on 'the route'. I didn't know where anything was, and no idea how I would find it. But, there was a shout down the wing: 'THE ROUTE'; 'SHEDS'; 'EDUCATION', all that sort of stuff. And if you were going to go to education you have to queue up and then, on a very carefully monitored process with prison officers at every junction, you're allowed to walk, in a group, and everyone knows who's going where. Like, if you are on education that's the route you follow and that's the only thing you can do. And so you end up at education by default. It's like squeezing toothpaste: you end up over there, and it's 'good'.

Drawing on the Chief Inspector of Prisons' description of the criminal justice system as a 'justice tube' E returns to this analogy later in the conversation to sum up his prison experience: 'you get put in one end and you go right through the other end, and the tube remains the same'.

Yet, within this narrative E also describes the means and mechanisms through which he learned to survive, make sense of, and ultimately 'flourish' within this total institution (Liebling, 2004). He describes how he actively used prison – and the space, opportunity and learning it afforded – to recognise, recover and progress his 'self'. Describing his entry into the prison system: 'that was the beginning of the shock to the system that gave me a chance to recover myself and to retrace my steps to when I could recognise myself as a happy individual'.   Again (see also B's narrative), this alter-narrative is not a story of equal or even-handed relationships, of unfettered joint working, or of unconstrained choice, agency or participation. It is a story of occasional - and in E's view mostly serendipitous - opportunities for participation, agency and

choice; of humane and respectful relationships that emerge as the exception rather than the rule; and of a form of co-production and progression that is entirely self-directed. Consider for example, E's account of his entry into and progression through the prison system:

> The process of literally being dropped through the floor of the dock into a holding cell, and then into a van to Saughton, Edinburgh prison, was terrifying, and a state of shock - utter and complete; and the entry into the prison was shocking. .... And the first night was really bizarre, and I really had no idea how to relate to anything and I suppose nightmares and the fear of the unknown were uppermost. … And so that was, it was a question of just working out how to survive was how I saw it to begin with.

> Then at the beginning of the second week I was interviewed. I wasn't told why I was interviewed. Two people in a room, one of them was a uniform. They said: 'well, what do you want to do in prison?' basically. I said: 'I haven't got a clue of what I can do'. [They said]: 'You've got a choice of going to the work-sheds or education'. [I] said: 'well, what do each involve?' [They] explained that … work-sheds were just that and they couldn't really be sure what I would be able to go and do. On the education side there were classes available: english, creative writing, art, other bits and pieces. Said: I'll go for education thanks.

> It was really farcical in retrospect that they gave somebody who's got a university degree and post graduate qualifications, this that and the next thing, who can read and write, the chance to go to education, but I took it. And I realised in that respect that I was ticking a box.

> … The education group was tiny really. Prison had a population of about 800 and they had space for 40. So I realised that I was quite lucky. Went down to the art class. Probably still in a state of shock, probably very confused. And [M], the tutor, looked at me and said: 'why are you here?' I said: 'I haven't a

clue'. So went down to the library at the end of a corridor. The only person in
there was the prison officer. He said to me 'what are you in for?'. [I said:] 'in
for a book'. And he said: 'oh no, no; oh dear'.

He was the first person to really give the idea of a prison officer being a human
being. It was really quite refreshing. I explained what I was in for and he said:
'right, am I right in thinking from the way you talk that you can read and write
as well? Right, next question: do you know how a library works?' And I said:
'yeah I do actually, because I did that at school'. [He said]: 'Great, do you want
a job?' So that I'd discovered later put me into one of the best paying jobs in
the prison, at twelve pounds a week, which was great. I went back from that
thinking: oh that's grand, I'd actually found a place.

Went back to the wing that night and a notice had gone up on the wall, offering
a chance for yoga and meditation, provided by the Prison Phoenix Trust. By
then, by the end of the second week, I'd discovered that anything that got you
away from your cell, away from the wing, was worth going to if you could
manage it. So I signed up for that and was able to start going along to yoga.   …
And along with the librarian work, I was then asked if I would train as a peer
tutor for literacies, so I underwent that training, … And that training process -
reaching the state where I was going to be ok to work with folk - was a few
weeks in, and I'd been doing the yoga and the meditation and realising, you
know that there was something good happening.

Like E, we might struggle to describe the above experiences in co-productive terms.
Nonetheless, it is clear that E found co-productive and in turn progressive
opportunities within the prison regime. Further, as E's narrative makes clear, one of
the most productive, progressive and transformative experiences for E within the
prison was his experience of co-production as a person *providing* support:

So I was actively involved in helping others who were, I suppose in simple
terms, my peers because we were all on short sentences. … And I settled down

to working hard to be, in all intents I suppose, a simple good prisoner. I would do my stuff, so that was busy, busy, busy and it took me all over the prison. And I worked … with all sorts of folk. And through that contact I realised that I was very lucky. Because I didn't have an addiction; I didn't have - I probably had had clinical depression but that was addressed by everything else that was going on; I could read and write and I hadn't lost all of my family. And that was quite an informative and formative process to go through for me … a huge process. And I ended up doing all sorts of stuff I would never have thought of.

We might observe then that even within an overarching context of control, coercion and constraint, co-production - albeit with a small c - is, in particular circumstances and for particular people, both possible and productive. Further, it is this positive, productive and co-productive experience of prison - located alongside an acute awareness that this was not the experience of most of those around him - that forms the centre point of E's motivation for the co-productive, peer support and mutual aid aspirations of PP?PF.

Why co-produce?

E's narrative reveals an array of reasons for co-production, as well as a clear grasp of the aids and obstacles in that process. Like B, E co-produces because there is opportunity to do so, and - as he is quick to point out - because of his capacity to recognise and respond to the opportunities before him. Contrasting this capacity with many of those around him E observes:

That's the big thing. For people who have been born and brought up in a situation where they are not in connection with in anyway shape or form the idea of choice or comfort or opportunity, they will not have been given the space to learn and realise that they have those things. And so if an opportunity comes along and stands in front of them they won't recognise it. And the prison service offers all sorts of things … But if you say: 'how do you fancy doing a Phd in nuclear physics?' Or: 'do you fancy learning to read and write?' Education in

each of those things is equally inaccessible or unidentifiable because they are not familiar with it, and it's not out of wilfulness.

E also co-produces then because he has the capacity to co-produce – capacity he often refers to in terms of being lucky.   Further, E co-produces because he finds reward in doing so. As the above reveals, for E these rewards occur in the reward of purposeful activity, in being treated as a human being, in payment of 'twelve pounds a week', in the opportunity to get 'away from your cell', and in the reward of finding a safe place.

Aids and Obstacles

Interwoven in the above discussion are the experienced aids to co-production in the prison context, identified as: relevant and recognisable opportunity, relevant and recognisable reward, the possession of basic life skills, the absence of addiction and mental health problems, opportunity for meditation and self-understanding, being treated 'like a human being' and the role of 'luck' and 'serendipity'.   Noting the significance of these interactive aids in journeys of progression I initially found E's frequent reference to the role of serendipity and good fortune, to the absence of a 'grand plan' and to his 'stumbling along' in his co-productive journey as an indication of E's exceeding modesty - or naivety - given what he achieved in prison. Unpacking this it became clear there was another message being expressed here. For E, the transformative opportunities in his journey through prison occurred not by design but by default. They were mostly chance encounters; rare opportunities - productive and transformative mostly because of E's atypical capacity to recognise, grasp and exploit them. As he explains:

> When I came out [my partner] said I was good evidence of how prison is a middle class process, a middle class construct. Because that's the only way I could have survived it because I was so relentlessly middle class. It ticked all the right boxes for me in lots of ways. And because I could recognise opportunities, and was willing to make a decision to take them that meant that I was operating at the level prison was supposed to work at.

But I wouldn't have credited the prison system of interviewing and assessment as one that would identify that capacity. And I still don't. It comes I think, I think it's based on risk assessment and on the idea of custody and order, rather than opportunity and care, or someone's capacity. And I think it's very much a question of managing the risks. And whether or not I was at risk I certainly didn't pose a risk to anyone apart from a risk of boring them to death.

Though E is quick to recognise the place of his 'relentless middle-class[ness]' (and the human and social capital that flows from that) in his co-productive journey, he is much less willing to credit that journey to the system's recognition of or responsiveness to the same. We might observe then that co-production is also more possible in the justice context when there is an atypical absence of risk.

The identified obstacles to co-production are also evident in the above discussion. They exist in the addiction, mental health, family and literacy problems that E considers himself lucky to be free from. They exist in a person's longstanding experience of disadvantage, disenfranchisement and dismissal – an experience that, as E observes, often results in a loss of expectation and an inability to recognise the opportunities before you.   And they exist in the system's preoccupation with 'risk … custody and order' and in the regimes, rituals, tick-box processes and lost opportunities that follow from that preoccupation.   E discussed these obstacles at length, drawing equally on his experience as a prisoner and as someone now working with prisoners.   Recalling a recent exchange with prisoners in Perth prison:

I was in Perth Prison last November. I met some of the prisoners there and when I explained where PP?PF had started and what it was doing they said: 'can we have someone from your organisation in every prison, at least one?' And I said: 'why?' They said: 'right, if a uniform comes to me and says: you gonna do a course on anger management? If I say no it goes against me. So I'll say yes. Whereas if you came to me and said: do you want to do a course on anger management? I'd say: right, where does it fit in my overall plan? What

happens if I say no? Do you know what I'd like to be able to do? How's it gonna help me in the long run? … What wish list do you want me to give you? '

And that experience, you know?

Or, contrasting his own prison experience and opportunity with that of most short-term prisoners:

> You have to remember that I was in the enhanced wing of the short-term part of Edinburgh prison. The progression system went through from admission, to progression to enhanced. And I missed the progression level. That was known inside as 'Fraggle Rock' because everyone in there had to be a 'muppet'. And it was … like a battlefield. Admission is a very tight regime, enhanced a very relaxed regime in comparison, and Fraggle Rock - progression in the middle - was more like a zoo, a bigger space, a much more challenging space and a lot of people in it. Who were all, it was as if it was one big street and the factions had the spaces to polarise.

Lastly, describing the systemic obstacles to co-production:

> The justice tube at the moment is not an example of joined up thinking. And it is not intended to, it's not designed, and it's not yet capable of addressing the reasons why people are offending.   … There is opportunity for intervention there - one that is not fully recognised.

> The prison offers a number of opportunities as they see it but a lot of the prison system is a legacy from Victorian times where it was punishment. And the attempt to bring education in is not one that is being introduced in a meaningful way, or in a way that has the capacity to do anything more than scratch the surface of what's going on. The opportunity for a prison to recognise each person as an individual, not only with needs, but with certain assets, is not yet fulfilled. And the process through which people are looked after inside prison is not conducive to these people developing the skills they

might benefit from when they leave, in a way that has any relevance to their reality the moment they walk out the gate. So, from the beginning, all the way through, at every step, opportunities are missed. … Now that is a shameful, a series of disconnects, a shameful waste of lives, and a shameful waste of resources.

Experience of co-production as a citizen

E described an array of emergent and diverse examples of co-productive activity with a range of individuals, groups and organisations – encompassing activity with prisoners, citizens, prison officers, prison governors, justice practitioners, young people, academics, ministers, civil servants, voluntary organisations, local authorities, the Scottish Government, the judiciary, and the Scottish Prison Service. Before moving to consider what made that possible I began by inviting E to articulate his *reasons* for co-producing in this particular sphere.

Why co-produce?

> The reason the whole thing started is the idea that having survived and learned or been through, actually the best word of all: having suffered - now suffering doesn't necessarily involve pain, suffering is a matter of experiencing something - and so, having been through my own suffering process, which involved the time before the time inside and the time since, I have been encouraged, and I have taken that encouragement to try to reduce the pain within the process for everybody involved in offending and the process of punishment that follows … And so my ideal, my dream, would be that everyone who, who's in trouble, can recognise that they have an opportunity to recognise hope within themselves, and that they can do something to build on that hope to not put themselves back in that same place or one like it.

> Now that's a lot of words, which are hard to bring to reality. But the idea is that within each one of us we have the potential to do good things. … And to

realise that just by being yourself you can have a worth that you maybe hadn't recognised before. … And in practical terms, to help people recognise that they can do something, even though they might not know what that would be. Bringing somebody who has been in that same place of hopelessness, that same place of darkness effectively - in terms of how they feel about themselves; bringing someone who has been there before and has changed, through their own work, their own efforts, and taking on board the work of others – that's one of the best ways of, that I know of. There might be plenty others, but the idea of: hello, I know how you feel, or: I think I know how you feel, I was in a place quite like that. And that's the process of conversation, and of developing two relationships. One relationship is between the person who comes in to offer help - between that person and the person they seek to support and help. The other relationship that is built is that person with themselves. And they have to realise that they have that choice, that we build that. Now exactly how that's done is a matter for us to discover and to explore and to continue to explore. Because it will change because every person who's inside is unique, and all the people who are coming into help - all of them are unique. And so … you cannot summarise and you can't generalise and you cant have a [prescribed approach].

As E notes, this initial vision and ambition has expanded well beyond what E and the group 'would have believed possible' – attesting perhaps to the opportunity and motivation that currently exists for co-production in the criminal justice sphere. Nonetheless it is worth pausing to consider the detail of the co-productive vision mapped out above – attending as it does to the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of co-production in the justice context. At the centre of E's co-productive vision is the concept of peer mentoring. For E, at the core of that vision is a belief in the innate worth, capacity and potential of each of us to do good things, followed closely by a belief in the value and potential of co-productive relationships as a site where both parties can discover and/or develop their capacity to fulfil that potential. The above vision also gives voice to an array of other reasons (and rewards) for co-producing,

including: the discovery/recovery of worth, the discovery/recovery of voice, the discovery/recovery of a positive identity, and ultimately, the discovery/recovery of a good life.

Aids and Obstacles

In E's experience a foundational feature of successful co-production is what we came to refer to as the discovery and recovery of voice: a 'vital process', aided when one finds a supportive, interested and receptive audience, and when one finds opportunity within that relationship for reciprocity. Discussing this in the context of PP?PF's collective and mutual-aid identity:

> I think, without setting about it knowingly, the fact that collectively we have had, we've taken the opportunity, we're exploring the opportunity of being, of feeling sufficiently confident in each other, to stand up and say: I was in prison, I went there, I did bad things and now I'm going to go and mend them. Or: I'm gonna help other people get on with their lives. To be able to say that, not quite in public but almost, is quite a big step. And I think that that is one of the remarkable feelings that happens in a group meeting where. And you know the, the potential for that is infinite. And, for me now, the challenge for us all as a group is to nurture this, without getting carried away on it. And for it to grow in a way that can never be taken away … . And so, it's a very precious and exciting but ultimately vital process.

And in the context of a pivotal relationship with a justice professional:

> Once again, we'll come back to serendipity. I'm not going to let [x] hear this but it was very lucky for us that I was introduced to [x], as someone who had a compassionate view and who had a great understanding of things. And through that connection I've recognised there's a huge amount of work going on in research matters to do with people in prison, or people in the criminal justice system. And through that, I've learned, I've discovered that I have a voice that can contribute to something. … And to realise that you can share

your experiences - however dark or good - that that is valid, is part of the journey for every one of us. To be able to talk about it and to realise that -, being heard is major. But that fact that that might then go towards a better understanding that might then go towards helping people - who knows how - that is, it's very empowering.

Importantly, and as already touched on, in E's experience the inter-related discovery of voice, worth, capacity and empowerment are not only pivotal aids to co-production, these processes and outcomes are equally pivotal in individual journeys of progression and desistance. As E observes:

> I think that that's where our, our huge opportunities lie. And it's a risky business. And we won't know for a while how it's doing. But the one thing I do know is everyone who's involved in PP?PF now in the open community has moved on a long way already. And for some of us, we may have been good people who did bad things, or good people who did silly things and, we're now being better at being good. And doing less that's silly or bad things. And that's tremendous. And that is a process I would like it to become viral.

E's experience also attests to the importance of opportunity, support and resourcing for co-production – ideally from the centre:

> I think the potential now exists for the collective voice of people caught up in the system, that collective voice can now be brought to the ears of the people who devise, commission and pay for the services. … We, as a group, would never have believed it possible if it hadn't happened right in front of us. [We] would not have recognised that the Government might ask, might value what we might be able to do. And we would not have recognised that the prison service might have wanted us to do it. And the fact that we went from saying we want to do what's now popularly known as mentoring. We also have a chance to talk to Government, as politicians, and as civil servants. And we have

a chance to speak to senior management teams of the prison service. We speak to the inspector of prisons.

In E's experience, co-production also requires a reasonable degree of autonomy and innovation, of trust and respect between actors, of trial and error, and of being able to 'work out how we go' (conditions that do not necessarily go hand in hand with being supported from the centre). The excerpt below discusses this in the particular context of peer mentoring, though it has application for co-productive relationships more broadly:

> Now exactly how that's done is a matter for us to discover and to explore and to continue to explore. ...And so the process we are going through now [is] to try and bring this to a reality.   ... It has to be a trusting but respectful thing, where there is a space for that person to operate on their own, on both sides on both parts of this; but that's the bit we are approaching an understanding of. But where we go from here is up to us now, as a group. To work out and to reflect on things, and to understand how we go. Because if we are to follow a standard mentoring process all the way through - because we've come, not from the point of view of being a bringer of services, but being a bringer of hope, which is, you can't distil into a service. We have the opportunity to be innovative in how we approach this and to do so based on our experience, our lived experience. And that lived experience is changing for us as we work with people. And so to learn from that, we have the capacity to grow from those positions rather than saying, that's the position we are going in, and anything outside that doesn't count. And so the direction is one of hope.

The above suggests that in co-production there is no blueprint and no standard way of doing things - starting as it does from 'a new set of connections' and starting points. If co-production is truly something new and different from what has gone before then it follows that we need to expect and allow it to produce something that is new and different from what has gone before. This strikes me as a particularly challenging opportunity.

Finally, E's experience suggests that co-production - here between citizens and professional providers - is aided when the former can speak using the language of the latter:

> This is going to sound a bit immodest. The fact that I can speak in a way that is comfortable for people who work in [the system], I think that has bridged a gap, or has made a connection that might not otherwise have been made as readily as it was. … I'm comfortable in talking and sharing and I can develop an argument. … And if part of having an EH10 voice, and if part of having the register of words that I have, and the ability to construct an argument and to maintain a discussion, that has been a vital tool I'm afraid to say.

E is right to acknowledge the role of his EH10 voice in bridging the gap that often exists between citizens and professional providers.   But it is of course about much more than an EH10 voice.   It is also the experience, capacity and opportunities that make that voice possible.

Obstacles

In respect of the obstacles to co-production, E identifies two key obstacles in the justice context (interestingly this discussion centred entirely on co-productive relationships between citizens and professional providers). The first is the obstacle of 'being an ex-offender', and the antagonism, prejudice and vulnerability experienced as a result of that status. The pain of this experience is powerfully expressed in E's account of his journey post-prison where, despite 'making good', E twice finds himself 'shafted' because of his (ex-)offender status:

> Then lost that job because somebody … decided that I was an inappropriate person to be working on it because I'd been to prison - he was the person who had given me the job in the first place. And then I was shafted. I was a bit embittered by that. But the process went on.

Further on in the process, and in another co-productive role:

> I went into work and my boss was in early which is unusual.   Switched the
> printer on and first thing that came out was the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.
> … Five days later he phoned me to tell me I was going to be suspended for
> bringing the trust into disrepute and the council decided that they would no
> longer pay half my salary on the basis that I had been a prisoner. Now I had
> disclosed everything all along the way before all of this. That was 15th of May
> last year. … My boss couldn't look me in the eye … so I was, really, really, really,
> hurt by that.

The second obstacle is what E describes as the competitive, self-protecting and self-
serving nature of the justice provider arena – described by E as 'the battleground'.
Discussing the interplay of these obstacles:

> That's one of the big areas of *frustration* that I suffer, that I go through.
> Because there are some big players out there who regard the criminal justice
> field as theirs, and that anyone else coming in is a threat. Now I've been
> offered to be bought out, I've been told there's no space, I've been told that
> working with ex-prisoners is unreliable because they're undependable, they're
> untrustworthy, and they're a waste of space and difficult to manage. Now
> those two things - the offer of a buy out and that description of why it's not
> worth doing it are from two of the biggest organisations in the 3rd sector in
> Scotland - personally, face to face, and in writing from one of them. And that is
> appalling.

Some of the resistance and antagonism described here may reflect the austere fiscal
climate within which justice providers now operate. However, it is for E and others a
vivid and cautionary illustration of the way in which justice organisations can run
seriously adrift from the justice ideals they exist to progress. Returning again to the
analogy of the criminal justice system as a 'justice tube' – where the focus appears to
be on what providers do rather than on what people achieve through those services - E
observes:

They get together in a way to protect their money. It's not somebody else's money, it's their money. They are service providers and they're not co-producing. They're putting stuff down the justice tube and saying: we've done that.

Looking forward: How to progress co-production?

The above question was not discussed directly in the research conversation. However it is implicit in the preceding discussion. In particular E highlighted the importance of PP?PF's role in:

- 'nurturing voice'
- 'not becoming part of the machine'
- developing and progressing a 'unique approach'

F

F is a white Scottish male aged 43 years.   Over the last decade he has worked extensively as a life coach, mentor and advisor with various justice and substance misuse service providers. He is not currently in employment. F was first imprisoned in 1987, at 17 years of age. He spent the next 12 years 'in and out' of custody and completed his last sentence at the age of 29.

Introduction

F preceded the research conversation by enquiring. At our first (telephone) conversation, he wanted to know what the inquiry was about and what I was about. Like me, he appeared to be seeking to explore and establish points of connection, while at the same time assessing the validity and credibility of the inquiry and its people.   F's caution was not unique, nor surprising. In his words, he had 'been at this [co-production] for a long time'. He was now 'pulling back at bit'; 'being mair choosy'. 'I'm now saying no to a lot of things I get asked to dae'. The reasons offered for this pulling back were simple and complex. As noted, F had been at this for a long time. He was mindful of his need to be 'moving forward', 'growing'. He was also aware that there were other 'younger', 'more in touch' versions of himself now emerging and 'making waves', and he was 'happy to step aside'. Yet, amidst this humility and insight there was also wistfulness in F's reasoning, as though he was sometimes not sure where this exit of sorts left him; or who it left him. Life most of us, F's evolving identity and sense of self was at least partly rooted in what he does – in what he did. At the point of our conversation F appeared to be grappling with and making sense of these shifts, and of the implications for his sense of self, worth, purpose and progress.

This initial conversation – and those that followed, highlight the various stages in an individual's co-productive journey, as well as the important relationships that can

flourish and flounder within that – including a person's relationship with themselves, with others, with employment and with society more broadly. The narrative that follows develops these themes and reminds us that co-production is both a personal and public phenomenon. It is also a shifting phenomenon, and it needs to be recognised and supported accordingly.

Biography

In response to my question: 'can you tell me a wee bit about you?', F told his life story across three broad frames. Significantly, F begins *his* story at the point of his exit from the criminal justice system – the point at which he begins to consciously develop and exercise the self-insight, choice and agency that become the markers of his recovery and rehabilitation. From here F recounts some of the formative life experiences that led him into dishonesty, addiction, offending and the criminal justice system - which, in his view, led him deeper into dishonesty, addiction, offending and the criminal justice system - followed by a brief insight into the twelve years he spent lost within that system. The final frame returns to the up and down journey of F's recovery and rehabilitation, underscoring the obstacles he faced – and continues to face – in learning 'how to live a life'.   As F notes, at times the narrative 'jump[s] fae one thing to the other' – moving across and between the above frames. We invite you to bear with this for here too lies the disorientating reality of F's story. The narrative that emerges is honest, humble and in-progress. It is a narrative through which F is still making sense of what are in many respects incomprehensible life experiences. As F observes repeatedly in respect of his progression: 'I would love to say it was aw just hunky dory, but it wasnae. It doesnae work like that'.

> I came oot the criminal justice system - well I would identify it as the last prison
>
> sentence I done - in 1999. An' I went back to my previous life style, but I really
>
> didnae want tae return to it. You know, I'd had experience of this before that,
>
> you know, I don't want to go back to that way of life. You know, I'm no willing

tae accept what's coming wi' it anymair.   I'd been institutionalised from quite
an early age. I believe I was institutionalised. No I was. From the age of 17 to
23 it was one prison sentence I was locked up on, you know I hadnae even
reached adolescence. Previous to that, there was a lot of care homes, early
family break-doon. Ma mother had addiction issues, ma old man had died
when I was quite young. You know the social work department brought me up.
I despised the social work department. There was only one gang I hated more
than the polis and that was the social work department.

You know and it was, I had to, I became, it was, you know it was aboot
education for me. It was aboot, I was lucky enough that I was able to leave
Glasgow. I was able to leave Glasgow and get away doon tae England, go into a
rehabilitation centre doon there, where I was very fortunate to be able to meet
people who had *very* similar life experiences to me. I think I found a grounding
there**.** It was like, it was a lot of progress, a revelation. You know, being able to
sort o see things in my life. Being able to see the kind of road I came doon. An
it was - I can always remember reading the court report for my first jail
sentence. Don't get me wrang it was - I don't know, I remember somebody
once saying to me, what, what do you think made you that way? I can
remember being, one of my earliest memories, maybe I was five or six year old
and my old great granny stayed with my gran; and I used to ask for money for
the van, and see if she didnae gi me it, I used to boot her. That was me at five
or six year old. Warning signals must've been there. You know is naeb'dy
noticing what's going on here?

My first arrest was age seven for stealing a bike. I can still remember it cos my
legs were too wee that they couldnae reach the ground, and that was how a
got caught, cos ma legs couldnae reach the ground. That was age seven, that
was me starting to get arrested. It was like, you know I can remember - I could
never understand that - it was as if dishonesty, manipulation an aw that was
built into me fae a dead early age. It was like, I remember daing some work wi'

the violence reduction unit. And it was like, a criminal psychologist or whatever. I grabbed a hold of him – I was always taking these people hostage, you know trying to get a wee bit oh [understanding].

F goes on to relay other stories of early and 'built in' dishonesty and manipulation; stories that with the help of others he can now reconstruct as a stories of a child trying to survive in a painful and punishing environment. Making the link between the traumatised child and the troubled and 'addicted' adult (then trying to survive another painful and punishing environment), F reflects:

> Fast forward to many years later and like, I had been through that prison system and that environment. I could never understand this, you know, I had addiction issues but see till I went to prison, I didnae like those kind of drugs. I had tried them and disregarded it, like opiates and aw that - I know I'm kinda jumping fae one thing to the other here - but something took place mentally and emotionally for me in the prison system. That took me fae they kind of drugs that made me sick … but then whatever went on for me mentally and emotionally - maybe the parts were already there - but whatever came to, when I started going into the institutions, it's like, I don't know, it's like, they drugs started to become mair what was going on for me. It was like - addiction was a big part o' crime wi me.

> … In 1987, my first conviction was for a robbery … I actually had a wee job at the time. Spent aw my money in fruit machines. Had nane o ma wages left, an' I thought nothing o' going into a shop and hudding it up at knife point. I think there had been a couple of other things where, some violence and things that I had been charged wi' but, from that move, from that wee boy that went in and held that shop up? I still ask myself: where did that come fae? You know, it was dead impulsive; there was no thought process to it. It was like, I was staying wi 'an auntie that was putting me up at the time. I was still under a social work supervision order. Social work would come out and see me every month or whatever. The social work had put in the report - cos it was read oot

in court - that they had recommended a custodial sentence. You know it's like, I could never understand that. Don't get me wrang, I could understand me having to go to prison for what I done, cos there's consequences to that type of behaviour, but?

F does not elaborate on the reasons behind his incomprehension of social work's recommendation. He gets that prison is a legitimate form of punishment for his actions. The tension for F - 26 years on and with the devastating effects of prison still fresh - appears to lie in social work's *recommendation* of prison and in the observed incongruity of its role as parent, protector and punisher.

From here F recounts, briefly, the twelve-year incarceration period that followed that first sentence. Though served as a series of short to medium sentences, beyond the significant memory of his first sentence, this period emerges as a black hole, during which F progressively loses his conscious self and his capacity to live a life:

At this time detention centres were still open for young boys, this was before they shut them doon for young boys hanging themselves. You know it was quite stressful, quite a hard sentence to dae.

… But, I think, from a personal point of view, prison desensitises you - at a mental level and at an emotional level and, if you've got enough insight, at a spiritual level. It's no stuff I would go right into but that's my personal experience.

… Ah remember arriving in Barlinnie. This was in 1987, before the riots. You went to the top flat at D hall at that time and you were lucky if you had a bed, sometimes sharing the same chamber pot. It was an adult hall; young offenders were on the top of it. It was a cons jail, it was before the riot, you know it was sink or swim. You don't walk into that without feeling fear, apprehension, aw these things. You know you don't. But you very quickly learn that they are feelings that you cannae allow yourself. They're no feelings that can show. You can see it in people and they make you vulnerable in that

environment. So you very quickly - an' I had learned this fae a very early age through other, through children's homes and things - I had learned fae an early age to hide these things.

[But] you can only hud this stuff so much and it starts coming over … It doesnae matter who you're speaking to, for whatever knowledge they've got about life in general, but there's got to be a capacity for growth, mentally and emotionally. It's like coming through adolescence, coming through childhood, being nurtured and being protected - I don't believe I got any of they things. And it's like coming into a prison system, it's like, no just have I no had it, I really didnae want it by that time. And so.

I had a lot of remands, a lot of full committals. I just had no ability to - I remember coming out when I was nearly 23 - and I had nae ability to live life. It was like, I can remember I coudnae hud my teeth the 'gether. My nervous system was so shot [emotion]. See the biggest area: I had no ability to form relationships. You know, I don't just mean at a personal level I'm talking about at a friendship level. I had a lot of resentment towards family members. It's like, I was just, I could only describe myself emotionally as a ball of pain and anger. And it's like, I took a lot of drugs. I had no ability to deal with anything on an emotional level.

Moving to describe the steps towards his recovery:

I can remember coming out of jail, this was before I got the help that I needed … I think it was maybe about two year before. And I had got out of Barlinnie and, it was the usual scenario when you got out of Barlinnie in the morning: somebody had phoned the drug dealer the night before, and they were all just getting into taxi's and going to his hoose. And I remember getting oot that morning and no daing that. And the funny thing wis it was the shortest sentence I ever done … I was still in withdrawals when I came oot. So for me no to go in that taxi and go and do the things I usually done, something was

going on that I didnae understand. But I remember standing at the wee bus stop and it was freezing cald in the middle of winter. I was shivering. I was standing crying at that bus stop. And see looking back, you know what it wis? I wasnae crying through - it wasnae like emotional pain or anything else. What I was crying for then was cos I knew I was going back to what I didnae want to go back to. And I didnae know anything different. I remember going back and it was like, all the things I would normally dae, I wasnae going an' daing them. … I can only say, it wasnae something, it wasnae a thought. It was intuitive, it was: I'm no dae-ing this anymore. I'm no dae-ing this.

… I went back in. Wasnae until I was 29. It was me phoning a doctor. I was in a lot of trouble at the time. I got myself into situations where it wisnae just the polis and that. There was a lot of different things going on in my life. … It was the millennium new year - I must have been weighing about 8 stone. [Doctor] told me I had an eating disorder. He says: F there's a place I want you to phone, and see if you go doon to that place there's different kind of help they can gi' people. That is what I went to this place for.

… Do you know, this is how bad my thinking was at the time, the only things that I was interested in at that time was - I knew I was so destroyed with drugs, weighing 8 stone. And see me going back into a prison environment, and some of the enemy's I had, there was only one thing in my heid: that I need to get myself physically and mentally better, and I need to stop taking drugs to dae that. That was the only thing that I could comprehend.

F goes on to describe his decision to go into rehab, his detox 'off horrendous amounts of drugs', and the physical and psychological growth that flourished and faltered as he, with the help of others, sought to get a grasp on himself, on life, and on 'how to live'. Like other accounts of co-production and progression, the journey described is an up and down and on-going one, complete with learning, insight, progression, risk taking, relapse and starting again – 'except it wasnae like going back and starting again'. It is at times a difficult and painful journey as F tries to accept, understand and rebuild 'the

wee guy who had the mindset and the abilty to do some of the stupit things I had done'. However, a critical difference in this turn of the story is that here F is becoming a conscious actor; an open, vulnerable, agentic, capable and responsible protagonist - attributes that were mostly absent pre-recovery. For reasons of space, this part of F's story is presented in the discussion that follows.

Defining co-production

F defined co-production in the applied context of his role as a life coach with people who offend:

> I was always one for getting people roon' the table: 'Who's your probation officer?' 'Who's your parole officer'. 'Lets get them aw roon' a table'. Even coming right to the opposite end, it's like, moving somebody into accommodation, looking for support in the community: come on, let's get them all roond the table. It's about me being able to put ma two bob's worth in wi' other people. You know what the best thing about co-production is? It shines a light on the lazy ones. There's a lot of them in there, burnt oot wi' it. You know what they don't like, they don't like to be sitting roon the table, and getting foon' oot. A lot of them will hide fae that. They don't like to come oot and be part of that. When you get like that, … when I'm sending an email out and saying: 'it's this person's future we're talking aboot; can you let me know what's happening?' See when they've missed three, I'll have them down to the fourth one.

> See, the thing is, there's plenty, we all know the pathways into prison; we know the roads that people have come down. We need to get pathways out. You can hear people maybe gie their experience, what they've done to move on fae their life. But, it's quite a difficult thing, [it] can be quite difficult to harness that. But if you can get enough people to come and contribute tae it, there are pathways there.

For F, successful co-production is about everyone working together and doing their bit. It is a means through which individuals can discover a positive pathway from prison as well as the tools and resources they need to negotiate that pathway. It requires each person to recognise and respect the stakes – 'it's this person's future'; and it requires each person to fulfil their role and responsibility in progressing that future. Here, the person serving the sentence, or embarking upon release, is neither solely responsible for change nor stripped of responsibility. Rather, he or she is part of a collective of mutually responsible and dependent actors. This definition articulates both the promise and challenge of co-production in the justice context.

Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence

F's experience of the justice system is discussed almost exclusively in the context of 'the prison' where, give or take brief spells of liberty, he spent most of his young adult life. F describes that experience as one of institutionalisation: 'I believe I was institutionalised', a process that started in his early experience of 'lots of care homes'. *The Chambers Dictionary* (Chambers, 2011) defines institutionalise as: 'to make someone lose their individuality and ability to cope with life by keeping them in an institution for too long'. This definition accords well with F's prison experience:

> I had just no ability to - I remember coming out when I was nearly 23, and I had nae ability to live life. It was like, I can remember I coudnae hud my teeth the'gether. My nervous system was so shot [emotion]. See the biggest area: I had no ability to form relationships. I don't just mean at a personal level I'm talking about at a friendship level. I had a lot of resentment towards family members. I was just, I could only describe myself emotionally as a ball of pain and anger. You know? And it's like, I took a lot of drugs, I had no ability to deal with anything on an emotional level.

For F, his justice experience emerges as a progressive and uninterrupted period of fear, trauma, addiction and withdrawal, where the latter become the means of surviving the

former. Not surprisingly, F identifies no opportunity, capacity or motivation for co-production within that experience. For F the single purpose of prison - as with life - was to survive it, by whatever means. Summing up the twelve years F concludes: 'The only positive things I could say about the time I spent in prison in they years is that it probably kept me alive'.

Obstacles

F's experience foregrounds an array of obstacles that impede co-production in the prison context. For F, they exist in the individual prisoner and in the 'stuff' – that is the traumatic life experience – he or she takes into the prison. They exist in the prison regime. And they exist in the strategies and means that each, in the face of these realities adopts to survive, resist and control the other. For F the means of survival was opiates, withdrawal and violence - each of which significant obstructed his capacity, and inclination, to co-produce.   F also highlights the high levels of addiction and maintenance prescribing that goes on within prisons, resulting in significant proportions of the prison population (though 'easier to handle') being effectively 'out of the game'.   Other obstacles include F's formative experiences of authority and of statutory services, and an acute sense of shame and failure. Reflecting on the interactive effect of the above obstacles on his motivation and capacity for co-production, F observes:

> It doesnae matter who you're speaking to, for whatever knowledge they've got about life in general, but there's got to be a capacity for growth, mentally and emotionally. It's like coming through adolescence, coming through childhood, being nurtured and being protected - I don't believe I got any of they things. And it's like, coming into a prison system, it's like, no just have I no had it, I really didnae want it by that time. And so.

It is this experience of the system, and his awareness of the 'hundreds' of others experiencing something similar, that underpins F's motivation for co-production:

That's why I'm a big pusher for PP?PF. Within that system, within these institutions - let me tell you there's a lot of people. An' there's no a place within the Scottish prison system - whether it be a part of these institutions - that somebody could go tae to start to get a grasp on [life].

Experience of co-production beyond justice services

F's experience of co-production, in respect of his own progression and recovery, occurs beyond the prison, beyond justice services and beyond statutory intervention. It occurs in the context of voluntary and residential drug rehabilitation services, in the context of supportive and resource-full relationships (including peer relationships) and it occurs gradually and iteratively.   For F, co-production neither starts nor follows from an instrumental or normative decision to turn his life around; rather that process and outcome occurs as F – from a position of (relative) physical and psychological security – begins to develop the insight, capacity and inclination to make that choice.   For F then, the seeds of co-production (and in turn progression, desistance and recovery) include a need to escape the life he knew, the availability of relevant and recognisable help, and the experience of a physical and psychological environment where co-production becomes possible.

Beyond these initial reasons for co-producing (and we are talking about co-production at its most basic level here), F's account of his progress - from despondent 'addict'/'offender'/'prisoner' to a conscious and responsible actor - foregrounds a number of other variables at play in this process, and in doing so attests to the interplay of objective and subjective factors that converge to trigger, aid and assist co-production. Attempting to articulate 'how' he did it, F explains:

It was, I had to, I became, it was - you know it was aboot education for me. It was aboot, I was lucky enough that I was able to leave Glasgow. I was able to leave Glasgow and get away doon tae England, go into a rehab centre doon there. You know - where I was very fortunate to be able to meet people who

had *very* similar life experiences to me. I think I found a grounding there. It was like, it was a lot of progress, a revelation. You know being able to sort o see things in my life. Being able to see the kind of road I came doon.

Here and elsewhere F describes the interactive affect of education, place, helping relationships, peer support, choice and an element of good fortune; and the ways in which these objective entities interact with and aid more subjective processes of openness, worth, insight, emotional and psychological growth and, ultimately, progression.

Further, F referred frequently, often with great emotion, to the significance of (voluntary) relationships in his co-productive journey, relationships that were mostly but not exclusively with people with like experiences but who were 'a wee bit further down the road'. Specifically, F described relationships that were accepting, affirming, forgiving, generous, protecting, healing and nurturing; relationships that were educative, insightful and revelatory; and relationships through which F developed the motivation and the capacity to understand, accept and nurture himself. Again, many of these relationships, and the nurturing words spoken within them, had a profound and transformative effect:

> And there was people that could say different things to me, and I don't know if they said them cause they had the knowledge to know it was gonna have an impact on me. I would tell people certain things like how I had grew up in my life and whatever and it was like, I remember one guy turning round and going like that to me: '[F] some people had they kinds of dads where they got a doing and they never got a cuddle and got sent back out to fight before they got another doing. That shouldnae happen to you when you're a wee boy'. And a remember getting so emotional when the guy said that to me. *And it was like, I don't know, I just became open, to let …* (emphasis added).

> … There was one guy in particular who had, maybe no a similar upbringing to me but very similar prison experience. The amount of jail sentences he had

done and what have you. When I went away doon there, this guy was five year doon the road fae it. … And ah remember him taking me to the side and he said: 'Look F I know what it's like … but listen, any time you're needing a hand wi' something'. And he would always come in and he would always gi me a wee bit of his time.

Describing the significance of these relationships:

> … I remember before going to prison, looking at that big thing called life and going: am no playing, am no playing. Looking at people going and getting jobs and going to college; I was like, it's no something I want to go and dae. Feeling really intimidated wi' it; having nae understanding o it. In some ways, [post rehab] I was that same person, except I had aw these, except I had aw these people going like that …

F also placed particular emphasis on the importance of self-insight and self-development in his developing capacity to co-produce. Though F alluded to his acquisition of formal qualifications, the most important education for F was his developing understanding and insight into himself. Explaining the ups and downs of his co-productive journey of recovery:

> There was things I didnae understand. This was stuff I'd taken into prison wi me. Quite a lot of stuff had happened in my childhood. I'd seen a lot of stuff fae an early age. Stuff that somebody growing up should never see.   It was like, well I didnae know how to trust. There wasnae a lot of love in me. There was a lot of anger in me. You take all that stuff wi' you into a prison environment, into an institutionalised way of life. … And I had this preconceived idea of how somebody goes and lives a life, but I didnae know how to dae it. I thought I knew how to dae it but I didane. I classed myself as a failure. [People] would say: 'F, how could somebody who's never ridden a bike' [emotion].   And that was a big part of it. You need to learn to do these things wee man.

> It was like, see fae a workers point of view, some of the things that were put into my heid … I've kind of looked at wee areas myself. See if that computer wasnae working, you wouldnae try and use it. You would get it fixed. See my heid, my heid was broke. So it had to get fixed before you could start using it.

F's narrative also underscores that co-production became *more* possible post detox – that is, without the significant encumbrance of addiction. Equally, co-production is more possible for him now – with the capital he has acquired over the last fourteen years – than it was then.

Finally, F's narrative attends to the place of personal responsibility in the co-productive process. For F, this is 'where change hinges'. Relaying a recent exchange with a fellow (and recently released) member of PP?PF, F explains:

> And I asked him one thing. Ah says, who's the problem mate. I was delighted when he went, I'm the problem F. Other people might cause me problems but am the problem. It's my reactions that will cause me problems. Bingo - see when you to that stage, that's where change hinges.

As the above makes clear, sitting alongside the above aids to the inter-related processes of co-production, progression and change, there exist various and sometimes overwhelming obstacles – many of which are already identified. In as much then as F's narrative is a story of co-production, progression and desistance, it is at the same time a story of the risk, relapse and struggle that frequently accompanies that journey. Concluding his narrative and, again, gently correcting my attempt to frame his progression in the inadequate and arguably unrealistic contours of 'what works', F explains: 'I would say I made it work to an extent'.

Experience of co-production as a citizen

F discussed his experience of co-production as a citizen in general terms – perhaps reflecting his aforementioned exit of sorts from this area. However it was clear that

co-production had been a big part of F's life, and that F had been a big part of co-production within drug and justice services. F made reference to co-productive roles within the Scottish Prison System, the Violence Reduction Unit, the Scottish Recovery Consortium, SAMH, the Routes Out of Prison project and, most recently, PP?PF. Many of these roles and positions were paid, innovative and relatively high profile.   Most were relatively short term, reflecting the short term funding arrangements that often accompany innovative ventures.

Why

As indicated, F's motivation for co-production as a citizen arises from his experience of having 'been there'. It is about observing a significant gap in existing provision and it is about seeking to bridge that gap – either as a mentor or life coach, or through working with traditional providers to provide more relevant services. For F, co-production is also about progression. It is about going on, giving back and doing good:

> It's like there's loads of people oot there like me, who have addressed areas of their life, who have went on and done some really good things wi' their life. And what I like about them is they're still contributing in some way. And it's at a level where, it's no working in the professional field. A lot of the things that are going on out there that help people the best are [outside of that].

Like other participants F also found himself co-producing because he 'got a call one day', because he 'got asked to be on the advisory group', because he 'got asked to help'. As he explains:

> They came to me. Don't ask me who told them but they came to me and they says: '[F] we've been told a wee bit about you and we're doing this thing, do you want to dae it?' See looking back I don't know if it was – I think it was quite a dangerous thing to take someone fae where I'd been back into prison.

Aids and obstacles

In unpacking F's experience of citizen co-production, much of the conversation centred on the complexity and costs of co-producing. In part, this likely reflects F's considerable experience in this area. At the same time it appeared to reflect F's ambivalent relationship to co-production. Though F (like B) remained committed to co-production as a means of providing relevant pathways out of the justice system, there was also a distinct ambivalence in respect of his own place and progression within that evolving landscape. As F mused: 'there comes a time for people when they need to move away fae it, for their own growth reasons'.

Considering the aids to co-production, for F, successful co-production requires equal and collective participation. As noted, in the context of a person's sentence or resettlement this requires everyone to work together, to respect the stakes, and to do their bit. It involves recognising the particular role, responsibility and resource of the person completing a sentence. And it involves recognising the particular role, responsibility and resource of those helping:

> But there's two things I know and I think this is tried and tested - most people would agree with this: One is that you cannie help somebody who's either no ready or doesnae want help. Two, the best way you can help somebody is help them help themselves.

Following his assertion that the best way to help people is to help them help themselves, F adds: 'but see if you've no got pathways that lead to that'. For F, the pathways that lead to people being able to help themselves include but go beyond helping a person to find a house or a job. They are pathways that *also* attend to the emotional, psychological, social and intellectual developments that make these outcomes meaningful and sustainable. Discussing this in the context of his mentoring experience, F explains:

> It's like: you get a six week pre-release period. Usually where they are [at] their heid's that scrambled or whatever. They're [the service funders] talking about

benefits, they're talking about housing, they're talking about employability, their talking about training and - stuff that's irrelevant. … Right noo you've got a system in place that believes that getting somebody off benefits and getting somebody a job addresses their way of life - the stakeholders and the people that fund these things. I had a wee look at the recent work plan that's come oot [from the Scottish Government] and I found a wee bit in it about emotional growth, about mental development, addictions, and stuff like that. And see when I seen it I says: yes! But there's nae money in happiness and contentment. There naebody gonna put that in an outcomes system. That's no gonna get the big lottery [funding] up.

What F is describing here is the importance of person-centred services and opportunities that assist people to recover and reconstruct themselves; that attend to individual and holistic well-being, or, to borrow Alison Liebling's (2004) phrase: that enable human beings 'to flourish'. For F, these supports came in the form of voluntary and residential detox and rehabilitation services (twice), counselling, and relationships with people like him but who were a bit further down the road. However, like others, F knows that what helps one person may not help another, and what helps one person at one point in their journey may not help them at a later stage in their journey. As F puts it in relation to his own journey of recovery: 'it takes a different spanner for every nut'. It is insights like these - realised and made meaningful through a person's lived experience - that speak to the potential and challenge of co-production. It is insights like these that cause F to 'push aside' or 'turn upside doon' the paperwork that seeks to streamline his (funded) mentoring activity and attend to the person in front of him. And it insights like these that can become threatened, or just less important, as co-production moves into the constraints of funded mainstream provision (see also D and E's narrative). Discussing this in the context of unfolding peer mentoring opportunities in the justice arena, and the potential and challenge that new opportunities in this area present for PP?PF and its members, F reflects: 'what happens now will define the project'.

Many of the aids identified above are, as F notes, 'well kent' principles. However, in a justice context where the force of individual compliance threatens to eclipse the necessity and potential of participation and co-production, they are principles that bear repeating. Moreover, F's insight in this area serves as an important reminder that, narrowly conceived, neither co-production nor the people progressing it can counter the challenge of individual progression and change in a society that is ambivalent about its role and responsibility in that process.

Obstacles

The identified obstacles to co-production connect with those identified by others. Discussed mostly in the context of partnerships between citizens and professional providers they include: the force and intractability of the prison regime, its priorities and its processes, the obstacle of a 'closed mind' (on the part of professionals and others), and 'the open hostility some professionals harbour towards offenders' – reformed or not. F likened the challenge of co-production in this context to that of 'trying to tame a beast'.

Like E, F also identifies professional 'preciousness'- both at an individual case level and at a service provision level - as a major barrier to co-production within justice services. F recounts, for example, being taken to task by a professional partner for doing something on behalf of a service user that was perceived to be someone else's job. Similarly, F recounts being quizzed by a major justice provider about the new co-ordinator of PP?PF who, in a climate of funding cuts, was perceived by some as a threat to existing providers. By way of explanation, F observes simply: 'it's a cut throat industry'.

F's narrative also gives voice to the personal costs of co-producing. Discussing co-production in the context of his own journey of progression, F reflects:

> I think, there's, I maybe shouldnae have come and done this as early as I did. I actually, after a year of doing this, went away, left and went into the building trade for a couple of year and then came back to it again. And I can remember

at the time of my life it was like a weight being lifted aff o' me. An' when I came back to it, to dae it again - the stuff that I was doing in the building trade was a lot more financially beneficial believe you me. But there's time. There's never a greater saying than time's a great healer. After coming back after a few year away fae daing it I had a wee bit mair to offer, a wee bit mair experience. But there has been times where there's been things going on for me where I've no been as effective as I can be.

F goes on to describe the pressure of the work, the feeling that you are not doing enough for someone, the hostility and fear he sometimes experienced going back into prisons, and the experience of feeling inadequate and ill-equipped:

I says to [PP?PF co-ordinator:] 'you need to be careful …'   It's like, sorry mate but, till somebody's been a few years oot the jail it's dangerous to let them go back in there; for their benefit and the people they are supposed to be helping. Know how I know? Cos I experienced it. I was going in and I'd met these people and, I never knew all this stuff was going on like the recovery movement and aw stuff like that. And these people would just be saying: 'what do you think F?'

But I've learned that ye are gonna make mistakes, nabodies perfect … I had to get to a stage where, where I could be alright wi' this stuff. Early doors I would be like - it can consume large parts, areas. Depending on where you are at in your ane [recovery] you need enough energy for yoursel' and what's going on in your own life. And if what you're daing in that area is taking all of that; I've seen it having negative consequences. I've seen people going back to it who I've worked wi'. I've seen people relapse. I think the support … a support mechanism [needs to] be created that's gonna pick up on these things.

Like others, F also describes the experience of feeling used or exploited. Recalling one such example, which resulted in F's offending history filling the centre pages of a national newspaper:

> I remember they took me into Barlinnie and photographed me wi all these big funders and that. That's another thing, I wouldnae dae 'hings like that any mair. I wouldnae allow myself to be put forward like that noo.

For these reasons and others, F observes that in the same way that co-production can be 'something to grab onto' in journeys of progression, it can also become something that you need to 'move away fae':

> There comes a time for people when they need to move away fae it for their own growth reasons. But when they're tied doon to it and it's a wage and it's a job, you know it starts to have the opposite effect. And see that individual's growth? And like you don't stand still in this game Trish, see if you're no going forwards, you're going backwards.

At the point of our conversation F was clearly re-negotiating his relationship to co-production and to the 'opportunities' available within that. At the centre of that negotiation process was a strong sense of choice, capacity, insight and humility – attributes that emerge as both the outcome and process practice of meaningful co-production.

How to progress co-production?

Considering, briefly, how to progress co-production, F identified a need for partnership agreements between the different organisations working within the field, a need for training and support for those who have come through the justice system, and a need for relevant and resourced pathways out of the justice system.

Part four. Discussion and analysis

Introduction

This section provides analysis and discussion of the insights and findings that emerge from the narratives presented in part three. As a 'meta-analysis' it is not possible to attend fully to the depth, detail and complexity of those insights, accordingly this chapter is offered as an addition rather than as an alternative to the more particular analyses presented there. The structure mirrors that of the preceding narratives and considers the research findings as they emerge from the following areas of analysis (though, again, there is clear overlap across these areas):

- Biography
- Defining co-production?
- Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence
- Experience of co-production as a citizen
- How to progress co-production?

In adhering to the above structure this discussion connects clearly with the initial research questions which, drawing on participant experiences of the justice system, sought to explore and unpack the meaning, relevance, possibility and potential of co-production in the criminal justice context.

As discussed in part two, the analysis, interpretation and discussion that follows is textured by the position and partialities of the analysts, and by my voice in particular. I bring to this process the (considered) commitments, responsibilities, partialities and constraints discussed in part two, in much the same way that you the reader of this

inquiry inevitably bring yours. The meaning that emerges then from this discussion is co-created and dialogic, and therein lies its potential.

Biography

Most of the research conversations opened with the question: can you tell me a little about yourself?[27] In asking this question my intention was two-fold: I wanted to elicit a biographical context for the narrative that followed; and in doing so to enable participants to define themselves on their terms; to tell their story.   Of course every biography is constrained by and produced for its particular context. The biographies assembled here are no different. They were produced in a particular space and time. Participants chose to tell some things and not others. I as researcher have done the same. Yet, within this opening question, and the method of analysis and representation that followed, was an attempt to get beyond the narrow and offence-centred confines of 'sample data' in justice research, to share the power and process of representation, and to aid the recovery of 'voice' through the research process.

Biography, Narrative and Voice

The stories that followed surprised me.   I was surprised by the detailed narratives that mostly followed my opening question (for some the 'opening' story was the whole story), by the depth of engagement, and by the value participants placed on narrating their story. It became apparent that this process was about more than providing a biographical context for the 'data' that followed. It was also, for each, about the broader discovery and recovery of voice – an empowering and enabling process valuable because it was rare. As A explains discussing the importance of having opportunity to tell your story:

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[27] In two conversations, where the participants took the lead, this question followed later.

Think that's important because that's what gives you the foundations to build and move on … you can't develop and build something unless you've got foundations to start with. … In my own experience, over all the years, the best pieces of work and the best bits of service user involvement have actually been the bits at the very beginning; the bits where you lay open yourself and when you talk about your experience. That gives you that starting point. People can begin to listen and begin to accept you and acknowledge you as a person.

Echoing this, E describes the discovery of voice through another co-productive relationship:

I'm not going to let [x] hear this but it was very lucky for us that I was introduced to [x], as someone who had a compassionate view and who had a great understanding of things. And through that connection … I've learned, I've discovered that I have a voice that can contribute to something … And to realise that you can share your experiences - however dark or good - that that is valid, is part of the journey for every one of us. To be able to talk about it and to realise that - being heard is major. But that fact that that might then go towards a better understanding that might then go towards helping people - who knows how, that is, it's very empowering.

A key message to emerge from the biographies is that the process of telling and narrating one's story can be an important and empowering one. It can be a foundational process through which the person telling can discover or recover voice, respect, identity and hope; processes and outcomes deemed central to participation, co-production, progression, desistance and recovery (see also Burnett and Maruna, 2004; Rex, 1999). For the listener (and justice audience) it can be equally foundational, prompting an orientation that moves beyond ascribed roles and labels towards a relationship that is co-productive.   How this process and outcome is achieved is

explored in detail in the discussion that follows. For now, it finds expression in C's account of how co-production works:

> It's about giving people a voice who would not otherwise have that say. Co-production formalises it and talks about equality, getting out of the silo mentality. When you are in the public sector there is a hell of a lot of empires and silos being constructed and inherited in some cases, and co-production tries to smash through that by saying: first step is let's recognise we are equals.

Or, as A explains, it occurs 'when people not used to listening listen to people not used to talking'.

Biography as a reorientation

Beyond this overarching message it is difficult to summarise what the biographies tell us. In part, this is because each biography asserts the individuality of the narrator. Equally, it is because within these 'opening' stories participants introduce the multiple and overarching themes that form the discussion that follows. However, to attempt to summarise these stories too quickly is perhaps to miss the point. The biographies offered here are mostly *life* stories. They point to a bigger picture, a broader context, a whole life, within which a person's co-productive experience and insight sits.   Within these stories there are points of connection and difference (and we attend to some of that below) but first and foremost the telling of these stories gently beckons the reader (and arguably the justice audience) to attend to the whole story - that is the whole person; and in doing so to also orient our gaze outwards - to the person *in situ*, and to formulate our analysis and conclusions accordingly. Relatedly, these stories remind us that the insights that follow (co-production included) are not 'the be all and end all' but part of a broader, individualised, situated and more complex story. They caution against attempts to pin down what works and what does not in the co-production process (though they do speak to this) and invite us instead to hear these stories in their individuality and difference, and in the contexts in which they are

offered. As F cautions in response to my attempt to relocate his story within the smooth confines of 'what works': 'I would say I made it work *to an extent*'.

Proceeding then with the above in mind, the biographies also reveal points of significance, connection and difference in respect of the participant group. These biographical particulars are set out in part two and, as noted there, provide important contextual data for the findings presented. More broadly, the biographies offered tell the story of the diverse life experiences, relationships and events that led people into offending behaviour, the strikingly similar and mostly obstructive experience of justice services that followed from that, and the interactive experiences, relationships, opportunities and environments that enabled people to move on from that and into something good - co-production included. In this respect the stories offered are desistance stories and connect clearly with the findings emerging from that important body of literature (see, for example, Farrall, 2002a; Maruna, 2001; Weaver & McNeill, 2007). But they are also more than that. In each of the narratives desistance occurs as part of a broader and on-going process of progression and recovery – a process through which participants variously rebuild their worth, identity, capacity and, ultimately, their lives. Stopping offending emerges as *a part of* those important processes, processes that are at their core deeply co-productive (see also Brown & Kandirikirira 2007; Scottish Government, 2008b).

These initial messages have significant implications for penal strategies centred increasingly - and sometimes exclusively - on offending behaviour, risk, punishment and control.   As argued in part one, this focus may be defensible if the function of justice services lies exclusively in the management of 'dangerous populations' (Feeley & Simon, 1992). But if, as current policy indicates (in Scotland and beyond), justice is about more than that; if it is also and equally about reducing re-offending through the creation of opportunities within a sentence for individual progression, growth, payback, desistance and transformation, then we need to design and develop sentences where these more challenging and co-productive outcomes are not only possible but probable.   The findings above suggest that listening to those sentenced is

a foundational part of that process – a process that allows 'offenders' to become people, with identities, histories and futures. But this is not just about professionals (and others) listening. It is about creating space within and beyond justice services for voice and for meaningful, purposeful and progressive participation; that is, a space where those sentenced can recognise, make sense of and tell their story, and through that foundational process begin to take ownership and responsibility for it.   In social work practice this empowering and potentially transformative process is sometimes called assessment (see, for example, Smale, Tuson, Biehal, & Marsh, 1993). In criminal justice practice this is frequently reduced to 'report writing' (Gelsthorpe, Raynor & Robinson, 2010). Co-production - both within and beyond a sentence - presents opportunity for the re-creation of this transformative space and in this area alone it holds both relevance and potential.

Defining co-production

Noting the recent political push for co-production (Bovaird, 2007), alongside the relatively uncharted nature of co-production in the justice context (Weaver & McCulloch, 2013), a key aim of the inquiry was to explore participant perspectives on the meaning and relevance of co-production in this particular sphere.

For most, the term co-production was new and initially distancing. The concept however was familiar and connected initially with participant experiences *outside of* the criminal justice system. In this broader context co-production was a fairly straightforward and valued concept and practice.   It was about people working together in a respectful and even-handed way; it was about equality and sharing power; it was about participation, reciprocity and interdependence between actors, and it was about progression and change. E's definition captures many of these defining features and functions:

> In simple terms I see co-production … as people working together in a practical and even-handed way towards a shared understanding for a way forward. This requires all involved to recognise individual skills, qualities and responsibilities alongside a lack of personal hierarchy - no one is more or less influential.

The complexity of co-production emerged when participants considered co-production in the particular context of statutory criminal justice provision, and in their lived experience of that. Here, participants remained clear about what co-production meant they simply struggled to recognise or imagine that in the contemporary justice context.   Considered from this vantage point, all but one of the participants questioned the possibility of co-production in the context of statutory criminal justice relationships. As C explains speaking from his experience of prison:

> To me there is a big disconnect between theory and practice. Theoretically co-production means to co-plan, co-do, co-evaluate. In the system there's not much opportunity for planning or getting involved in your sentence. In fact the exact opposite is the case … You are on the bottom rung. In prison the purpose of the sentence is to put you in your place - as an offender.
>
> … If you were to suggest that prisoners should be involved in the running of the jail they would laugh you all the way to a headline in the Daily Mail.

Or, as A observes, speaking from her experience of CS:

> I think it's a very difficult phrase … co-production to me really means that everybody should be on an equal playing field. …. And I suppose there is a bit of me that thinks well, within the criminal justice system can you have co-production if you have people that are on statutory orders? Because they are there because they have to be there. They are not there because they want to be there. So there is this bit about, is it possible to have co-production when

everybody is going to be treated as an equal? But if someone is on a statutory order they are not equal.

For most, there was an immediate and obvious tension between the meaning, aspiration and ideals of co-production, and the experienced realities of statutory justice provision. This tension revolved principally around issues of power, in terms of who has it, who does not and how it is used; around the perceived purpose and priorities of criminal justice services - as C asserts: 'one it's security, two is politics, three it's public opinion', and around the cultures, regimes, failures and 'series of disconnects' that follow from those priorities. Relatedly, participants expressed concern that the emergence of co-production in the criminal justice system was or would become another 'tokenistic', 'top down', 'tick box process' or, as D put it, another example of the 'bullshit bingo' considered common in public service policy, provision and reform. As D concludes, comparing emerging rhetoric in this area with the reality she experiences in supporting people within the justice system: 'a wee observation of how co-production is working my end … system failure from start to finish'.

Yet, located alongside this sometimes cynical though arguably realistic appraisal of co-production in the justice context (see, for example, Burnett & Maruna, 2004) there also existed, for all, a clear hope, vision and conviction that co-production was not only possible but pivotal within this unlikely environment. Mostly, this vision was fuelled by participants' experiential belief that co-production was a necessary feature of meaningful, productive and progressive justice relationships. Here, co-production was more than an interesting or innovative approach; it was a pivotal process in individual journeys of desistance, change and progression. Hope in this area was also fuelled by the more nuanced experience of justice services that sometimes lay beneath dominating experiences of punishment and control, and by the observed opportunities for co-production unfolding in the present moment. As E (who initially questioned the relevance of his justice experience to the research focus) observed in respect of the co-productive opportunities now available to PP?PF and its ('ex-offender') members:

> We, as a group, would never have believed it possible if it hadn't happened right in front of us, [we] would not have recognised that the government might ask, might value what we might be able to do. And we would not have been able to recognise that the prison service might have wanted us to do it.

Notwithstanding the above, most struggled to imagine the possibility of co-production between those completing a sentence and those supervising it. Accordingly, the primary opportunity for co-production in justice provision was seen to reside in relationships between professional providers and 'ex-offenders'. Relatedly, many passionately advanced a vision of co-production between people serving a sentence and those who had come through the system (now commonly known as peer mentoring), while others talked excitedly about the experience and potential of co-production in the form of mutual aid or collective action.   In part this likely reflects the stated vision and focus of PP?PF as an organisation – an organisation committed to using the 'collective experiences, abilities, skills, commitments and energies [of] people who have been through the system to reduce re-offending and to help build safer communities' (PP?PF, 2013). It likely also reflects the increasingly recognised value of peer mentoring and mutual aid forms of co-production in individual journeys of progression, and the considerable investment in this form at the present moment (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Government, 2013a). But it also reflects a deep ambivalence amongst participants regarding the possibility of co-production between those sentenced and those supervising within the constrained context, contours and content of a statutory criminal justice sentence.

Co-production as a complex, multi-dimensional and liquid phenomenon

Perhaps reflecting the above caveats and constraints, co-production emerged as a complex, multi-dimensional and liquid phenomenon. Co-production did not occur neatly or uniformly in the two key areas we set out to explore (indeed the above introduces a third form of co-production in the form of mutual aid). Rather, it

occurred variously and flexibly within, beyond and across these areas. For example, in the context of completing a sentence co-production occurred (or did not occur) in relationships between the person sentenced and the person supervising. It occurred, sometimes, between prisoners and prison staff in the delivery of prison services and supports (in the form, for example, of peer tutoring or prison listening), and it occurred between prisoners in the delivery and receipt of those services. Across these areas co-production was vacillating, contingent and liquid – occurring and taking on a variety of shapes and forms as it was negotiated, constructed and reconstructed by the actors involved. In the 'less impossible' context of citizen co-production, co-production was similarly fluid occurring mostly as an emergent and uncharted phenomenon. In sum, co-production was messy. It was often difficult to grasp, contain or define. As noted in part one, this messiness (or elasticity) is not uncommon to co-production and is perhaps one of the hallmarks of an emergent and participatory practice being constructed in new and fluid relationships and in constrained and contested spaces (see, for example, Harris and Boyle, 2009). Further, it is worth noting that participants were unperturbed by this elasticity, and in discussion moved between the different forms with ease. However, in an attempt to aid our navigation through these different forms the principal 'types' of co-productive relationships described are set out in the table 1 below[28]:

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[28] This is not intended as an exhaustive list of co-productive activity in the justice context. It is an outline of the types of co-production described by the research participants. For example, the research conversations did not explore co-productive relationships between individuals and communities. Nonetheless, the forms identified connect clearly with existing 'typologies' of co-production (see, for example, Bovaird, 2007; Weaver, 2012).

Table 1: Types of co-production in the justice context, as described by participants

Co-production between people completing a sentence and professional providers	Co-production between professional providers and citizens (or 'ex-offenders')	Co-production between citizen-providers and people completing a sentence	Co-production between citizens and/or people completing a sentence	Co-production between citizens and wider services/society[29] (i.e. non-justice communities)
As a means of progressing an individual sentence.	As a means of service development, delivery and/or evaluation.	As a means of service delivery, i.e. in the form of peer mentoring	As a form of mutual aid or collective action.	As a means, amongst other things, of countering the stigma, prejudice and fear that surrounds those who have come through the justice system.
As a means of service development, evaluation or review.				
As a means of service delivery, i.e. in the form of peer tutoring, prison listening, and other forms of 'employment' or 'purposeful activity' that takes place within a prison.				

[29] This form of co-production was not discussed directly in the research conversations. However, in analysing the research conversations it was clear that many participants were engaged in purposeful co-productive activity outside of the justice context. This activity was seen to provide important opportunity to counter the stigma and prejudice that frequently surrounds people who use justice services.

We return to the above forms (and functions) of co-production in the discussion that follows. For now, the above highlights the multiple opportunities for co-production in the justice context, that co-production *is* occurring - albeit with a small 'c', and that in some forms it has been doing so for some time.

Co-production as a moral project

Also evident in the version and vision of co-production advanced by participants was an explicit relationship between co-production and humanitarian values. As noted, for most of the participants co-production was more than an interesting or innovative approach. It was a deeply held moral and political conviction; for some even a way of life. It was fuelled mostly by participants' acute experience and/or observation of injustice within and beyond the justice system, though the 'seeds' of a person's co-productive stance were often traceable in earlier life experiences. The foundational values of co-production are introduced in the above discussion. They were variously expressed as:

- *Respect for persons*: including a belief in the individuality, worth, capacity and potential of each person to do good things
- *Equality amongst persons*, irrespective of a person's role, status, authority and previous conduct
- *Hope*
- A belief in the transformative potential of *participation, co-operation, mutuality, reciprocity and interdependence* in human relationships

For the participants, co-production was a practical, straightforward and necessary expression of these values.

In a climate where it has become contentious to talk about criminal justice as an explicitly moral or value based project (at least in relation to interactions with people who offend) the re-centring of these issues in justice talk is important.   For the participants in this study the reassertion of humanitarian values was not simply about

progressing an ethical justice practice (though that was important) it was about progressing an effective, responsive and hopeful one. This message connects closely with the research findings discussed in part one, and also with Alison Liebling's (2004, 2012) work on the 'moral performance' of penal interventions. In the latter Liebling makes a case for attending more closely – now on effectiveness grounds - to the 'moral quality' of justice interventions by highlighting the important relationship that exists between this issues and opportunities for individual growth and progression.

Co-production as an ambitious, challenging and progressive project

Connecting with the above, the co-production advanced by participants emerged as an ambitious, challenging and progressive project. Though resolutely grounded and practical, participants frequently discussed co-production in the context of progressing an ideal, dream or vision. It was about developing 'a new set of connections'. It was about being flexible and responsive. It was sometimes risky and transgressive. And it was about discovering different ways of seeing and doing through new, emergent and responsive relationships. As E sums up: it is about 'making real what doesn't currently exist'. And as A concludes: 'what matters is whether anything changes as a result'. As D observes, for some this might be considered an 'airy fairy' project. For the participants it was an authentic, relevant and uncompromising one, informed by their experience and analysis of what is needed for individual, service and social progression within and beyond the justice context.

We return to the particular features of co-production in the sections that follow. For now, the research conversations advanced a grounded, just, ambitious and relevant vision of co-production for the criminal justice context. Though alert to the risks and obstacles, participants were not only hopeful regarding the meaning, value and potential of co-production for justice services, most were actively engaged in advancing that.

Experience of co-production

Central to the research inquiry was a desire to elicit and explore participant experiences of co-production across two key areas. First, to explore participant experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence; and second, to explore experience of co-production as a person who, having come through the justice system, was now choosing to use that experience for good.   In exploring these areas our aim was to begin to unpack the meaning, mechanisms and value of co-production in the justice context. Specifically, we sought to understand:

- What is occurring?
- Why co-production occurs?
- How that occurs (what aids and obstructs co-production)?

Experience of co-production as a person completing a sentence

What?

None of the participants identified their criminal justice experience as a co-productive one. For many, the idea that their sentence might be constructed in this way was, initially, surprising and confusing.   Relatedly, five of the six participants struggled to recognise a progressive purpose to their sentence. Rather, the predominant experience described was one of punishment, judgement, humiliation, depersonalisation and a 'total imbalance of power', within which the primary function of a sentence was experienced as being 'to put you in your place, as an offender'.   For most this was a distancing, disenfranchising and disorientating experience that, for some, directly obstructed their capacity to cope far less co-produce.

In contrast, B described what emerges as a 'qualified' form of co-production within her prison and community justice experience, an experience characterised by positive,

humane, reciprocal and productive relationships located within clearly defined roles and boundaries. Relatedly, for others, within a dominating narrative of punishment and control there emerged counter experiences where co-production is at least emergent in the relationships described. Here we observe a more nuanced picture of individual justice experiences, suggesting some diversity and potential within that. Importantly, though derived from a small sample group the justice experiences described here are broadly comparable with those reported in other larger scale analyses (see, for example, The Aldridge Foundation & Johnson, 2008; Armstrong & Weaver, 2010; Liebling 2004)[30].

Three of the participants also described significant and transformative co-productive experiences that occurred alongside but *beyond* justice services. Here co-production occurred beyond the prison, beyond community justice and beyond statutory services. It occurred, or was triggered, in the context of voluntary social work relationships (A), in a voluntary relationship with a lawyer (D), through voluntary mutual aid opportunity in the form of AA and NA (D), and in the context of voluntary and residential drug rehabilitation services (F). Significantly, co-production occurred gradually and iteratively in these examples as people developed the insight, capacity, motivation and hope required to recognise and respond to co-productive opportunity available. Moreover, the co-productive capacity developed within these voluntary relationships directly aided a person's co-productive capacity within statutory justice relationships (albeit with clear constraints).

Further, co-production emerged in people's activity as a 'provider' of support to others while completing their sentence.   This is most pronounced in B and E's narrative but is emergent in A and C's.   Here co-production occurs in activity as a peer tutor, as a prison librarian, and in an array of other formal and informal acts that involve a person completing a sentence (sometimes at the request of a justice professional) getting

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[30] It is worth noting that Weaver and Armstrong report slightly more positive experiences of community based sentences than those reported here. This difference likely reflects a range of factors, not least the fact that participants in Armstrong and Weaver's study were reporting on experiences of punishment while our participants were reporting on experiences of co-production (so creating a different context for reflection and analysis).

alongside and supporting a fellow prisoner. In this form, co-production emerges as an insightful, progressive and transformative experience:

> So I was actively involved in helping others who were, I suppose in simple terms, my peers because we were all on short sentences. … And I settled down to working hard to be, in all intents I suppose, a simple good prisoner. I would do my stuff, so that was busy, busy, busy; and it took me all over the prison. And I worked … with all sorts of folk. And through that contact I realised that I was very lucky. Because I didn't have an addiction, I didn't have - I probably had had clinical depression but that was addressed by everything else that was going on; I could read and write; and I hadn't lost all of my family. And that was quite an informative and formative process to go through for me. (See also B's account of this process).

Noting the significance of these experiences for those involved, this would appear to be an important opportunity for co-production – and progression– within a sentence (see also Devilly, Sorbello, Eccleston & Ward, 2005; Dhaliwal & Harrower, 2009; Maruna, 2001). However, as Perrin (2013) notes, it is one that is mostly overlooked within existing justice policy and practice.

Why co-produce?

For some, the idea of co-production in the criminal justice context is a peculiar and perplexing one. Certainly there exists an array of obstacles in the culture, priorities and practices that dictate and define the contemporary criminal justice experience. As one academic reviewer questioned responding to an early manuscript on the subject: why co-produce a process of punishment? As the above suggests, co-production is not the norm in the progression of a justice sentence (though we might equally observe from the above that progression is not the norm in a justice sentence). However, noting the broader, progressive and arguably co-productive aims of sentencing (see, for example, Scottish Government, 2010; Scottish Prison Service, 2013a), and the fact

that almost all of the participants chose at some point in their inter-related journey of progression, desistance and recovery to co-produce, it seems important to explore why and how they chose to do so.

Participants' reasons for co-producing (or not) in the context of their sentence connect closely with the identified aids and obstacles to co-production. Mostly, co-production emerged less as a conscious or wilful choice and more as a normative response to the situation, relationships and/or environment a person found themselves in. Broadly speaking, participants co-produced:

- when they experienced relevant and recognisable opportunity
- when they possessed capacity for co-production, or found opportunity to develop requisite capacity
- when they recognised and valued the rewards of co-producing

The above reasons emerge clearly in B and E's qualified accounts of co-production, though they exist also in the narratives of A, C, D and F – most of whom find co-productive opportunity beyond justice services. In this respect, each of the narratives reveals a normative motivation and capacity for co-production.   However, the realisation of that motivation and capacity is greatly affected by the existence or absence of opportunity and reward. The above reasons also explain the absence of co-production within individual justice experiences. For most, the absence of co-production was attributed to the absence of one or all of these 'requirements', or to a person's inability to recognise and/or respond to the existence of them. As C reflected reviewing his draft narrative: 'I don't think that I deliberately chose not to enter into the co-production arena, it was just that no opportunities really existed within [the prison] for that to truly happen'. Relatedly, as E observed, contrasting his own experience, opportunity and capacity with that of other prisoners:

> That's the big thing. For people who have been born and brought up in a situation where they are not in connection with in any way, shape or form the idea of choice, or comfort, or opportunity, they will not have been given the space to learn and realise that they have those things. And so if an opportunity

comes along and stands in front of them they won't recognise it. And the prison service offers all sorts of things … But if you say: how do you fancy doing a PhD in nuclear physics? Or do you fancy learning to read and write? Education in each of those things is equally inaccessible or unidentifiable because they are not familiar with it, and it's not out of wilfulness.

Importantly, these findings suggest that the obstacles to co-production in the justice context lie less in the particularities, motivations or will of the 'user' group and more in the motivation and capacity of justice services to recognise and respond to those particularities and (fragile) motivations. Again, these findings present a particular challenge to the contemporary penal project. Criminal justice services are indisputably about punishment and public protection. But they are also, necessarily, about providing people who offend with opportunity and capital to stop offending, pay back, solve problems and make good – processes and outcomes that are indisputably co-productive. Progressing justice within criminal justice services requires that we attend equally, responsively and interactively to these interdependent aims and outcomes, and to the *opportunity*, *capital* and *reward* required to progress them. The following provides some insight into if and how we might do that.

How? (Aids and obstacles)

Identified aids and obstacles to co-production overlap with the reasons for co-production discussed above. They exist in the capital or 'stuff' that people bring with them when they enter the justice system. They exist in the opportunities or obstacles that exist within and beyond a sentence. And they exist in the connection or clash that occurs as these significant variables interact.

Co-production favours the capable

The narratives assembled make clear that co-production is significantly aided when the person completing a sentence possesses the basic capital required to co-produce; capital that connects closely with a person's life experience and opportunity. In sum,

co-production is aided and made easier when a person is physically and mentally well, when they feel safe and secure, when they are not drug or alcohol dependent, when they are not dealing with a history of abuse, when there are literate and educated, when they possess basic or well developed life skills, when they have access to purposeful activity or employment, and when they have access to support from family and/or friends. We might observe then that co-production is aided when participants are 'lucky' enough not to share the life histories, traits and associated problems common to most persistent offenders (see, for example, Maruna, 2001; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). As E reflects:

> When I came out, [my partner] said I was good evidence of how prison is a middle class process, a middle class construct. Because that's the only way I could have survived it because I was so relentlessly middle class. It ticked all the right boxes for me, in lots of ways. And because I could recognise opportunities, and was willing to make a decision to take them that meant that I was operating at the level prison was supposed to work at.

Co-production, capacity and opportunity

However, this is not the whole story. C for example possessed much of the capital outlined above yet found himself unable to co-produce in prison because of the absence of opportunity (though C's account of the 'booking in' process suggests there is more going on here than absence of opportunity.). Similarly, A, D and F's journey makes clear that there is much more to co-production than one's life experience or capital. In each of these stories co-production is also closely connected to relevant and recognisable opportunity: in the form of direct opportunities for co-production, and in the form of opportunities to *develop and/or recover* capital for co-production. In the context of a person's sentence, recognisable opportunity for co-production and/or the development of co-productive capital was rare, though when it did occur it was a refreshing, progressive and productive experience. Accordingly, the identified aids to co-production emerge mostly from participant experiences of co-production beyond

justice services; though there emerged no discernible difference regarding what mattered across these thresholds.

Co-production, relationship and empowerment

Consistently, opportunity for co-production - and/or for the development of co-productive capital - occurred in the context of human relationships. Specifically, co-production was aided by individual and group relationships characterised by respect, choice and participation. It was aided by relationships that were affirming, that provided an experience of equality, and that were characterised by humility and empathy on the part of the helper. Co-production was aided by voluntary, non-punishing, educative, therapeutic, nurturing and reciprocal relationships, and by relationships that provided tangible opportunity for the discovery and recovery of worth, esteem, confidence, capacity and hope. Equally, co-production was aided by peer relationships, specifically relationships that provided opportunity for hope, growth, shared responsibility and challenge. Further, co-production was aided by honest, realistic and resource-rich relationships, where risk and relapse was permissible and where change was possible and sustainable.

The message emerging here is not simply that co-production occurs in relationship (though this is an important point), it is that co-production is aided and made possible in particular types of relationship. Repeatedly the relationships described by participants are relationships that involve the tangible sharing of power. They are, consistently, empowering relationships through which the formerly disempowered, disenfranchised or 'non-existent' person is allowed and enabled to discover and recover a positive identity. Across the narratives the process of empowerment involves being recognised as a person and not a number. It involves being recognised as a person with worth, capacity, voice, choice, responsibility and potential. And it involves the provision of opportunities that allow people to (re-)discover and realise that for themselves.

The consistency of these messages compels us to look closely at the relationship between power and progression in justice relationships. In this sample all but one of

the participants describe justice relationships that are profoundly disempowering; relationships where the primary purpose of a sentence is experienced as humiliation – that is 'to put you in your place, as an offender'. Such experiences appear to be commonplace in justice relationships and are rarely questioned, far less challenged (see, for example, McCulloch, 2010a). Even within more co-productive opportunities and relationships the participants in this inquiry raise important questions about what needs to occur for the meaningful transfer, acquisition and exercise of personal power. As F asserts discussing some of the good work going on in this area:

> They're [the funders] talking about benefits, they're talking about housing, they're talking about employability, their talking about training and - stuff that's irrelevant. … It's like [the] Routes Out of Prison[31] [project]: to a certain extent some good work is done. But, right noo you've got a system in place that believes that getting somebody off benefits and getting somebody a job addresses their way of life - the stakeholders and the people that fund these things. I had a wee look at the recent work plan that's come oot and I found a wee bit in it about emotional growth, about mental development, addictions, and stuff like that. And see when I seen it I says: 'yes!' But there's nae money in happiness and contentment. There naebody gonna put that in an outcomes system. That's no gonna get the big lottery [funding] up.

Each of the areas highlighted above emerge as critical to the process of co-production and progression. These are the services and opportunities that empower people to recover and reconstruct themselves, that create space for personal, social and psychological growth and well-being, and that, to borrow Liebling's phrase: enable

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[31] Routes out of Prison is a Scottish based service run by the Wise Group that works with prisoners before and after they are released to help prisoners acquire the life, social and employment skills they need to rejoin society. The service employs life coaches, many of whom have a background in offending, who are using their experiences in turning their lives around to help others. Most recently the Wise Group has co-developed 'New Routes' a Public Social Partnership created to design and deliver a national mentoring service for prolific male offenders with outcomes that will contribute to reducing re-offending. In 2013 the New Routes Partnership was awarded 2.9 million in funding from the Scottish Government's Reoffending Change fund. Further information is available at: http://www.thewisegroup.co.uk/content/default.asp.

human beings 'to flourish'. As noted, the challenge here is not simply that 'there's nae money in happiness and contentment'. It is that there remains an explicit tension in the idea of promoting happiness, wellbeing, opportunity, empowerment or human flourishing for people who are or have been involved in offending behaviour.

Co-production and environment

Relatedly, the research narratives reveal that co-production is aided when a person's internal and external environment is conducive to that. That is, when people feel physically and psychologically safe, when they have opportunity for emotional and psychological growth and well-being, when they experience the support of family or friends, and when they have opportunity for purposeful activity, training or employment. Notwithstanding the above, it is worth noting that co-production was often triggered amidst crisis. D and F, for example, discover opportunity for co-production (or at least the threads of that) at points of deep crisis and desperation. Similarly, B and E find opportunity for co-production (again in a qualified form) amidst the shock and trauma of incarceration. Importantly however, in each of these instances co-production only becomes possible when the person finds a safe and secure place within that crisis.

The above insights – and the narratives behind them - speak to the deeply individualised, interactive and iterative nature of co-production in the justice context. The above is not presented then as a checklist of how to 'do' co-production. Nor are we suggesting that all of the above aids need to be in place in order to progress co-production. Rather, the above is an attempt to map out the broad parameters of what, for the participants in this study, mattered most in the co-productive process. For these participants, co-production is aided when a person:

- possesses capacity for co-production
- experiences relevant and recognisable opportunity for co-production, and/or for the development of co-productive capacity
- experiences affirming and empowering relationship
- finds a space or environment conducive to co-production

It is worth noting that the above findings connect closely with existing scholarship on what matters in individual journeys of compliance, progression, desistance and recovery (see Bottoms, 2001; Brown & Kandirikirira 2007; Farrall, 2002a; Liebling, 2004; 2012; McCulloch, 2005; McNeill and Robinson, 2013; Scottish Government, 2008b; Weaver and McNeill, 2007). In this respect, the findings presented here assert the foundational place of co-production and of co-productive relationships within those important processes. Though then the above messages are notably challenging in the current correctional climate they are nonetheless deeply relevant. Advancing co-production in justice provision is not simply about progressing a more participatory, just or innovative practice. It is, fundamentally, about advancing a relevant, credible and effective one.

Obstacles

The identified obstacles to co-production emerge as the inverse of the above. In the context of completing a justice sanction they were felt, by most of the participants, to be everywhere. They exist in the neglectful, traumatic, disorientating and disempowering life experiences that a person frequently brings into the criminal justice system - and in the life problems and loss of expectation that follow from that. They exist in the politics, purposes and priorities that dictate and define the contemporary justice experience – and in the punitive, humiliating, depersonalised, distancing and disempowering regimes and relationships that flow from that. And they exist, as significantly, in the clash, disconnect and interplay of these realities as each party seeks to resist, control and survive the other.

The interactive and typically regressive effect of a person's life experience and the regime they are required to inhabit is expressed poignantly across the narratives (consider for example A, D and F's stories). It finds particular expression in E's account of the uniqueness of his experience and opportunity:

You have to remember that I was in the enhanced wing of the short-term part of [x] prison. The progression system went through from admission to progression to enhanced. And I missed the progression level. That was known inside as 'Fraggle Rock' because everyone in there had to be 'a muppet'. And it was … like a battlefield. Admission is a very tight regime, enhanced a very relaxed regime in comparison, and 'Fraggle Rock' - progression in the middle - was more like a zoo, a bigger space, a much more challenging space and a lot of people in it. Who were all, it was as if it was one big street and the factions had the spaces to polarise.

The idea that co-production – and the progression, desistance and recovery associated with it – might flourish in this battlefield, amidst these factions, and in this polarised space seems a fanciful one (at least in the forms being considered here). We know the difficult and obstructive life experiences that most people bring with them when they enter the justice system (Maruna, 2001; Social exclusion Unit, 2002). We know the punishing, distancing and obstructive environments and relationships that people typically encounter in their journey through that system (Burnett & Maruna, 2004). And in this inquiry we see the obstructive and regressive effect of these realities as they interact and clash. As a starting point we need to recognise that this *is* the starting point for most within the criminal justice system; a starting point that necessitates a more grounded and realistic engagement with what we expect and 'require' of our justice system and the people sentenced to it.

However, the narratives also point to the opportunities for movement, co-production and progression that exist, against the odds, within, across and beyond these spheres. In this study we see clearly that a person's formative life experience (and/or their 'mistakes') need not define them - though the opportunities made available to them frequently do. Similarly, we can observe that opportunity for co-production is not entirely dictated by the existence of a dominant culture or regime (though this has a profound effect) but by the opportunities and spaces available within and beyond that regime. Consistently, co-production, progression, desistance and recovery - which emerge here as fundamentally inter-connected processes and outcomes - follow

directly from relational opportunity for acceptance, respect and worth; and from relevant, tangible and resourced opportunities for growth, self-development, insight, empowerment and progression. In a landscape uneasy with the language of opportunity, empowerment, growth and progression for people completing justice sanctions these findings are significant and sobering. They require us to consider, in a more realistic and joined up way, what we want and what we can expect from our justice system. They require us to consider what we want and what we can expect from the people we sentence to that system. Only when we are willing to confront the gaps and disconnects that exists between these aspirations and realities can we meaningfully engage with the question of how to progress co-production, and justice more broadly, with people involved in offending behaviour.

Experience of co-production as a citizen

What?

Most of the participants described a variety of co-productive experiences as a citizen. Reflecting their experience of using services, half of the group described co-productive activity within and beyond the justice system (occurring also, for example, in the fields of mental health, substance misuse, the children's hearing system and social work education). Co-productive activity also occurred across statutory and voluntary lines and across paid and unpaid opportunities. The nature of activity described across these thresholds was diverse, encompassing individual, group and collective forms (see, for example, Weaver & McCulloch, 2013). In the criminal justice context, most of the experiences described were new and emergent and for many there was a particular energy associated with that. However, there were also clear lines of continuity between emergent justice experiences and participants' broader experiences of co-production.

Participants described three distinct but overlapping forms of co-production as a citizen within the justice context. First, there emerged a clear commitment to progressing structured peer mentoring opportunities within and beyond the prison, within which co-production was advanced as a significant opportunity for relevant and recognisable help. Second, participants described considerable opportunity for co-production between citizens and existing justice providers. Typically, this involved participants using their experience of the system to aid and advise those with responsibility for service delivery, development and evaluation. Activity in this area occurred mostly with statutory providers (and with the Scottish Prison Service in particular) and was mostly service-led. Lastly, participants described experience of co-production in the form of structured mutual aid, as experienced through membership of PP?PF. For most this was a new, precious, and empowering experience that impacted positively on individual journeys of progression, desistance and/or recovery.

There exist very few studies that examine citizen co-production in the justice context (see Clinks, 2008, 2011; Weaver, 2011, 2012; Weaver & McCulloch, 2013), fewer still that explore user/citizen experiences of that. Acknowledging then the very limited understanding of this emergent phenomenon, it is worth noting some of the particular features of the experiences described.

Co-production as part of something bigger

For all but one of the participants co-production emerged as part of something bigger. Co-production was rarely a 'side-line' or occasional activity; rather, for most, it was a fundamental part of their identity, values, beliefs and purpose. By way of illustration, four of the six participants were currently or recently employed in co-productive roles. For another it was hoped that current co-productive activity would lead to future employment in this area. Further, most of the participants were also involved in voluntary co-productive activity. In this respect co-production emerged as a committed practice.

Co-production as a diverse and fluid experience

Notwithstanding the above, participant relationships to co-production were diverse and fluid. For some co-production emerged as an 'electrifying' experience. For others it was more ambivalent with clear pros and cons. For others it was each of these things, sometimes at the same time. In part, this appeared to reflect the nature and quality of co-productive opportunities available. It also appeared to reflect participants' unique 'journeys' in respect of co-production – some of which seemed to have a beginning, middle and end. For one of the participants there was a distinct weariness that came from 'having been at this for a long time', alongside an acute sense of there being limited opportunities to move on to. Relatedly, ambivalence was attributed to a need for continual growth and progression, and to the sense that co-production - and the constant revisiting of one's *criminal* justice experience - was sometimes a hindrance to that process.

These experiences are significant and present a more nuanced and grounded picture of co-production that is sometimes apparent. As we return to below, co-production has costs, for all involved. These need to be considered openly and collaboratively in efforts to move co-production forward.

Co-production as an emergent, authentic and innovative process

Within the above diversity, most participants placed particular value on the emergent, authentic and innovative nature of many of the co-productive opportunities emerging through PP?PF – opportunities that were felt to be exciting, hopeful and empowering. Authenticity in this area was linked to the user-led nature of some of this activity and to the honestly, integrity and drive of the people involved. As D explains:

> People are listening because a lot of the people who are involved in it are no bending to the old corporate side, they're no wanting to sing and dance and give it the old … They really are wanting to talk, they're really frank, they're really honest and they've really been there. … It's no about that - like other organisations I've seen … where it's almost: let's just get, we've got something

coming up that we've got to involve user involvement … When we sit in meetings, when we go to different things there is a genuine drive, there is no, as I've said, there's no bullshit bingo, there's none of that. It's just straight talking: this is how it is, this is how to change it, in fact get us on to the board, and this is how you make decisions. And there's almost like a, a nice militant side to it. And proactive; rather than just the kind of user involvement – it's user led.

There also emerged a strong sense of innovation and experimentation within emergent opportunities: of people on both sides 'working it out as we go'. These are significant opportunities for justice services and perhaps connect with A's observation that the 'best bits' of co-production often occur at the start of the process 'where you lay yourself open'. As the participants note, what matters now is how these opportunities are taken forward.

Co-production as a constrained and qualified opportunity

Considered more broadly, co-production also emerged as a constrained and qualified opportunity. Each of the participants experienced these constraints and qualifications, often painfully. Discussing participation on a social work education user group, A observes: 'but is it co-productive? No, because you see the university is calling the shots on this'. Reaching a similar conclusion in respect of PP?PF's relationship with the Scottish Prison Service, C observes: 'They are still in control. They can still dictate what [we] can and can't do'. Relatedly, C experienced various constraints on co-production as someone recently released from prison. Further, A, C, D and F described constraints as people trying to co-produce from within the system. As D summarises: it feels 'as though my wings [have] been clipped'.

Without question PP?PF members are making significant strides in advancing co-production in the Scottish justice arena. And it is clear that much of what is taking place would not be taking place, in the way it is taking place, if it was not for the commitment, capacity, authenticity and tenacity of this organisation and its people. Nonetheless, there emerged a distinct sense that the form, opportunity and potential

for co-production remains considerably constrained by the space, resource and support available for it.

Why co-produce?

Participants highlighted an array of reasons for co-producing as citizens. Three emerged powerfully across the narratives.

'Self-actualisation, that's what it's about'

Used commonly within psychological discourse, self-actualisation describes the process of progressing and fulfilling one's potential. It connects closely with Liebling's (2004, 2012) concept of human flourishing in so far as it is broader than well-being or pleasure and includes the development of character and potential and the demonstration of a good and purposeful life. Co-production emerged as an important means to this end and thus adds to existing research evidence on the important benefits of co-production for individuals and communities (Clinks, 2008, 2011; Devilly et al., 2005; Morrison, Doucet & Murray, 2006; Weaver, 2012). For some, the discovery of a relationship between co-production and personal progression and development occurred through the experience of co-productive relationships within a sentence (see for example B and E's accounts of helping others within the prison). For most, it occurred beyond or following their sentence and was part of a broader process in which the person moved from being a passive victim of their justice experience towards becoming an agentic and productive protagonist (see for example C and D's narratives). For all, co-production emerged as an important part of rebuilding - and demonstrating - a positive, purposeful and productive identity and life. As C summarises:

> You can get to feel a sense of self-worth by participating. You can feel you are doing something positive; you can enhance your employability prospects; you can get a renewed purpose and direction; you can just feel good about something. All of the preceding are personal experiences and are similar to

others with whom I have spoken. The personal development in intangibles should not be underestimated or ignored in evaluating co-productive measures.

Reflecting on his co-productive activity post prison - spanning the last seven years and culminating in his current 'opportunity' as co-ordinator of PP?PF - E makes a similar point:

> From the moment I left Edinburgh prison, I [decided] that whoever looked at it, whatever I did, they could look at it from any angle and see that it was for a good reason … The idea was I had to re-establish my integrity. Not just within myself, I knew I could do that, but it had to be evident.

Co-production as a rare opportunity for voice, equality and worth

For all of the participants co-production emerged as a precious and transformative opportunity for voice – an empowering and enabling experience valuable because it was rare. The discovery and recovery of voice occurred through the collective and mutual aid opportunities provided through membership of PP?PF, as well as through meaningful co-productive relationships formed through some of those opportunities. For all, the discovery or recovery of voice was pivotal to their journey of progression, desistance and/or recovery.

For these participants, central to the discovery and recovery of voice is having the opportunity to speak freely, without judgement, in a safe environment. It is being listened to, without judgement. It is the discovery, through that process of talking and listening, that you are not 'the most wretched person in the whole entire world' but a valid and valuable individual. And it is the discovery through those processes that you – including your justice experience – have worth. That, as A,B,C,D and E explain, is a very 'precious', 'exciting' and 'empowering' process. As E explains, capturing some of this:

> I think, without setting about it knowingly, the fact that collectively we have had, we've taken the opportunity, we're exploring the opportunity of being, of

feeling sufficiently confident in each other, to stand up and say: I was in prison, I went there, I did bad things and now I'm going to go and mend them. Or: I'm gonna help other people get on with their lives. To be able to say that, not quite in public but almost is quite a big step. And I think that that is one of the remarkable feelings that happens in a group meeting where -. And you know the, the potential for that is infinite. And, for me now, the challenge for us all as a group is to nurture this, without getting carried away on it. And for it to grow in a way that can never be taken away … . And so, it's a very precious and exciting but ultimately vital process.

Co-production as a just response to a 'shameful series of disconnects'

Connecting closely with the above, co-production emerged as a moral, political and just response to the 'shameful series of disconnects' experienced and observed within the current justice system. It was a means of offering relevant and recognisable help to those within the system, and of bridging the gap between what exists and what is needed:

> That's why I'm a big pusher for [the co-ordinator] of positive prisons. Within that system, within these institutions, let me tell you there's a lot of people. There's no a place within the Scottish prison system … that somebody could go tae to start to get a grasp on [life].

For many, co-production was also a means by which they could attempt to effect the attitudinal 'sea change' needed if justice services are to reconnect with those lost within the system, and if they are to provide those people with much needed opportunity to reconnect with themselves, their potential and society more broadly. For all, it was a means of doing something good with something that was mostly, or partly, bad:

> Cos I've been through the [justice] system and experienced it to be full of prejudice, judgement and labelling. I believe there is a place for people like me to put my views and experience across to help others still in that.

For some, co-production also served as an important and timely reminder of how far they had come, and of the costs of slipping back. As D explains:

> It's like a revolving door. Because the whole nature … it's almost like a merry go round where when you are feeling pressure or struggling and someone comes in the door who's bleary eyed, like a rabbit in the headlights, doesnae know what's happening to them. Just oot o custody or whatever and they are totally bamboozled with what's going on. And it constantly just brings you back. Sometime you think to yourself: wee glass o' wine would be lovely, course it would. And it brings you back to, that's what happens, that's what happens when that enters my life again.

The above reasons (and others) emerge variously, powerfully and humbly across the narratives. They attest to the considerable motivation and capacity that exists for co-production amongst those who have come through the justice system, and to the important outcomes that can accompany and follow meaningful co-productive experiences.   In this respect the above findings connect with the findings of the few existing research studies in this area and speak to the 'transformative' potential of co-production in the justice context (Clinks, 2008, 2011; Devilly et al., 2005; Morrison et al., 2006; Weaver 2011, 2012). However, the above also speaks to the lasting pain, exclusion and disempowerment that frequently accompanies and follows justice experiences.   It is encouraging that participants can experience respect, voice and equality through PP?PF activity, and that they can use that transformative experience for personal and public good. But it is deeply troubling that for many - some now a decade into their desistance - that this experience and opportunity remains so rare.

Notwithstanding the considerable motivation and commitment that exists for co-production amongst the participants, it is important to also acknowledge the ambivalence that existed for some within the group. This is particularly evident in A, B and F's narrative. Though each was committed to the idea of co-production, sometimes doing co-production was challenging. Further, for some, co-production was a means of progression at a particular stage in their journey, though became less

so as they moved through that.   For some this was difficult to own and express – as though to do so was to place at risk the valued and valuable opportunity available. We attend to these challenges in more detail below.

Aids and Obstacles

Participants mostly discussed the aids and obstacles to co-production in the context of their relationships with professional providers[32]. Notwithstanding the emergent nature of the relationships described, participants were clear about what matters in that process.

Equality and voice

For all of the participants, what mattered most in co-production was opportunity for 'equality and voice', described by C as: 'the most basic and important elements of co-production'. But what does equality and voice mean in justice relationships? What does it look like and how is it realised?

Equality and voice did not necessarily mean equality of role or power - though it did require a willingness to share power. For most, it was about recognising each person as having an *equally valid* perspective. As C explains: 'a feeling that your view is useful, that it matters, and that you can effect change in the process you are examining'. Again, equality and voice was found, aided and realised in particular kinds of relationship. It was found in affirming relationships that demonstrate interest, genuine listening, respect and follow up. It was found in authentic relationships - where there is scope for frankness and honesty, and where there is a 'genuine drive' for progress. It was found in person-centred and empowering relationships that actively seek to counter stigma and shame, characterised, for example, by the absence of a 'big framework' in which people are sorted and screened in accordance with offence/risk profiles. And it is found in relationships where there is opportunity for

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[32] Though, as already noted, there was clear overlap between what aids and impedes citizen-professional relationships and other described co-productive relationships.

shared ownership, reciprocity, and a reasonable degree of choice, autonomy and innovation - that is, where there is no blueprint or standard way of doing things but instead trust and respect, scope for trial and error, risk taking, and being able to 'work out how we go'.

Further, equality and voice was found and realised in relationships characterised by confidence and humility. As C explains, co-production is aided when each person or party is confident in the particular experience and contribution they bring. And as D adds: it works when each person or party has the humility to recognise that theirs is a particular and thus partial experience and contribution. As C observes, there is a need now for professionals, citizens and users to become comfortable and conversant with this construction.

Relevant opportunity, resourcing and support

More broadly, co-production was seen to be aided when there is relevant opportunity, resourcing and support – for all involved. Reflecting the different forms of co-production, the opportunities, resource and support required to progress co-production in justice relationships are similarly varied. The message emerging here is that we need to attend flexibly and collaboratively to this area. Participants highlighted the importance of opportunity, resourcing and support from the centre, in the form, for example, of relevant training and support for all actors. Participants also highlighted the importance of relevant and accessible community based services - services considered critical if people (users and citizens) are to be helped to help themselves. Further, participants underscored the strength, support, resource and capacity that came from acting collectively as part of a user group. For all, this was a defining feature of positive co-productive experiences. Relatedly, co-production and co-productive capacity was aided when citizens had access to wider developmental, progressive and generative opportunities, whether in the form of affirming relationships, purposeful activity, or valued training or employment.

Time

For many of the participants, co-production was aided by time. The passing of time was often an unspoken feature of successful co-productive relationships but it was in this space that participants found opportunity to develop the types of relationships (with themselves and others) described above. There was also a clear sense of participants 'learning as they go' through longer-term co-productive relationships, and of provider-partners doing the same. Also, the passing of time – specifically time spent 'away' from the system – was considered by some to be a critical feature of healthy and sustainable co-productive relationships. It was for F, and others, 'a great healer', providing space to recover from the pain and trauma of the justice system and its effects. Not surprisingly, time away from the system was considered most critical by those who had spent prolonged and/or painful periods within it.

When your face/voice fits

Lastly, for many of the participants, co-production was felt to be aided when the face and/or voice of the citizen 'fits'. Here participants gave tentative voice to the unjust and discriminatory nature of co-productive relationships and to the prevailing effects of education, opportunity and class. Though this was a recognised point of tension it was nonetheless considered 'a vital tool'.

This message connects with earlier observations that co-production favours the capable, the resourced, the low risk, the middle class and the fortunate. If these messages are not surprising they are problematic. Criminal justice services exist, amongst other things, to provide a credible, relevant and just response to the problem of persistent offending behaviour. Yet, the findings of this study suggest that justice services, like other public services, 'work' best with members of the population that barely fit the profile of this group (reformed or not). For some time now we have been talking the talk of responsivity in justice interventions (and there are some promising initiatives that have developed from this important insight). At the time of writing we are witnessing the advance of personalisation as a bold new headline for public service provision (Scottish Government, 2009). These are important opportunities for justice

services. They present an opportunity to get to grips with and take seriously the realities, experiences, needs and starting points of the people who use justice services. This is not about excusing offending behaviour. Nor is it about acknowledging or sympathising with the life experiences that lie behind it. It is about taking seriously the challenge of designing, developing, resourcing and tailoring services – and the relationships, interventions and opportunities that makes those meaningful – in ways that can demonstrably empower people to get a grip on their life and their behaviour and begin to move forward.   As the narratives assembled here make clear, this is a complex and challenging task. It is not aided by a service that, when it is not ambivalent about its role in the change process, appears content to presume that it can deliver on these outcomes without the co-operation and co-production of the people 'required' to change.

Obstacles

Again, the obstacles to co-production were discussed mostly in the context of relationships with professional providers. Of the various obstacles identified, three emerged as particularly significant, each of which were seen to constrain not only 'what' co-production occurred but where and how that occurred. Despite the pervasive and interactive nature of these obstacles, participants mostly discussed these with a clear commitment to change – a commitment fuelled perhaps by the collective capital and hope generated through PP?PF's ambition and activity.

'Being an offender'

The most significant obstacle encountered by participants in their efforts to co-produce and progress co-production in the justice context was the obstacle of 'being an offender' (or ex-offender). Specifically, co-production was obstructed by the stigma, antagonism, prejudice and/or fear participants often encountered from professionals and others as a result of their 'offender' status. Noting that all of the participants were living demonstrably 'good lives' (Ward, 2010), and that four of the

six had only one conviction, this finding is significant. Despite the considerable accomplishments of the participant group, for most the designation of 'offender' remained persistent and pervasive.

The status and stigma of 'being an offender' obstructed and constrained co-production in different ways. A person's 'offender' status prevented some participants from working or retaining work within and beyond the justice system. For example, on two occasions C found himself unsuitable for paid co-productive opportunities in the justice context on account of 'being an ex-offender'. Relatedly, E twice found himself 'shafted' from co-productive roles, again, on account of 'being an offender'. More frequently, being an offender acted as a barrier to co-productive relationships, as a result of 'the open hostility some professionals harbour towards offenders'. Further, being an offender sometimes acted as a barrier to *meaningful* or progressive co-production, whereby participants were left feeling less valid, patronised, paraded, exploited or shafted on account of their 'offender' status. The irony here is that co-production between people who have been through the system and people who have not is precisely the kind of co-production that can break down barriers of stigma, prejudice and fear (Clinks, 2011; Devilly et al., 2005).

Connecting with the above, for some the process of returning to their offender or ex-offender status (that is the process of publicly identifying with and taking on that label or one like it) was an uncomfortable and ambivalent process. This was mostly because participants had worked hard to move on from that identity and were understandably reticent about going back. However, entering co-productive relationships in the justice context inevitably meant returning to that status in some shape or form, a process that involved laying yourself open, again, to the pain, shame and vulnerability associated with it (see also Maruna, 2001; Morrison et al., 2008). This tension finds expression in different degrees in each of the narratives. As A expresses:

> … I suppose what I wrestle with is … why do I want to be involved in criminal
> justice user involvement? And that's probably only because of my involvement
> in other user involvement stuff.   If not for that, going into the Criminal justice

system would have been: start, do the punishment, get out of it. Forget it, it never existed.

But … running alongside that there is this element of, well, could I make it better for other people? And I have a belief that services could be better, but the only way to achieve that is by contributing my experiences.   But I still, I suppose it still doesn't sit well with me because even though it's several years since I've come out of the criminal justice system it still has that element of shame attached to it.

This tension arguably sits at the heart of co-productive relationships in the justice context and reflects both the punitive tradition of justice services and the increasingly punitive political, professional and public attitudes towards those sentenced (see, for example, Maruna & King, 2008; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Progressing co-production in this context can be challenging and painful for all involved. For some participants, sometimes, these experiences served to strengthen their collective commitment to challenge, interrupt and resist these dominant and dominating discourses through the progression of new voices, identities and representations. Yet, even for this relatively resourced and supported group the challenge of doing so was palpable.

Politics, penal priorities and public opinion

Connecting closely with the above, and with the obstacles discussed earlier, participants identified obstacles to co-production in the overarching politics and priorities of contemporary criminal justice services and in the punitive public attitudes towards those sentenced. This powerful and pervasive interplay was seen to result in the privileging of standardised and distancing mechanisms of punishment and security over, and often at the expense of, collaborative, innovative and constructive approaches. As F describes, capturing the sentiment of others, progressing co-production in this context – even with professional support – is like trying to tame a beast.

The politically charged and publicly sensitive nature of justice provision was also felt to place considerable pressure on emergent and innovative co-productive activity. Despite the fact that participants were clearly finding their way in co-productive terms, and working with little control over the bigger picture and context, some felt under pressure to 'make it work'. As C expresses discussing emerging opportunities for co-production within the prison: 'we are no in a position where we can afford to fuck up'. This pressure arguably reflects the performance culture currently surrounding criminal justice services and public sector provision broadly. However, in a context where there exists both ambivalence and hostility regarding the appropriateness of involving 'offenders' in the delivery and development of justice services it is reasonable to assume that the pressure experienced by this group may be particularly pronounced.

Professional silos and empire building

Lastly, half of the participants drew attention to the obstacle of 'professional silos' and 'empire building' in the justice context. This was described as a process in which some justice providers were seen to 'close ranks' as a means of protecting and progressing their own interests (rather than the interests of those they exist to serve). In this 'battleground' co-production, and those seeking to advance it, was treated as a threat rather than as a resource for innovation, progress or change. For some this was a source of great frustration and another indication of a justice system that has run adrift from the ideals and outcomes it was set up to progress. At the same time, it was another reason for nurturing, protecting and progressing co-production in the criminal justice space.

The above obstacles also give voice to the various and significant costs of co-production for citizen-providers. Mostly, participants articulated these costs obliquely, though they emerged across the narratives affecting participants differently and at different points in their journey. Specifically, the narratives highlight the emotional, relational, psychological and financial costs of co-producing, many of which appeared to go unnoticed and unacknowledged by professional partners. Though most participants were not asking for acknowledgement of or support with these costs,

attending to these issues seems important if we are to respect, nurture and protect existing commitment and capacity in this area. For many of the participants existing support in this area came mostly through the relationships developed through PP?PF. Though this was not always enough, user collectives would appear to be a good place to start in exploring what might be needed in this area as co-production moves forward.

As noted, there exist very few studies with which to connect and compare the above findings and for that reason it is difficult to form firm conclusions on the basis of the findings presented here. Of the studies that do exist, most focus on professional perspectives and insights (albeit with varying efforts to integrate user views) and the conclusions that follow tend to reflect that (see Clinks, 2008, 2011; Devilly et al., 2005; Morrison et al., 2006). For example, Morrison et al. (2006), in exploring the potential of ex-offenders as peer volunteers for community based justice programmes, assert the importance of 'maintaining established work conventions'. This includes ensuring 'well-defined boundaries' and 'relationships that are professional', so as to reduce the risk of volunteers 'living their work' and 'taking on others troubles'. Relatedly, exploring the value of peer education in justice provision, Devilly et al. (2005) assert the importance of 'appropriate' and 'thorough' recruitment and supervision methods for 'offender-volunteers'. These are important insights and connect, to an extent, with some of the challenges of co-production described by some of the participants in this inquiry. Yet, they are at odds with the more innovative and transgressive model of co-production advanced by the participants here. Similarly, Devilly et al.'s findings contrast with the need expressed in this inquiry for practices that counter stigma and shame - experiences felt to be exacerbated by offence focussed and risk centred recruitment, supervision and monitoring processes. Importantly, our point here is not that there ought to be no boundaries or constraints in and on co-productive relationships. Nor is it to negate or privilege one or other of the above discussed findings. Rather, it is to highlight the importance of developing a more collaborative, critical and flexible understanding of co-production – and what matters within that – drawing on the perspectives and experiences of *all* of those involved.

The narratives in this inquiry suggest that co-production is not about maintaining the status quo. Nor is it about replicating or reproducing existing professional-user relationships. Rather, it is about developing through trial and error a new set of relationships, and from these new relationships a new way of thinking about and doing justice that has something new and significant to add to existing practice and provision.   Part of this process will inevitably involve identifying boundaries, safeguard, constraints and conventions that ensure people are appropriately protected and supported, but the findings from this study suggest that these boundaries need to be co-constructed, starting from a more collaborative commitment to understanding co-production as an emergent, fluid and innovative model of practice.   In this respect the findings from this study augment (and complicate) existing knowledge and understanding in this area and point to the importance of developing a more collaborative, grounded and critical understanding of this emergent phenomenon.

How to progress co-production?

The preceding discussion - attending as it does to the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of co-production in the justice context - connects closely with the question of how to progress that. In this final section we pull together the key messages that emerged as participants considered what was needed to move co-production forward.

All of the participants identified considerable capacity and potential for co-production in the justice context.   Much of this capacity and potential was seen to reside amongst those who had come through the justice system and amongst user/citizen collectives in particular. Specifically, those who had come through the justice system were seen to have a significant contribution to make in the following three areas (though it should be noted that this list was emergent rather than exhaustive):

-    the delivery and development of peer mentoring as a form of relevant and
      recognisable help

- the design, development and delivery of more relevant, responsive and progressive justice services

- countering the punitive hype, rhetoric and stigma 'that makes it difficult to do anything positive'

Participant perspectives on *how* to progress co-production across these broad and overlapping areas were diverse and particular, but also clearly connected. Collectively, participants highlighted the need for:

- a fundamental and cultural shift within justice services – encompassing the service's identity, values, purposes and practice – and in political, professional, and public attitudes towards people who 'use' those services (both during and beyond the life of a sentence)

- a more developed and participatory understanding of what co-production is amongst justice stakeholders, including attention to: where it comes from, why it matters, whether it works and how it works

- investment in real and relevant support services that can provide pathways out of the justice system

A fundamental and cultural shift within and beyond justice services

The first of the above areas connects clearly with the various and extensive obstacles to co-production identified in the preceding discussion. At the centre of this ambitious vision is a reconstruction of 'offenders' as people - with worth, capacity and potential, and of justice services as a critical (though not exclusive) space for that reconstructive process. As C observes in respect of prisons: this requires a fundamental re-examination of what prison is for, as well as a willingness amongst all stakeholders to re-engage with prisons, their people and their potential.

In the wake of recent pronouncements of 'a radical shake-up' of Scotland's prison service[33], alongside related commitments to 'radically reform' and 'redesign' community justice provision in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011, 2013b), we might observe that the vision expressed by participants connects well with the transformation vision currently being espoused from the centre. Certainly there is room for hope in the direction being set. However we must also acknowledge that this 'new' vision and ambition is not entirely new. Moreover, as the participants point out, many of these pronouncements are (relatively) easy to say but difficult to do. What matters here is how the current vision and ambition for justice sanctions is taken forward (including how it is communicated to those it affects most). In community justice the emphasis is almost entirely on organisational redesign and restructure, a now familiar strategy that has met with disappointment and/or scepticism from most. For prisons, interestingly, the strategy seems bolder, broader and more tangible; but there remain significant gaps, and even more significant obstacles. For example, none of the recent political pronouncements engage meaningfully with the sentencing changes required to make them work. If we really want to transform prisons – and the people in their 'care' – then we need, as a starting point, to reduce the numbers of people we send there (see also Liebling, 2004, 2012).   The same holds true for community justice. If we want community sentences to become a credible and meaningful 'alternative' to prison then we need to target this resource carefully whilst making greater and better use of other options within and beyond the justice system (though there seem to me to be clear dangers in the current trend to recast community sanctions as a 'comparable' alterative to prison. We may well get what we wish for).   Perhaps most importantly, we need to take any agreed vision forward collaboratively. The participants in this inquiry were skilled at joining the dots in justice ambition and provision - and at pointing out where the dots do not join up. They were adept at cutting through the 'bullshit' and insisting on change that can be seen and felt by all.   And they were (mostly) full of hope, an arguably scarce resource

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[33] These include an expressed commitment to: reconstruct and rebrand prison 'as a punishment' and 'not for punishment', a fresh focus on prisoners as people 'with potential', and an expressed commitment to 'transforming lives' and 'helping offenders to change', Scottish Prison Service, 2013b),

that will be invaluable in progressing the vision set.   In these areas and others the participants in this inquiry demonstrate that they, like others, have much to contribute to the potentially progressive vision and ambition again being espoused for justice services in Scotland. The success of that vision will almost certainly depend on the will and capacity of those driving it to do so collaboratively.

Developing understanding of co-production in the justice context

Participants also identified a need to develop our collective understanding of what co-production is, what it means, where it comes from, why it matters and what it involves. Though C asserts a need to also ask whether it 'works', mostly participants advocated a more exploratory relationship with co-production; one that recognises co-production as an emergent, collaborative and even transgressive model of practice, rather than a ready-made, standard or secure one. What is being described here is a process of thoughtfully and collaboratively moving co-production *forward*, and of learning about co-production - its potential and caveats - through that exploratory, collaborative and committed process. If that sounds counter-cultural in a climate fixed on evaluation, evidence, replication and roll-out it is worth noting that participants frequently drew attention to the importance of maintaining some distance between PP?PF's co-productive activity and approach and that of the broader justice system. As E put it: 'We do not aspire to become part of the machine. We would, we aspire in the first, in the near future to being the oil in the machine, to help the machine work better'.

Again, this different approach, this innovative experimentalism is central to the co-productive vision expounded by participants. If in looking to co-production we are looking for a model of practice that can be produced, packaged and posted into a form fitting for the justice tube described in the preceding narratives then we will likely be disappointed (though we might observe that this approach has not served justice services well in the last two decades). As already noted, co-production invites us to see, think and do things differently – and therein lies the opportunity and potential of

this emergent approach.   Relatedly, participants asserted that the value of co-production does not reside entirely in questions of whether it 'works' or in whether it can work (as judged by a dominant majority), it resides equally in the transformative value and potential of efforts, however localised and incremental, to make it work.   As A concludes:

> What *is* possible is listening to service users' experiences. Acknowledging that you might not be able to change the service, but it can change how you view people if you listen to their experiences.
>
> R: anything else?
>
> Just, whether co-production can work or not you still have to do it. Just because something, just because you think something is gonna be unachievable, have so many obstacles, doors slammed, that's not a reason not to do it. Whatever you do you will make an impact somewhere.

These are brave insights. They push against accepted ways of knowing towards other less solid constructions and possibilities. Of the few research studies engaging with co-production in justice, most conclude by asserting the need for robust and systematic evaluation in this area. This is important. But it is *as* important that we create space and time for co-production to emerge and take shape; that we make time to develop and understand what co-production is and what it can be in this complex and contested context. At the time of writing there exist a number of very positive indicators that co-production can have value for the people involved, and for wider justice stakeholders (Clinks, 2008, 2011; Weaver, 2011, 2012; Weaver & McCulloch, 2013). These seem to me and others to be reason enough to invest judiciously in this emergent approach and practice (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Government, 2013a). In time, certainly, this investment needs to be followed by systematic evaluation. But perhaps first we must allow co-production to find its place and form without insisting too soon that it 'works'.

Real and relevant pathways out of the justice system

Lastly, participants identified a need to develop real pathways out of the justice system*.* This seems to me to be an important insight. Despite a clear vision and commitment to progressing co-production and change *within* the justice system participants remained clear that the criminal justice system is not 'where it's at'. The criminal justice system is not naturally a co-productive space, and co-production - and the progressive outcomes associated with it - is unlikely to flourish within that space (see also Liebling, 2012). For these reasons participants repeatedly underscored the importance of *also* investing in co-productive pathways out of, and outside of, the justice system – again, in the form of real, relevant, personalised, responsive and co-productive support services. The kinds of services relevant here are broad and diverse and include those traditionally associated with rehabilitation and desistance (including, for example, substance misuse, mental health, housing, education, training and employment services), as well as more creative opportunities for personal development, growth and progression (see, for example, recent work on the potential of Arts activities (Bilby & Caulfield, 2012), yoga and meditation (Liebling, 2012), peer support (Perrin, 2012), and other forms of 'purposeful activity' occurring within and beyond justice sanctions (Prison Reform Trust, 2011)). The message emerging here is that if we cannot transform the criminal justice space then let us work to populate it with opportunities for escape.

Conclusions

Introduction

This inquiry set out to out to explore the meaning, relevance, possibility and potential of co-production in the criminal justice context. More specifically, we sought to explore these questions drawing on the particular experience of those who have come through the criminal justice system, and through the progression of a research practice that was collaborative, relevant and progressive for all of the people involved. In this concluding section we provide a summary of the research findings, concluding comment regarding the nature and significance of these findings, and summary consideration of arising implications for justice policy, practice and research.

Research findings

What does co-production mean in the criminal justice context? What are its distinguishing features?

For most of the participants, the term co-production meant very little. The concept however was familiar and important. Within and beyond the justice context, co-production was understood to involve: 'people working together in a practical and even-handed way towards a shared understanding for a way forward'. For all, it meant being treated (and treating others) as a person and as an equal, with a valid and relevant voice. It involved listening, sharing power, reciprocity and interdependence, and it was about progression and change. Co-production was deemed to work best

when participants demonstrated both confidence and humility in their particular contribution.

Beyond this clarity, considered in the context of criminal justice relationships, and of statutory relationships in particular, co-production was complicated. Complications revolved principally around issues of power in justice relationships and around the experienced and observed purposes and priorities of statutory criminal justice provision. These and other issues were felt to significantly obstruct the possibility and potential of co-production within this sphere.

Examined more broadly, co-production occurred as an emergent phenomenon in the justice context, experienced occasionally within but mostly beyond the confines of a justice sanction. Across these areas participants described five distinct but overlapping forms of co-production with particular emphasis on co-productive relationships between citizens ('ex-offenders') and others (service users, professionals, politicians, policy makers and academics included). Across these areas and forms co-production emerged as:

- an emergent, multi-dimensional and elastic concept and practice
- a diverse and shifting experience
- a committed, moral, ambitious, challenging and progressive project
- a constrained and qualified opportunity

In summary, participants advanced a version of co-production that connects clearly with constructions emerging across the public sector, and a vision of co-production that is grounded in the particularities, potential and challenge of progressing that in the contemporary justice context.

Is co-production relevant in the criminal justice context?

Co-production emerged as a deeply relevant concept and practice for the criminal justice context.

For each of the participants, co-production was a foundational feature of their particular and ongoing journeys of progression, desistance and/or recovery, though for most co-productive opportunity occurred beyond or following a justice sentence. Notwithstanding this tension, co-production was considered by all to be a pivotal and foundational feature of productive, progressive and rehabilitative justice sanctions.

Looking beyond a person's sentence, co-production was no less relevant. For many, this was where co-productive opportunity and reward began in earnest. For citizens, co-production emerged as an important and tangible means of discovering, recovering and demonstrating a positive, purposeful and productive identity and life. Specifically, it was a means of discovering and recovering voice, agency, worth, equality and citizenship, outcomes deemed integral to a person's ability to move forward from their justice experience and into something good.

In addition, co-production emerged as an important means of bridging the gap between what is and what is needed within existing justice provision. Specifically, participants described the importance of co-productive relationships between citizens and existing justice providers in the design, development and delivery of more relevant and responsive justice services. Equally, participants placed particular emphasis on the value of peer mentoring relationships between citizens and service users as a form of relevant and recognisable help (for both parties). Further, co-production between citizens (and/or users) emerged as an important form of mutual aid in on-going journeys of progression, desistance and recovery.

Notwithstanding then the many obstacles, tensions and questions that surround the concept and practice of co-production in the justice context, the findings of this inquiry attest to the relevance and transformative potential of co-production in that context.

Is co-production possible in the criminal justice context? What aids and obstructs co-production?

The findings from this inquiry indicate that co-production is possible in the contemporary justice context, albeit with clear caveats and constraints.

Reflecting perhaps the particular experience, position and passion of the participants, presenting opportunity, capacity and potential for co-production was seen to reside mostly within relationships between citizens and others. As noted, participants identified particular capacity and potential for co-production between:

- citizens and users of criminal justice services, in the form of peer mentoring and support
- citizens and professional providers, towards the design, development and delivery of more relevant and responsive justice services
- citizens and/or users, in the form of mutual aid and collective action

Participants also gave tentative voice to the possibility and potential of co-productive relationships between citizens and non-justice communities/persons as a means, amongst other things, of countering the stigma, prejudice and punitive rhetoric that surrounds justice services and those who travel through them.

In the more constrained context of justice sanctions, participants were deeply ambivalent about the possibility of co-production between those completing a sentence and those supervising. Ambivalence in this area reflected participants' dominant experience of justice sanctions as controlling, punishing, disempowering, de-personalised and humiliating; experiences that were felt to reflect the politics, purposes and priorities currently driving justice sanctions. Though there emerged some diversity - and thus potential - in the experiences described, co-production in this area emerged as the exception rather than the rule and often appeared to rely on the atypicality of the people involved.

Relatedly, participants described important opportunities for co-production within a sanction in the form of peer help and support. These were, again, significant and

transformative opportunities for the person helping. However, again, opportunity in this area was rare and appeared to rely on the atypicality of the helper.

Aids and Obstacles

In the context of completing a sanction, co-production was significantly aided when participants:

- possessed capacity for co-production
- experienced relevant and recognisable opportunity for co-production (and/or for the development of co-productive capital)
- experienced affirming and empowering relationship
- found a space or environment conducive to co-production

In the same context the obstacles to co-production were 'everywhere'. They were observed to exist principally in:

- the life experiences and problems that those sentenced bring into the justice system
- the politics, purposes and priorities that define the criminal justice experience, and in the punishing, distancing and disempowering regimes and relationships that flow from these priorities
- the clash, disconnect and interplay of the above variables as each - the punisher and the punished - seeks to resist, control and/or survive the other

In the 'less impossible' context of citizen co-production, co-production was aided by:

- opportunities for equality and voice (which occurred, typically, in affirming, empowering and innovative relationships)
- opportunity, resourcing and support - for all involved and in a variety of forms
- time
- when the face, voice and capital of the citizen 'fits'

Identified obstacles in this context include:

- 'being an offender' (or 'ex-offender'); and more specifically, the stigma, antagonism, prejudice, fear and shame encountered as a result of that status
- the politics, purposes and priorities of justice services
- professional silos and 'empire building'

Discussion and analysis in this area also highlighted the considerable costs of co-production for citizen co-producers, an area that has received very little attention in the limited extant literature.

The above findings raise a number of important implications for justice, policy, practice and research. Before turning to this area it is necessary to make some concluding comment regarding the nature and significance of the research findings presented.

Comment on the nature and status of the research findings

As already noted, there exist various limitations in the findings presented. First, these are particular, situated and temporal findings – reflecting as they do the particular, situated and temporal experiences, relationships and discursive practices from which they emerge. Second, the findings presented reflect the experiences of a small sample group and thus resist generalisation. However, as has been argued, it is within these particularities that the strength and significance of the research findings reside.

There exist very few studies that explore the experience of co-production in the justice context; fewer still that attend to user/citizen perspectives on this issue, and none (that we know of) that employ a co-productive research design in progressing this area of inquiry. The findings presented speak into that gap and in doing so have something significant, particular and timely to contribute to our developing understanding of what co-production means, why it matters and how we might progress it in the justice context.   Further, as an exploratory and co-productive inquiry, the findings presented are not offered as a means of completing or closing down this area of inquiry. Far

from it, they are offered as a means of opening it up. For example, in considering the above findings we need now to understand how these findings compare and contrast with broader experiences of co-production – including the experiences of other citizen co-producers, as well as those who, in D's words, are still 'in the throes of it'. Also, we need to look more closely at the differences that exist between community and prison based sanctions, and at the different opportunities and obstacles for co-production that reside within these particular spaces (differences that are not well illuminated in this inquiry). Further, we need to understand how these experiences connect and contrast with professional and community experiences of co-production, and the implications of these connections and differences for moving co-production forward. Relatedly, the findings presented here give rise to other, connecting questions, including: how does co-production work across risk categories, offence types and offending populations? How does justice work when co-production does not work? These are not easy questions for a system and society looking for secure and ready answers. But the findings from this inquiry suggest that these are questions (and answers) worth grappling with.

We conclude then with some *confidence* regarding the authenticity, ethicality and significance of the findings presented, and with a *humility* that recognises that ours is a particular and thus partial contribution.

Implications for justice policy, practice and research

The implications of the above findings for justice policy, practice and research are broad, detailed and diverse.   They extend beyond questions of how to progress co-production in the criminal justice context and connect closely with questions of what justice services and sanctions are for. Though then this inquiry is located in the particular experience of justice services in Scotland, it is our view that the issues discussed here, and the implications that arise from this discussion, extend well

beyond these geographical boundaries. Some of the implications that arise from this inquiry are discussed in part four. Some are yet to be identified[34]. In this concluding section we focus on four areas which seem to us to be important in moving co-production forward.

Confronting (and bridging) the gaps and disconnects

This inquiry started by observing the contradictions and tensions that exist between the increasingly punitive and correctional turn occurring within justice services and sanctions and broader public service shifts towards more participatory, personalised and co-productive public services. These contradictions and tensions find further and fuller expression in the results of this inquiry. On the one hand, co-production emerges as a foundational, fundamental and transformative feature of individual and ongoing journeys of progression, desistance, rehabilitation and recovery (outcomes which continue to sit at the heart of what justice services and sanctions are for). Yet, opportunities for co-production within a sentence were reportedly non-existent, atypical or deeply constrained.

These findings suggest a need to look more closely at the gaps and 'disconnects' that exists between justice ambitions and justice realities. For the participants in this inquiry, bridging these gaps will require a fundamental and cultural shift within justice services, and in political, professional and public attitudes towards those who use justice services. The detail of this challenge is presented in part four and we have little to add to that here – beyond restating our commitment to it.

However, if we are not willing to imagine and progress such a shift within justice services then we surely need to moderate our ambition. As a start we perhaps need to stop pretending to ourselves and others that we can deliver security, safety, public protection and social cohesion - far less the individual progression, desistance,

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[34] In line with the transformative aims of the inquiry, as a research group we hope to co-produce, in partnership with the Scottish Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS), a summary paper on the policy, practice, research and education implications of the inquiry findings.

recovery and transformation on which these outcomes depend - when we do not have, or are not willing to invest in, the means to these ends.   If we choose to progress this path we also need to be clearer about what justice services *can* do and how they can best do that. Followed to its logical conclusions this may seem a bleak vision for the future of criminal justice services. It might also be a brave one. Only when we are willing to meaningfully grapple with the question of what criminal justice services and sanctions can and cannot do - or will and will not do, and what, by extension, we as a society and as citizens can and cannot, will and will not do, can we begin to intelligently and imaginatively consider and progress other, alternative and perhaps more hopeful responses to the realities of crime and justice in late-modern societies. In 2008, Henry McCleish[35] presented Scotland with a choice not unlike the one described above, as he launched the appropriately entitled 'Scotland's Choice' report (produced by the Scottish Prisons Commission, 2008). Despite the considerable ambition and 'connect' of that report, five years on we appear to have made little headway in progressing it; a reflection perhaps of our unwillingness to choose.

Developing existing opportunity, resource and support

Relatedly, the above findings highlight a need to invest in, resource and support existing and emerging opportunities for co-production between citizens and others. The findings of this inquiry suggest that those who have come through the criminal justice system have a great deal to contribute to the progression of co-production in the justice context, but they cannot do so on their own.   Though there are some important and encouraging developments occurring in this area, opportunity, resourcing and support for citizen co-production remains patchy, underdeveloped and constrained. At best those in power might be described as dipping their toes in the waters of co-production. This tentative stance is, perhaps, understandable, but it is not sufficient. The findings from this and other inquiries attest that progressing co-

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[35] Former First Minister of Scotland, Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong learning, Minister for Devolution and Home Affairs - update

production is challenging for all involved. It is perhaps particularly so in the justice context and climate. It is unlikely to be aided by an ambivalent and uncertain stance.

Developing understanding of co-production in the justice context

The research findings also point to a need to significantly develop our understanding of co-production, on the ground.   This has implications for future research direction (as discussed above). It also has important implications in respect of how we make use of, and make known, existing research knowledge in this area. Co-production has a strong and developing research base behind it; one that connects clearly with the challenges facing justice services in the present moment. Moving co-production forward will require us to engage with that developing knowledge base and with the questions and clashes that emerge from it. As a starting point we need to start talking about co-production in the justice context – in our classrooms, academies, agencies, user groups, prisons, government buildings and communities. As importantly, we need to start talking and listening across these spaces. It is surely through this process of talking and listening that we will begin to develop a more grounded, practical and collaborative understanding of what co-production is, why it matters, what it requires, and how we can progress it in this complex yet critical space.

Developing real, relevant and responsive pathways out of and outside of the justice system

Lastly, the findings of this inquiry, like many of the criminological inquiries that precede it, point to the need to develop real, relevant and responsive pathways out of and outside of the justice system. This is an important conclusion. It is discussed in more detail in the preceding section. As noted there, it reminds us that co-production is not a panacea for justice services. It is not an end in itself and it does not 'work' in isolation. Rather, co-production - like justice - 'works' when it occurs in particular kinds of relationships, spaces and contexts, specifically, empowering, resourced and

progressive ones. As D observes, reflecting on the value of co-productive opportunity within her journey of progression: 'it's no the be all and end all. It's the source, if you are willing to accept it'. Therein lies the opportunity and challenge of co-production for criminal justice services. Advancing co-production will not transform criminal justice services, nor the people sentenced to those services. However, appropriately targeted, resourced and supported, it can provide a space within which transformation becomes possible.

Closing reflection

This inquiry has been rich in learning, questions and tensions.   Some of the tensions experienced reflect the broad focus of the inquiry as we have sought to explore an emergent, uncharted and elastic phenomenon experienced differently across different domains. Mostly, they reflect the method, as we have grappled with how to 'do' co-production and as I, a privileged voice, have grappled with how to listen and how to speak in a way that allows other often marginalised voices to speak and be heard.

This submission presents some of the outcomes of that inquiry and process. As noted, it is not offered as a perfect inquiry, nor a perfect solution to the ambitions, tensions and questions described and encountered. Rather, it is offered as an experimental one; that is one that, through a process of talking and listening, trial and error, has sought to connect and progress the ambitions stated.   In concluding this inquiry I am acutely alert to limitations and tensions of it. It has not been an 'efficient' process (in the modern managerial sense of the term). It can hardly be described as concise; and it is perhaps constrained by my efforts to respect and respond to the rights, needs and expectations of at least two different populations. Yet, in completing this inquiry I have learned a great deal, above and beyond the findings presented above. I am more convinced that when I started that research practice is not only about the progression of knowledge, it is also about our progression as people. Further, I am convinced that the quality, validity and usefulness of research knowledge rests at least partly on the

nature, quality and progressiveness of the social relationships through which it is produced.   I do not yet have answers to all of the questions and tensions that arise from these conclusions. However, in facing these questions I am reminded of the (translated) words of Spanish poet Antonio Machado (1912/2012): 'we make the road by walking it'.

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Appendix 1

Project I:

RPL Claim for 50% of the Professional Doctorate

Submitted for the award of Doctor of Social Work

University of Dundee

September 2009

Contents

Claim

Appendices

Introduction

This submission presents a Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) claim for 50% of the Professional Doctorate in Social Work. The submission is structured in two parts - in so far as it draws upon two distinct bodies of academic work. Part 1 draws upon the following 3 academic publications:

McCulloch, T. (2005) Probation, Social Context & Desistance, *Probation Journal,* 52(1), 8-22 (Appendix 1).

McCulloch, T. (2006) Reviewing 'What works': A Social Perspective, *British Journal of Community Justice,* 4 (1), 19-32 (Appendix 2).

McCulloch, T. & McNeill, F.[36] (2008) Desistance-focussed approaches. In Green, S., Lancaster, E. & Feasey, S., *Addressing Offending Behaviour,* (pp. 154-171). Cullompton: Willan. (Appendix 3)

Part 2 draws upon the following peer reviewed journal paper:

McCulloch, T. & McNeill, F[37]. (2007) 'Consumer society, Commodification and Offender Management' *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 7 (3), 223-242*,* (Appendix 4).

Full permission to present the above papers within this thesis has been granted by the relevant copyright holders.

The author requests that the above papers (and the supporting commentary) be assessed against the following SCQF Level 12 headings (The Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework, 2007)

> Knowledge and Understanding (KU)

> Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding (P)

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[36] The breakdown of contribution by the collaborators in the above chapter was McCulloch: 60% and McNeill: 40%. Verification of this statement is provided in Appendix 6.

[37] The breakdown of contribution by the collaborators in the above paper was McCulloch: 50% and McNeill: 50%. Verification of this statement is provided in Appendix 5.

Generic Cognitive Skills (G)

Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills (C);

Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others (A)

In outlining my claim for RPL I will make reference to the 'characteristic general outcomes' identified for each heading. These will be referred to in abbreviated form throughout the submission, i.e. (KU1). An outline of the characteristic outcomes for each heading, and the abbreviations used, is provided in Appendix 6.

Part 1

McCulloch, T. (2005) Probation, Social Context & Desistance, *Probation Journal,* 52(1), 8-22 (Appendix 1).

McCulloch, T. (2006) Reviewing 'What works': A Social Perspective, *British Journal of Community Justice,* 4 (1), 19-32 (Appendix 2).

McCulloch, T. & McNeill, F. (2008) Desistance-focussed approaches. In Green, S., Lancaster, E. & Feasey, S. *Addressing Offending Behaviour*, Collumpton: Willan (Appendix 3).

Collectively, the above papers contribute to developing criminological and professional debate relating to 'what works?' in supporting desistance from crime. More specifically, each seek to develop our understanding of the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance. Though all three papers will be drawn upon as evidence, emphasis will be given to 'Probation Social Context & Desistance' (McCulloch, 2005) (henceforth referred to as 'paper 1').

Claim

Knowledge and Understanding

Probation, Social Context and Desistance (McCulloch, 2005) begins by reporting on the findings of a detailed and systematic review of two key research literatures: (i) the effectiveness research and (ii) the desistance literature. In this respect the paper demonstrates my capacity to provide a critical overview of two key research literatures, evidencing a clear grasp of the principal theories, principles and concepts (p. 9-12) (KU1). My critique of the effectiveness research – i.e. my analysis of what that research literature can tell us regarding the relevance of offenders' social contexts in

behaviour change interventions – questions and moves beyond traditional interpretations of the effectiveness literature, providing evidence of leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of this field (p.10-11) (KU2). This is further evidenced in McCulloch (2006) (henceforth paper 2) and also in McCulloch & McNeill (2008) (henceforth paper 3) which provides a critical, detailed and leading overview of the emerging Desistance literature.

Having identified the limitations of the reviewed research literatures, paper 1 goes on to report on the findings of a qualitative research study which sought to generate new knowledge and understanding in this area. My summary of the research findings (p.13-17) demonstrates my ability to generate knowledge and understanding through independent research (KU3). The discussion and conclusion section of this paper demonstrates my capacity to make a significant contribution to the development of the subject (p.17-20) (KU3). This is further evidenced in my wider dissemination of the research findings (within both professional and academic communities) and in the citation of the paper by other leading academics in this subject area (i.e. cited at least 13 times by national and international scholars). Paper 3 provides additional evidence of the above SCQF outcomes, demonstrating leading knowledge and understanding in the area of Desistance (p.154-161).

Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding

Paper 1 reports on my activity in implementing a research plan from initial conception to final dissemination of findings. My activity in this task demonstrates my ability to make use of a significant range of principal and complex skills, techniques, practices and materials associated with professional and academic enquiry (P1&2).

Specifically, the paper is a product of the following activities and processes:

- Networking and negotiation with professional staff at key levels to identify service development needs in respect of probation practice
- Development of a relevant research proposal and strategy

- Submission of research proposal for approval to relevant professional and academic bodies

- Design and implementation of a systematic and detailed literature review, including the construction, implementation, revision and (re-)implementation of appropriate search strategies

- Revision of research questions and research methodology

- Identification of appropriate sample group and activity towards securing access

- Completion of pilot research interviews

- Revision of research methodology

- Completion of research interviews

- Transcription of data gathered

- Analysis of data gathered

- Completion of research report

- Dissemination of findings:

  o Dissemination of 'summary papers' to research participants

  o Planning, delivery and evaluation of learning seminars with professional staff

  o Planning, delivery and evaluation of taught inputs to undergraduate and post-graduate social work students

  o Publication of paper in *Probation Journal* 2005

  o Liaison with senior planning officer, Dundee Criminal Justice Social Work Services, resulting in dissemination of paper to social work managers as part of staff development

  o Presentation of paper at academic conference

My design and execution of a systematic literature review (as evidenced and reported on in papers 1,2,& 3) demonstrates my ability to apply a range of standard and specialised research instruments and techniques of enquiry (P3). In respect of the Effectiveness literature (paper 1 & 2), given the breadth of literature surrounding the

subject, this involved the design and implementation of multiple and varied electronic search strategies.

My design and implementation of an appropriate and feasible research methodology (as reported on in papers 1 & 3), i.e. one that was capable of taking the identified research questions forward, gathering relevant data and analysing that in a reliable, timeous and cost-effective way, demonstrates my ability to design and execute research projects to deal with new problems and issues (P4).

My presentation and discussion of the research findings (as evidenced in paper 1 (p.13-17), paper 2 (p.20-28) and paper 3 (p.162-167)) demonstrates an ability to contribute to the creation and development of new knowledge, understanding and practices (P5). Specifically, my capacity and commitment to connecting theory, research and practice demonstrates a capacity for originality and creativity in the interpretation and application of research findings. This is evidenced, for example, in paper 1 in my discussion around the multiple and inter-related processes that can be seen to impact on probationers' decisions to desist, (p.14-15, 18). Supporting evidence in this area can be found in a reference provided by Professor Fergus McNeill, a leading international figure in this field (appendix 7).

Finally, the focus and argument of paper 1 (i.e. the necessary relationship between probation practice, offenders' social contexts and desistance efforts) recognises and engages in the professional and political contexts of change and reorganisation framing probation practice in Scotland and the UK at the time. In this respect the paper demonstrates an ability to practice in the context of new problems and circumstances (P6). Supporting evidence in this regard is provided in the editorial introduction to the paper (appendix 8). Paper 3, published more recently, provides additional evidence in this regard, further demonstrating my capacity to apply emerging knowledge and understanding to contemporary social work and probation practice (P2, P4, P5).

Generic Cognitive Skills

Paper 1's exploration and analysis of the relationship between probation practice, social context and desistance provides routine evidence of a capacity to apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas (G1). This is further evidenced in my critical analysis, evaluation and conclusions relating to the Desistance literature (paper 3). In both papers, my interpretation of the research data, my ability to locate that data within existing theory, and my ability to offer original creative insights into the implications of the research findings for contemporary probation practice, demonstrates my ability to identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new issues (G2). See for example my re-assertion of the value of 'talking' or 'narrative approaches' in a professional and political climate where such approaches have become deeply unfashionable (paper 1, p.15-16, 18-19).

In paper 1, my interpretation and discussion of the data relating to 'what methods workers and probationers identify as most helpful in supporting change in offenders' social problems?' demonstrates an ability to deal with complex and longstanding challenges for probation practice, as well as an ability to develop creative and original responses to problems and issues. Specifically, my discussion of the critical role that 'significant others' or 'naturally occurring guardians' can play in supporting the process of change, demonstrates an ability to develop creative and original responses to presenting problems (G3). Similarly, my analysis, discussion and conclusion around the potential value of 'direct help' within probation practice (p.16, 19-20) demonstrates my ability to deal with complex and/or new issues and make informed judgments in the absence of complete or consistent data (G4).

Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

The publication of papers 1, 2 & 3 demonstrates my ability to communicate at the standard of published and peer reviewed academic work. Moreover, the publication of these papers in three independent journals/books demonstrates a capacity to adapt communication and content in accordance with given specifications (C1, C2). However, dissemination of the research findings on which each paper reports has been

considerably broader. For example, in respect of paper 1, the study was driven by a concern to contribute to a more considered and comprehensive understanding of what works in social work efforts to support desistance from crime. To this end, effective dissemination and communication of the research findings was critical. Accordingly, I negotiated a dissemination strategy which enabled communication of the research findings to a range of audiences in a variety of formats. This included:

- The provision of a paper and electronic copy of the completed research study to the agency in which the study was undertaken. This is currently located within the agency library.

- The provision of summary papers outlining the key findings to all of the research participants. Separate papers were prepared for probationers and practitioners.

- Oral presentations of findings to agency staff at various levels in the organisation, making use of relevant software (i.e. powerpoint) as appropriate.

- Planning and execution of taught inputs to undergraduate and post-graduate social work students, again making use of appropriate learning technologies.

- Presentation of the research findings at an academic conference.

As indicated, in each of the above activities the form and function of the communication was targeted to meet the needs and priorities of the various audiences and drew on a variety of e.tools as appropriate (C1,C2, C3).

As previously outlined (see 'Knowledge and Understanding'), the research activity underpinning the above dissemination activity demonstrates an ability to use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and to critically evaluate numerical and graphical data, i.e. in my use of electronic information databases and in my capacity to critically evaluate research data presented in a variety of formats (C3,C4).

Autonomy, Accountability and Working with others

The production of papers 1, 2 and 3 - and the various activities associated with each (i.e. the process of enquiry, the execution of the research study and dissemination of the research findings) - provide ample evidence of my ability to exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional activities (A1). Further, the focus and form of each paper evidences an approach to professional practice that is routinely reflective, self-critical and grounded in research evidence (A4).

In papers 1 and 2, throughout the research process I took full responsibility for all of the work completed, a process which provided considerable opportunity to demonstrate leadership in tackling and solving problems and issues. For example, the empirical component of my research activity (reported on in paper 1) required an ability to demonstrate clear leadership through the research process, to highlight and take steps to resolve ethical and practical dilemmas posed by the project, and to work collaboratively with agency staff at all levels to balance research priorities with the priorities and needs of the agency, its staff and service users. For example, this was evident in collaborative efforts to secure access to a random sample group and in ensuring that all those who participated in the study had the opportunity to contribute as appropriate to the interpretation of the findings (A2,A3, A5).

Part 2

McCulloch, T. & McNeill, F. (2007) 'Consumer society, Commodification and Offender Management' *Criminology and Criminal Justice,* 7 (3), 223-242*,* (Appendix 4).

The above paper arose from a conference paper, presented as part of an invited panel session at the British Criminology Conference in 2007. The paper was subsequently developed and published in the international journal *Criminology and Criminal Justice*. The paper ably demonstrates my ability to engage in and produce outputs that can be assessed at SCQF Level 12 and has been described by Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms (one of Europe's most eminent criminologists) as 'outstandingly original' in its application both of Bauman's ideas around consumer society and critical scholarship around the commodification of public services to the processes and practices of 'offender management (see appendix 7).

The breakdown of contribution by the collaborators in this piece of work was McCulloch: 50% and McNeill: 50% (Verification provided in appendix 8). In this respect, the final product clearly reflects a collaborative endeavour. However, given the geographical positions of the authors, their individual commitments, and the respective capacities of each, it was clear from the outset that this collaborative endeavour would involve a high level of autonomy and initiative in taking forward the component parts of the project.

Claim

Knowledge and Understanding (KU)

The paper's examination of the commodication of probation or 'offender management' in the context (i) of Bauman's analysis of crime and punishment in consumer society and (ii) wider research and debate about the commodification of public services, demonstrates critical, detailed and leading knowledge and

understanding at the forefront of contemporary criminological debate (KU2). The paper's identification and discussion of the varied forms of commodification currently evident within public sector provision, alongside its more in depth analysis of the 'substantive commodification' of probation practice, evidences my critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts relating to this subject area (KU1).

Further, my ability to investigate, interpret and report on the extent to which the substantive commodification of offender management is already evidenced within contemporary probation policy and practice, provides evidence of knowledge and understanding generated through personal research which makes a significant contribution to the development of knowledge in this field (KU3).

Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding

As noted above, the paper evolved from a personal invitation by the British Criminology Conference to present on 'The Commodification of Probation' - a subject area recognised by those in the field to be emergent and relatively unexplored within applied criminological debate. In this respect, the focus of the paper demonstrates a capacity for enquiry and knowledge development in the context of new problems and circumstances (P1, P4). Recognising the dearth of existing knowledge in this area, the design and execution of a strategy for enquiry necessitated a capacity for originality and creativity in the development of new knowledge and understanding (P5).

Acknowledging the above context, the process of enquiry was two-fold. Firstly, in exploring the concept and process of commodification within contemporary practice, current developments within offender management were explored and considered within the broader context of Bauman's analysis of crime and punishment in consumer society. The objective of this approach to enquiry was to firmly locate our analysis within the wider socio-cultural context framing contemporary penal developments. In this respect, the paper demonstrates a capacity to critique and make use of sociological and criminological data within an applied professional field, and to make use of complex techniques of enquiry (P2, P3).

In addition, the enquiry process made use of more familiar techniques of enquiry routinely associated with a review of relevant literature (P1). In this instance this extended beyond the realms of offender management or probation practice to also incorporate literature relating to the broader arena of public services (P1&2). This enhanced approach to enquiry demonstrates an ability to appropriately draw upon a range of principal and complex skills, techniques and modes of enquiry relevant to the development of new knowledge and understanding (P1, P2, P3).

My capacity for originality and creativity in the application of new knowledge, understanding and practice is further demonstrated in the conclusion to the paper. Specifically, the paper concludes by analysing apparent problems in the commodification of probation practice (p.235-239), as well as the potential for the containment or moderation of that process in the future (p.237-239) (P5,P6).

Generic Cognitive Skills

The journal *Criminology and Criminal Justice* is recognised as a leading, peer reviewed international journal of original research and thinking in the field. The paper's publication within this journal demonstrates external recognition of my ability to identify, conceptualise and offer original insights into new, complex and abstract ideas (G2, G3).

More specifically, the paper's analysis of Bauman's analysis of crime and punishment in consumer society and my ability to locate offender management developments within that analysis, demonstrates a capacity to apply an integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas (G1). Further, it provides evidence of an ability to deal with and engage with very complex and new issues and to make reasoned and informed judgments in the absence of detailed knowledge (G4).

The paper's systematic analysis of the extent to which the substantive commodification of offender management can be seen in probation's: 'products', 'consumers' and 'processes of production' (p.226-235) demonstrates a capacity to

identify, conceptualise and offer original insight into the processes of commodification currently in evidence within probation policy and practice (G2, G4).

In discussing the extent of commodification within probation and offender management the paper also attends to the windows of opportunity and/or potential for resistance within current developments. In this respect the paper demonstrates a capacity to develop creative and original responses to problems and issues (G3). This is further explored in the conclusion to the paper where the prospects and potential for containment of commodification within probation and offender management are explored (p.237-238).

Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

The presentation of this paper at the British Criminology Conference, alongside it's publication in *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, demonstrates a capacity to use a significant range of advanced and specialised communication and ICT skills appropriate to the particular audience, context and purpose (C1,C2, C3).

Specifically, the conference presentation – which constituted one of four invited panel presentations - required an ability to summarise the key messages of the research, to communicate orally with an expert though diverse academic audience, and to create an environment which would foster critical dialogue and engagement with new material.   The paper, by contrast, necessitated a fuller form of communication and to a level and form which reflected the journal submission guidelines. In this respect my activity evidences a capacity to modify my communication styles to particular contexts and requirements (C1, C2, C3).

Autonomy, accountability and working with others

As already noted, the process of completing the paper involved a high level of autonomy and initiative at key stages. For example, stage one of this process involved each author engaging in an initial process of enquiry. For my part, this involved:

- An analysis of the varying definitions surrounding commodification, and their relationship to developments within offender management and probation practice (a summary of this investigation is reported on in the introduction to the paper (p.223-224))

- A systematic review of international literature. Given the limited research available on this subject this necessitated a broader and more creative approach to locating and interpreting relevant research (as outlined under the KU & P headings (A3)).

- An ability to locate, critique and apply (what were typically international, multi-disciplinary and frequently abstract) analyses of the processes of commodification in consumer society, within the practical realities of offender management and probation practice developments in Scotland. This approach reflected an awareness of the potential inaccessibility of the subject matter to those engaged in professional practice, a firm belief in the relevance of this subject matter to the effective development of professional practice, and a resulting commitment to ensuring that the messages to emerge from this study were accessible and firmly grounded in professional and practice realities. In this respect, both the process and the final product demonstrate an ability to work in ways that are reflective and self critical and an ability to recognise and deal with complex ethical and professional issues (A3, A4, A5).

Naturally the completion of this paper entailed a range of other activities and processes. However, the above outline of my activity in stage 1 provides evidence of my ability to exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative and an ability to take full responsibility for my actions and activity (A1, A2).

The emergent nature of the paper's subject has already been outlined and in this respect my substantial contribution to the paper demonstrates a clear capacity to make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional practices (A5). More specifically, the section entitled: 'Problems in commodifying probation', demonstrates an ability to make informed judgements on

the problems associated with the commodification of probation practice – a discussion which at the time had not been published elsewhere (A5). Further, the conclusion to the paper presents a series of 'informed judgements' relating to the future development of probation practice which again, had not, at the point of publication, been published elsewhere (A5).

References

The Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (2007) *SCQF Handbook Volume 1 2007*.

Available at: http://www.scqf.org.uk/Resources/Downloads.aspx.

(Appendix 1)

Probation Journal

Article

Probation, social context and desistance: Retracing the relationship

Trish McCulloch, University of Dundee

Abstract This article reports on the findings of a small-scale Scottish study which drew on participant perspectives to explore the attention given to probationers' social contexts in supporting desistance from crime. In light of findings from previous studies which suggest that recent developments in the design and delivery of effective programmes have contributed to a neglect in attention to offenders' social contexts, this article presents a more optimistic picture whilst providing some insight into how desistance-focussed interventions can more effectively assist change in this area.

Keywords desistance, effectiveness, effective programmes, probation, social context, social problems

The pursuit of 'effectiveness' in the delivery and development of community-based disposals has been one of the few observed constants within penal policy and practice over the last two decades. However, despite well-documented developments in our knowledge of what is effective in supporting desistance from crime – coupled with the notable, and at times fervent, efforts of ministers, researchers and practitioners to bring theoretical developments into practice – research, policy and practice continues to highlight that our knowledge, and success, in this area remains 'embryonic'. In particular, a number of recent studies have highlighted the importance of offenders' social contexts in decisions to persist in and desist from crime, a message which, alongside other forces, has contributed to a recognition of the need to develop a more 'considered and comprehensive response to the problems of crime in the 21st century' (McConnell, 2003).

Reporting on the findings of a small-scale research study, this article aims to contribute to the development of a more considered and comprehensive response to individual offending behaviour and begins by providing a brief review of what

existing research can tell us regarding the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance from crime. Having identified a theoretical rationale for *also* attending to offenders' social contexts within change interventions the article draws on participant perspectives to explore the attention given to probationers' social problems within a local probation team in Scotland. Attention is also given to the methods used to address probationers' social problems and, with a view to informing future practice in this area, to the perceived efficacy of these methods in supporting change. In recognition of the shifting definitions associated with the term 'social problems', for the purpose of this article the term is used in its broadest sense and refers to the range of problems which probationers experience as they interact with their social environment (i.e. family, community, society).

The article concludes that within the cases examined, considerable attention was given to probationers' social problems – reflecting participants' cogent recognition of the relevance of probationers' social contexts in supporting desistance from crime. However, in common with previous studies, participants reported limited success in assisting probationers to overcome social problems. Whilst this raises concern regarding probation's ability to assist probationers to achieve and sustain desistance from crime, probationer accounts of how they achieved 'improvements' in their social problems provides some insight into how probation can more effectively move forward in this area. In particular, the article highlights the need for a more collaborative, integrated and re-integrative approach to probation assessment and intervention.

Social context and desistance: Retracing the relationship

The relationship between offending behaviour and the social and cultural contexts in which offending and desistance decisions are made is a subject which has long occupied social researchers, policy makers, practitioners and, one would suspect, offenders and desisters themselves. Recognizing the breadth of academic and empirical literature to be drawn upon in exploring this subject, the review which follows is deliberately limited and draws primarily on the effectiveness research and the desistance literature.

It can be fairly safely asserted that the effectiveness literature is not well known for its attention to the social and cultural contexts of individual offending behaviour, an attribute which is not surprising given this work's heavy reliance on psychological perspectives of crime and criminality. However, given the ongoing salience of this research discourse on current policy and practice, closer attention to what this body of research can tell us regarding the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance is not only pertinent to the focus of this article but is, by now, long overdue.

The key messages from the effectiveness literature were collated into six key principles by McGuire and Priestley in 1995 and include: risk classification, criminogenic needs, responsivity, community base, treatment modality and programme integrity. At first glance the above principles appear to neither directly advocate

nor refute an attention to the social context of offending behaviour within change interventions. Rather, as a whole, they support an offence focussed, individualized and broad-based approach to programme design and delivery. Even where the research identifies a single 'most promising' approach in the form of cognitive behavioural methods – a method recognized for its focus on the individual offender and on the modification of his or her thoughts, attitudes, reasoning and problem-solving skills (Hollin, 2001, p. 21) – this is routinely located within an attention to the other six principles, any discussion of which underlines the need for interventions to be delivered in accordance with *individual* risk, criminogenic need and responsivity considerations (Andrews, 1995; Lipsey, 1995; McGuire and Priestley, 1995).

Closer attention to the individual principles, and to the research informing those, further endorses a broader conception of effectiveness and, despite suggestions to the contrary (Neary, 1992; Pitts, 1992), indicates that in the design and delivery of effective programmes workers would do well to target those aspects of an individual's social context that can be 'reasonably linked' with his or her criminal conduct. For example, whilst Andrews' (1995) identification of 'more' and 'less' promising targets for effective interventions has courted considerable criticism for its heavy reliance on personal or psychological factors (McNeill, 1998) – a reliance which Lipsey's (1995) research suggests may not be entirely justified – emphasis is also given by Andrews (1995) to the role of 'peer associations', 'family dynamics', 'academic, vocational and recreational rewards' and 'other attributes of clients *and their circumstances* that . . . have been linked reasonably with criminal conduct' (p. 55, italics added). For Andrews then, the emphasis does not appear to be on psychological or social factors per se but on those factors that can be 'reasonably linked' to an individual's criminal conduct.

Lipsey's (1995) meta-analysis (of nearly 400 studies of the effectiveness of treatment for juvenile delinquency) provides further preliminary support for an attention to the social factors known to be associated with offending behaviour. For example, one of the surprising findings identified by Lipsey was that effects in the broad domain of psychological change (i.e. attitudes and feelings) were not strongly correlated with delinquency effects (i.e. change in offending behaviour). By contrast, Lipsey found that school participation outcomes and, to a lesser extent, vocational and interpersonal outcomes do tend to co-vary with delinquency effects. Further, Lipsey's study demonstrates that the largest single reduction in offending behaviour (35%) was achieved by employment-focussed programmes in which clients were able to secure 'real' jobs. Whilst the significance of this finding is mediated by a corresponding, though less favourable, finding relating to employment programmes within the same study, as others have already observed (McGuire, 1995; Palmer, 1995; Vanstone, 2000), the success of this mode of intervention remains significant and provides at least preliminary indication that an attention to the social context of offending behaviour (e.g. employment circumstances) can, under the right conditions and with the right resources, be very effective in supporting desistance.

Recent research tracing the *application* of the effectiveness literature provides further preliminary support for attending to offenders' social contexts. Research in

this area has focussed almost exclusively on the application of cognitive behavioural approaches, perhaps reflecting what Mair (1997) termed the 'almost evangelical movement' (p. 1222) on behalf of cognitive behavioural approaches and the now all too familiar piecemeal application of the effectiveness research findings. However, despite the widespread adoption of cognitive behavioural methods across the UK, research relating to the effectiveness of these methods remains patchy and notably cautious in its conclusions (see for example, Lewis et al., 2003; Ong et al., forthcoming; Raynor and Vanstone, 1997; Underdown, 1998; Vanstone, 2000; Vennard et al., 1997). Moreover, each of these studies reach broadly similar conclusions regarding the way forward and continue to identify a need for decisions about programme content to be not only individualized – i.e. more explicitly matched to individualized assessments of risk, need and responsivity – but also contextualized. As Raynor and Vanstone (1997) concluded with reference to the limited 'sustained' success of the Mid Glamorgan STOP programme: 'Work on the thinking and behaviour of people who are at a high risk of further offending [needs to be] complemented by attempts to assist them with the problems that they encounter in their everyday lives in the real world' (p. 282).

Such conclusions are now increasingly familiar within research evaluating the application of the effectiveness principles and, together with the messages which emerge from even a cursory critical reading of the effectiveness literature, provide a clear rationale for attending to the broader social contexts in which offenders live and change.

The above messages find further and fuller expression in the emerging desistance literature, a research discourse which, though less well known, is now more readily recognized for its acknowledgement of the 'complex, personal, inter-personal and social contexts of criminal careers and their termination' (McNeill, 2002, p. 1). Indeed, recent studies of desistance underline the inter-relationship between these key 'contexts', indicating that workers concerned to support the complex process of desistance need to be addressing and working across all of these areas (see for example, Graham and Bowling, 1995; McNeill and Batchelor, 2002; Rex, 1999). As McNeill (2002) observes, this 'requires that interventions be focussed not solely on the individual person and his or her perceived deficits' but rather should 'tend towards recognising the broader social contexts and conditions required to support change' (p. 5). Drawing on research interviews with 199 probationers, Farrall (2002) puts this point more directly and identifies the need to now 'conceptualise probation intervention as being aimed at altering some aspects of an individual's social and personal circumstances' (p. 214).

Moving the agenda forward: From 'what' to 'how'

Whilst there is much evidence to suggest that the above messages may need to be restated in the current climate – not least recent research findings which suggest a reticence amongst 'offence-focussed' probation managers and staff to directly address family related obstacles, social and environmental factors or other 'underlying issues' (Farrall, 2002; McIvor and Barry, 1998; McNeill, 1998; Maguire et al., 1998) – Maruna (2000) suggests that most practitioners already know that if their

clients could find rewarding careers or develop satisfying relationships that they would likely 'go straight' (p. 12). *If* this is the case then the more pressing question, suggests Maruna, is how can probation interventions help individuals to achieve these social goals?

Maruna (2000) suggests that the task is to get the person to the point where they are 'employable and marriageable' (p. 12) and in this respect identifies a need to better understand how to encourage 'cognitive changes' within the individual. Others, drawing on more general probation research, point to the relational element of supervision and to the importance of probationers feeling valued and engaged in the supervision process (Pitts, 1999; Trotter, 1999). Rex's (1999) research endorses this message though also indicates that most probationers valued 'guidance' and 'advice' on how they might resolve social and personal problems rather than direct practical assistance. In contrast, Farrall's (2002) research questions the efficacy of 'purely talking' approaches to obstacle resolution and suggests that more by the way of 'direct action' is required to maximize probation supervision.

Whilst then recent desistance and client-orientated studies concur that probation interventions should pay greater heed to the social contexts in which offending and desistance decisions are made, knowledge relating to 'how' probation can assist offenders to achieve and sustain change in this area remains limited.

The implications of the above for the development of effective and ethical probation practice are considerable. Specifically, there is a need to better understand the attention currently given by workers to probationers' social contexts within probation supervision, to identify the methods used to achieve change in probationers' social contexts and, perhaps most importantly, to consider the efficacy of these methods from the perspectives of those who use them.

Methodology

Informed by the above, the research study set out to address three inter-related questions:

1. What attention is give to probationers' social problems within probation supervision?
2. What methods are used to address probationers' social problems?
3. What methods do workers and probationers identify as most useful in achieving change in probationers' social problems?

The research activity was conducted in January 2004 and involved 12 semi-structured individual interviews with six social workers and six of their[1] probationers. The interview schedules for workers and probationers were broadly similar in nature, were structured in accordance with the three research questions outlined above and contained three or four, mostly open, questions relating to each theme. In order to gain access to research participants an access agreement was secured

via the service manager of a local criminal justice social work agency, following which I visited the agency's three probation teams allowing me to brief potential workers about the study and to recruit participants. Two workers were randomly selected from each of the three probation teams, each of whom were then guided to randomly recruit one probationer from their caseload.

Of the probationers interviewed five were male and one was female. Half were aged between 17 and 23 years, two were aged between 24 and 29 years and one was aged 35 years. All of the probationers were white. Of the workers interviewed four were female and two were male. Workers ranged in age from 37 to 52 years and had a length of service of between two and 18 years, the average being nine years. All of the workers were white. The small size of the achieved sample, coupled with the fact that all of the participants were white, prohibits defensible claims being made regarding the general representativeness of the sample achieved. Though a clear limitation, this is perhaps to be expected in a study of this scale.

Research findings

Attention given to probationers' social problems

All of the participants understood the purpose of probation to be the reduction of further offending and all but one reported that considerable attention was given to addressing probationers' social problems as a means of achieving this goal. Whilst previous research has at times interpreted a focus on probationers' social problems as a weakness – in so far as this is seen to reflect a 'welfare' rather than an 'offence' focussed approach to intervention (Ford et al., 1992; McIvor and Barry, 1998) – the rationale provided by participants for work done in this area suggested otherwise. The probationers interviewed provided a particularly clear and 'offence-focussed' rationale for attending to the social problems they experienced, as illustrated by Probationer 5's response to the question: 'Do you think probation should help you to deal with these [social] problems?'

> Yes, definitely, definitely . . . For starters it's most of those problems that are causing the offending in the first place. Boredom for starters, that leads then into either mischief behaviour or leads on to taking drugs to combat the boredom. One thing leads on to the other, you start taking drugs, you start breaking the law, one thing leads on to another thing.

Of the workers who believed that probation should address probationers' social problems the rationale provided mirrored probationer accounts of why this was important, i.e. the perceived relationship between a probationer's social problems and his or her offending behaviour. The worker who expressed ambivalence on this issue related this to organizational pressures, the challenge of addressing social problems and a more 'strict' sense of what probation was about. Though a minority voice in this study, this view corresponds with views expressed in McNeill's study (1998) which suggests that workers were less inclined to address

'broader environmental' factors, believing work on probationers' 'attitudes' to be a more realistic target (p. 54). In the current professional climate of narrow targets, high caseloads and shifting professional values, this perspective is neither surprising nor difficult to defend. However, in light of what the probationers in this study identify as important in supporting them to desist from offending, it is a perspective which poses a problem if probation hopes to demonstrate effectiveness in assisting probationers to achieve and sustain desistance from crime.

Whilst the study found that considerable attention was given to probationers' social problems generally (most commonly, problems with relationships and problems with alcohol and drugs), this was not the case in relation to problems of boredom and employment which, though prioritized by probationers, received limited attention from workers. The possible reasons for workers' inattention to these areas are varied though, given that most probationers identified the existence or resolution of these problems as integral to their persistence in or desistance from offending, the limited attention given to these issues is concerning. As Probationer 1 identified in relation to boredom and employment: 'That's the reason I offend'. From a different perspective, Probationer 2 describes the impact of finding employment on his ability to desist:

> If I didnae hae a job I think I would just basically be the same like, sorry to say but I do . . . the job changed it . . . that's what changed it.

Methods used to address probationers' social problems

The study found that the methods used to address probationers' social problems generally reflect the findings from wider probation research which identify the use of talking methods, referrals to other agencies and direct help as the most common methods used to address probationers' problems (Farrall, 2002; Rex, 1998). More particular to this study, participants highlighted the involvement of family members and being visited at home as methods also employed to address social problems. On a more general note, workers relayed what appeared to be an overarching task centred or problem-solving approach to tackling social problems, the use of multiple methods to address single problem areas and, on being asked what informed their choice of methods, more than half related their decisions to a combination of the characteristics of 'learning style' of the probationer and their sense that a particular method had 'worked' in the past. These general messages are encouraging and suggest that workers were approaching work on social problems in a way which is broadly consistent with messages to emerge from the effectiveness research and, though to a lesser extent, with recent research findings which stress the importance of probationers' own networks in supporting change (Braithwaite, 1999; Haines, 1990, cited in Rex, 2001).

With regard to the general usefulness of the methods used, participant responses are best described as 'cautiously optimistic' with most participants relating that work done on social problems tended to result in 'improvements' rather than 'resolution'. In this respect the findings echo with the findings of wider probation studies which indicate that, though workers may be attaching priority to

probationers' practical and social problems, most report limited success in resolving problems (Farrall, 2002; McIvor and Barry, 1998; Rex, 1998). Further, where 'improvements' were achieved, in common with Farrall's (2002) findings, most participants attributed improvements to a combination of the work done within probation and the wider normative processes taking place in the probationer's life. As Probationer 2 describes in recounting the many and interrelated processes which impacted on his social problems and, in turn, offending behaviour:

> It was just kenning [knowing] about all your stuff, all like in the one room, rather than just waking up in the morning and going what's happening; kenning about everything and sort of like that's when I realized. Then wi' being on probation you have to be of good behaviour too so I was sort of like being alright and then once I got the job that was it. I've got a new job now too. That one was only temporary but the one I'm at now is permanent.
>
> [How did you get the new job? (Researcher)]
>
> My dad, like cos fae I got probation and I was trying to calm down, with stopping going out, not getting charged, getting a job. I think it sort of showed my dad tae I was able to dae it like, so he got [me] an application for his work and then I got a job.

Whilst this would suggest that the work done on probation is only part of a wider process enabling probationers to achieve change in their social circumstances – a finding which raises the question of how can probation more directly influence these wider processes – the fact that probation was seen by most to have played a part in that process underlines the need to better understand the methods of intervention which contributed to that.

Most helpful methods in addressing social problems

A common theme in probationer accounts of what was most helpful in assisting them to address their social problems was the value of being listened to, closely followed by talking about social problems and receiving advice and guidance. The provision of advice and guidance is now well recognized as a useful method in helping probationers to resolve a range of problems (McIvor and Barry, 1998; Rex 1998) though the value of talking and, more significantly, listening to probationers is less well documented. However, the findings from this study suggest that listening to probationers is not only *as* important as providing advice and guidance but is integral in assisting probationers to take on board advice given. As Probationer 1 explains:

> Until [Worker 1] came on the scene I didnae hae anyone to confide in . . . so I was just hitting the tins or hitting the bottle. She's different. She'll sit down and she'll listen to [me] . . . ken she doesnae try and hurry [me] up or anything, she'll just sit there until I'm finished and then she'll say, right, is there anything else you want to talk about? If I say yes then she'll let [me] carry on and if I say no I'll say, right, is there anything you want to speak to me about. If she says yes I'll say I'm ready to listen.

The process of 'talking about' problems also emerged as a more crucial and complex process in addressing social problems than is often recognized. For example, in common with Rex's (1998) probationers, probationers in this study indicated that talking about their problems often involved a process of problem clarification and identification, a process considered central in enabling probationers to understand their problems and in turn address them. Talking about problems was also frequently used to refer to dialogue which incorporated the provision of advice and guidance, the development of thinking skills and practical problem solving. As Worker 3 elaborates:

> We talk . . . talk through, play through scenarios, in terms of when he gets approached by these people, how he could deal with the situation so he doesn't get into trouble. Like identifying ways of coping with that and withdrawing. A lot of it is to do with developing his thinking skills and the way he deals with difficult situations, confrontational situations and just showing him how he can cope with that.

In addition then to underlining the range of processes denoted by the term 'talking about' problems, the above findings also indicate a very natural, and at times unconscious, ability amongst workers to effectively combine more traditional talking methods with more directive methods of intervention (i.e. cognitive training and concrete problem solving).

Whilst the probationers interviewed clearly valued being listened to and talking through problems, previous studies have questioned the efficacy of purely 'talking approaches' in resolving social problems, suggesting that more in the way of 'direct help' (i.e. providing probationers with training/employment contacts [or indeed employment], preparing probationers for interviews, providing relationship counselling, etc.) is needed to assist probationers to overcome their problems (Farrall, 2002). Perhaps surprisingly, this view did not appear to be shared by the probationers interviewed. Rather, in common with probationers in Rex's (1998) study, probationers reported that they didn't expect probation to 'resolve' their problems for them but wanted advice and guidance as to how they themselves could do that, coupled with encouragement and support as they engaged in that process. Although it is possible that probationers' views on this issue were constrained by their current experience of probation, my impression from conducting the research was that probationers had a sufficiently informed, critical and realistic view of what they expected from probation – more so, it might be argued, than can at times be said for policy makers, academics and practitioners. However, this is not to suggest that probationers did not value direct help in resolving social problems, the study merely indicates that probationers did not expect or need that to come directly from probation workers. As Probationer 6 puts it:

> I think [more direct help] would help for the likes of us but I don't think it's a job for the probation officers themselves, like I think they've got enough on their plate without having to find jobs for people. . . . I think that's up to the job centre and that.

Also included within participant accounts of what was 'most helpful' was the involvement of family members. Whilst this could be seen to reflect the age and life stage of the probationers involved in this study, the value placed by participants

on the involvement of family members seemed to reflect their recognition that efforts to address social problems were most effective when workers worked alongside, and in one case mobilized, the support of family members. As noted, this finding sits well with wider research relating to what works in addressing social problems though the limited, and more often than not chance, use of this method suggests that workers are still some way from routinely utilizing what Smith and Vanstone (2002) refer to as 'the naturally occurring guardians' (p. 824) within probationers' lives.

Discussion and conclusion

In considering the implications which may be drawn from the findings of this small scale study I return in closing to the three original research questions.

What attention is given to probationers' social problems within probation supervision?

As noted, participants within the study clearly understood the purpose of probation to be the reduction of further offending and reported that considerable attention was given to addressing probationers' social problems as a means of achieving this goal. In light of concerns raised within the literature regarding the diminishing attention given to probationers' social problems, this finding is encouraging and might suggest that the workers interviewed were adopting a more integrated approach to the reduction of offending behaviour than is currently being evidenced UK-wide. More broadly, participants' apparent ease and cogent rationale for integrating these at times polarized objectives bears potential and would suggest that the often cited tension between 'welfare' and 'offence-focussed' approaches may be less difficult for workers and probationers to reconcile than it is for the wider academic and political community.

Though welcome, the above findings need to be treated with caution on two counts. First, the findings reflect the perspectives of a small sample group and, as previously noted, are not entirely congruent with the findings of other Scottish or UK studies. Second, the findings emerge from a time and place when the delivery and content of probation supervision is subject to considerable scrutiny and change, reflecting the ongoing influence of the effectiveness research on Scottish probation practice (Whyte, 2002), alongside wider political concerns to reform and, it might be argued, 'rebrand' Scottish criminal justice social work services (Scottish Executive, 2004). As these 'developments' unfold, and inevitably impact on the delivery and content of probation practice, the above reported findings are all the more timely and bring a clear challenge to policy makers, managers and practitioners to ensure that future developments do not erode existing strengths. At the very least, this will require a more explicit acknowledgement of the importance of probationers' social contexts in supporting desistance and a more active commitment towards altering these contexts as a means of supporting change.

What methods are used to address probationers' social problems?

The findings from the study present a relatively positive picture of the quality of local practice in addressing social problems and suggest that a number of workers were approaching work on social problems in a way which is broadly consistent with recent research messages. However, the more troubling finding to emerge from the study is that despite this fact, though in common with the findings of previous studies (Farrall, 2002; McIvor and Barry, 1998; Rex, 1998), most workers reported limited success in enabling probationers to overcome their problems. Further, where 'improvements' were achieved, in common with Farrall's (2002) findings, most attributed improvements to a combination of the work done within probation and the wider normative processes going on in the probationer's life. On the one hand this finding usefully underscores that probation cannot enable probationers to address their social problems in isolation – a finding which, in turn, highlights the need for workers to become more attuned to the normative processes which can and do facilitate change in this area and more adept at influencing these processes towards the resolution of social problems. However, noting recent research which suggests that probationers' failure to achieve and sustain behaviour change may be linked to the failure of traditional and recent interventions to enable probationers to overcome 'day to day' problems (Farrall, 2002; Raynor and Vanstone, 1997), probation's limited success in this area cannot be overlooked and foregrounds the need to better understand the particular methods and processes which can assist probationers to overcome their social problems and achieve desistance.

What methods do workers and probationers identify as most useful in achieving change in probationers' social problems?

As noted, almost all of the participants identified 'being listened to' as one of the most useful methods in addressing probationers' social problems. Further, participants' discussion of this process highlighted that listening to probationers was not only important as a method in itself but was crucial to establishing the type of relationship needed (i.e. participatory and respectful) to enable probationers to receive, and respond to, more directive methods. This message sits well with wider research on probation which emphasizes the importance of the relational element of supervision and of probationers being valued and respected if they are to engage in the process of change (Rex, 1999; Trotter, 1999). However, it is a message which sits notably less comfortably with the current correctional ethos driving penal policy and practice developments. For now, it remains unclear how these tensions are to be resolved though the findings from this and other studies suggest that if politicians, managers and practitioners are committed to enabling probationers to address the problems and obstacles which lie in the way of desistance then these less fashionable or politically palatable messages need to be heard and more routinely embedded into the rhetoric, policy and practice of probation.

Next to being listened to, both probationers and workers identified the importance of talking methods in helping probationers to resolve their problems. In light

of more recent studies which have questioned the efficacy of talking methods in supporting change this finding is significant and suggests that talking to probationers about their problems can be a more complex, structured and useful process than is often assumed. More specifically, the considerable emphasis placed by probationers on gaining a thorough understanding of their problems in order to address them suggests that more routine attention needs to be given to the process of assessment *within* probation supervision, a process which the wider findings from this study suggest needs to be participatory, individualized and contextualized. Further, the value placed by participants on dialogue which incorporated direct attempts to develop probationers' thinking skills (cognitive training) and ability to resolve real problems (concrete problem solving) suggests a need for workers to more routinely integrate traditional talking methods with more structured and directive methods of addressing problems.

The involvement of family members was cited as a useful method by almost half of the study's participants and, as stated, is a finding which links with messages from wider studies that stress the importance of probationers' personal and community networks in addressing social problems (Braithwaite, 1999; Haines, 1990, cited in Rex, 2001). Rex (2001) notes that this will require more active collaboration between probation and local community agencies though, more fundamentally, it will require more active collaboration between workers and probationers themselves, towards identifying the network of family members, friends *and* community agencies which can be mobilized to help probationers address the social problems which lie in the way of desistance. Once again, this highlights the importance of workers engaging in participatory, individualized and contextualized assessments that focus as much on the needs and problems underlying a probationer's offending behaviour as they do on the natural supports and networks which can be utilized to address these problems. Naturally, once workers and probationers have identified the potential pro-social networks which surround probationers, the challenge will be to strengthen, support and mobilize those networks – a process which, as Farrall (2002) observes, will involve 'the probationer's social circumstances and relationships with others [becoming] . . . both the *object* of the intervention and the *medium* though which . . . change can be achieved' (p. 214).

Finally, one of the surprising findings to emerge from this study was that none of the participants identified direct help amongst their discussion of most helpful methods. However, as noted, this is not to suggest that probationers did not want direct help in resolving social problems, merely that they did not expect this to come directly from probation workers. In slight contrast then to Farrall's (2002) vision of a probation service which works to directly resolve probationers' social problems, i.e. by 'creating jobs locally for their caseloads' (p. 221) or providing the counselling necessary to restore broken relationships, the findings from this study suggest that it is perhaps more desirable, as well as more realistic and inclusive, for probation to direct its efforts towards developing the individual and community partnerships needed to enable probationers to achieve these goals themselves. However, even this more modest vision of probation presents a considerable challenge for current practice and policy. As has been argued, at a

practice level it will require a more participatory and solution-focussed approach to probation assessment, a more active commitment to working collaboratively with the individuals and resources within probationers' communities (which will inevitably require workers spending more time in these communities) and a more explicit attention to motivating and enabling probationers to do the same. In addition, any success on the part of probation services to work more collaboratively and effectively with probationers and community resources will be wholly dependent on those resources being in place. As others have already noted, this is a challenge which reaches beyond the realms of probation and criminal justice policy (Chapman, 1995; Farrall, 2002; Rex, 2001) and will require targeted, integrated and evaluated action on the part of the government to ensure that resources exist within communities which are capable of enabling individuals to overcome their problems and realize their potential.

In conclusion then, the findings from this small scale study suggest that any attempt to provide a more 'considered and comprehensive response to the problems of crime in the 21st century' must entail a more comprehensive and considered commitment to improving the social contexts in which offenders live and change. Further, the study indicates that, within the cases examined, most workers already recognize the importance of probationers' social contexts in supporting desistance and, at least for the time being, are practising accordingly. Of more concern, though in common with previous studies of probation, the study found that the work done on probationers' social problems tended to result in 'improvements' rather than 'resolution' – a finding which, if replicated across the country, raises concern regarding probation's ability to support probationers to achieve and sustain desistance from crime. However, probationer accounts of how they achieved improvements in their social problems provides some indication of how probation can effectively move forward in this area and, in particular, highlights the need for a more collaborative, integrated and re-integrative approach to probation assessment and intervention than is currently in place.

Note

1 The term 'their' is used to denote the associative relationship between the workers and probationers interviewed and does not imply a possessive relationship between the two groups.

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(Appendix 2)

REVIEWING 'WHAT WORKS?': A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Drawing upon the effectiveness research and the desistance literature, this article explores the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance from crime. The article contends that there now exists a clear theoretical rationale for attending to the social context of offending behaviour within change interventions which needs to be more routinely and confidently applied in practice. The article goes on to argue that, whilst our understanding of 'what' we should be addressing is advancing, our knowledge pertaining to 'how' offenders can be assisted to achieve change in their social circumstances remains limited. The article concludes by considering the implications of these findings for effective probation practice and calls on those involved to look beyond piecemeal, prescriptive approaches to 'what works?', towards more integrated responses capable of confronting not only what we know but, also, what we don't.

Key words: probation, social context, effectiveness, desistance, what works

Introduction

Over the last two decades the purpose, process and organisation of Probation (Criminal Justice Social Work in Scotland) has been subject to sustained scrutiny and change highlighting the now explicit and competing influence of political, cultural, fiscal and academic forces on penal policy and the probation task. Amidst this complexity and change the concept of effectiveness, and the body of research which now informs that, has remained central to the debate, direction and delivery of community penalties.

The influence of the effectiveness – or, as it has come to be known, 'what works?' - research on probation policy and practice has been considerable and, as Rex (2001) observes, has been achieved within a remarkably short period of time. Whilst, on the whole, the policy and practice developments associated with this discourse have been welcomed – in so far as they have been seen to contribute to a more evidence-based approach to intervention with offenders (McGuire, 1995; Whyte, 2002) - at the same

time there has emerged a growing body of research attending to the limitations of the research evidence and its application. Indeed, such has been the constancy of this 'critical perspective', one might argue that it is now possible to detect subtle shifts and 'trends' within the discourse itself[1].

Notwithstanding, one of the sustained criticisms to be levelled at the research revolves around its apparent negation of the social and cultural contexts of offenders' lives and offending choices (Neary, 1992; Pitts, 1999; Lacey, 2002); a concern which, as many observe, is amplified by the often narrow and piecemeal application of the effectiveness principles in practice (Mair, 1997; Vanstone, 2000).

Recognising the ongoing, and increasingly prescriptive, salience of the 'what works?' research within current policy and practice development (Mair, 2004), alongside the long and well documented links between offending behaviour and the social and cultural contexts in which that behaviour takes place (Farrington, 1997), attention to this criticism is, by now, long overdue. Moreover, in a late-modern penal climate which, both north and south of the border, appears increasingly preoccupied with the creation of structural arrangements intent on reducing complex professional interactions to well executed 'correctional' processes, (Carter, 2004; Scottish Executive, 2004) the need to revisit and re-articulate what research evidence can and does tell us about the broader processes which might support reductions in re-offending remains particularly pronounced.

This article draws on two dominant research paradigms – that of the effectiveness research and the desistance literature – in an attempt to articulate what is currently known regarding the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance from crime. In doing so the article asserts that there exists a very clear theoretical rationale for attending to probationers' social circumstances within change interventions - a rationale which now needs to become more routinely and confidently utilised in practice. On a more cautionary note, the article argues that while we may now have a clearer understanding of 'what' we should be addressing, knowledge relating to 'how' we address social context remains limited.

The Effectiveness Research

Depending on the perspective of the commentator, what the effectiveness research has to tell us about the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance can appear quite varied. Andrews (1995), in setting out the evidence and principles of 'effective correctional treatment', appears keen to assure the reader that the findings presented 'exist without denial of the importance of ... the contribution of political economy, social structure and culture... to the processing of 'criminal actors'' (p. 35). Similarly, McGuire's (1995) collation of the research evidence relating to the question of 'what works in reducing re-offending?' devotes an entire chapter to illustrating the importance, in designing structured programmes, of carrying out work which 'takes account of the social and cultural conditions in which offenders live' (McGuire, 1995: xii). In contrast, critics continue to point to an over-reliance within the effectiveness

research upon personal and psychological factors and the resulting negation of the wider social and cultural contexts of offenders' lives and offending choices (Pitts, 1992; Neary, 1992; Lacey, 2002). From yet another perspective, more recent commentators have argued, with particular reference to cognitive behavioural methods, that the above criticism is more accurately levelled at those responsible for implementing the research findings than the authors themselves (Vanstone, 2000; Rex, 2001; Raynor, 2004).

Notwithstanding this diversity, it can be asserted that the effectiveness research is not well known for its attention to the social and cultural contexts of individual offending behaviour – a factor which is not surprising given this work's heavy reliance on psychological perspectives of crime and criminality. However, there appears to have been little direct attention given to exploring what this body of research does in fact tell us about the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance. Recognising the above-noted salience of this research discourse, it is to this task we now turn.

Messages from the research

The 'what works?' research draws on a series of meta-analytic studies which examine the effectiveness or 'effect size' of various forms of 'treatment' in reducing recidivism. The principal, though by no means undisputed, finding to emerge from these studies is that 'treatment' or rehabilitation interventions can have a positive effect in reducing recidivism (see for example: Whytehead and Lab, 1989; Izzo and Ross, 1990; McGuire and Priestle, 1995). In addition to asserting that rehabilitation can be effective in reducing recidivism, the effectiveness research identifies those features most consistently associated with positive outcomes in terms of reducing recidivism. These 'features' were collated into six key principles by McGuire and Priestley in 1995 and have since been widely publicised and disseminated in this form across the UK. The principles identified include:

1. Risk classification
2. Criminogenic needs
3. Responsivity
4. Community base
5. Treatment modality
6. Programme integrity

In addition to the key principles, McGuire and Priestley (1995) identify that 'amongst the range of intervention methods included in the meta-analyses, those which emerge as offering the most promising outcomes are based on the 'cognitive-behavioural approach' ' (McGuire and Priestly, 1995: 16).

At first glance the above principles neither directly advocate nor refute an attention to the social context of offending behaviour within effective interventions. Rather, as a whole, they support an offence-focussed, individualised and broad-based approach to programme design and delivery. Even where the research does identify a single 'most promising' approach in the form of cognitive behavioural methods - a method recognised

for its focus on the individual offender and on the modification of his or her thoughts, attitudes, reasoning and problem solving skills (Hollin, 2001) - this is routinely located within an attention to the other six principles, any discussion of which underlines the need for interventions to be delivered in accordance with *individual* risk, criminogenic need and responsivity considerations (Lipsey, 1995; Andrews, 1995; Andrews and Dowden, 2004). Further, discussion of the research findings by the authors themselves routinely cautions against attempts to 'pick out the magic bullet' treatment, highlighting the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural methods alongside *other* effective approaches (e.g. skills based, concrete, structured and multi-modal approaches (Lispey, 1995; Losel, 1995)). Whilst then the effectiveness literature places emphasis on the efficacy of cognitive behavioural methods (a finding which as Rex (2001) observes should not be surprising given what the criminal careers research tells us about the impulsivity and poor abstract reasoning characteristics of persistent offenders) it is inaccurate to suggest that the research identifies cognitive behavioural approaches as *the* effective 'treatment' mode.

Closer attention to the individual principles, and to the research informing those, further endorses a broader conception of effectiveness and, despite suggestions to the contrary (Neary, 1992), indicates that in the design and delivery of effective programmes workers would do well to target those aspects of an individual's social context which can be 'reasonably linked' with his or her criminal conduct (Andrews, 1995). For example, in discussing the need principle, Andrews (1995) identifies 'more' and 'less' promising targets for effective interventions, a distinction criticised by some for its over-emphasis on personal or psychological factors to the neglect of social factors (McNeill, 1998). Whilst Andrews' (1995) identification of 'more promising targets' certainly places a heavy reliance on personal and psychological factors - a reliance which Lipsey's (1995) research suggests may not be justified - also included in Andrews (1995) list of 'promising targets' are:

- reducing anti-social peer associations
- promoting family affection/ communication
- shifting the density of... rewards and costs for criminal and non criminal activities in familial, academic, vocational, recreational and other behavioural settings [and, perhaps most importantly]
- changing other attributes of clients *and* their circumstances that, through individualised assessments of risk and need, have been linked reasonably with criminal conduct (Andrews, 1995:p55, italics added)

More notably, in a recent review of 'core correctional practices' by the same author (Dowden and Andrews, 2004), the importance of targeting 'social factors' is now particularly pronounced - a response perhaps to earlier criticism in this regard. Nonetheless, of the five core correctional practices identified by Dowden and Andrews as being 'important indicators for treatment outcome', problem solving on 'community/ interpersonal issues' and the 'effective use of community resources' now constitute two of the five core practices.

Lipsey's (1995) meta-analysis (of nearly 400 studies of the effectiveness of 'treatment' for delinquency) provides further preliminary support for an attention to the social factors known to be associated with offending behaviour. For example, one of the surprising findings identified by Lipsey (1995), and recently supported by Wilkinson (2005), was that effects in the broad domain of psychological change (i.e. attitudes, feelings) were not strongly correlated with delinquency effects (i.e. changes in offending behaviour). By contrast, Lipsey (1995) found that school participation outcomes and, to a lesser extent, vocational and interpersonal outcomes do tend to co-vary with delinquency effects. Further, Lipsey's (1995) study demonstrates that the largest single reduction in offending behaviour (35%) was achieved by employment-focussed programmes in which clients were able to secure real jobs. Whilst the significance of this finding is mediated by a corresponding, though less favourable, finding relating to employment programmes within the same study, as others have observed (Palmer, 1995; McGuire, 1995; Vanstone, 2000), the success of this particular mode of intervention remains significant and provides at least preliminary indication that an attention to the social context of offending behaviour (i.e. employment circumstances) can, under the right conditions and with the right resources, be very effective in reducing recidivism. As Palmer's (1995) research suggests, the arising challenge then is to identify the particular components or factors of this intervention which contributed to its success.

Notwithstanding the preliminary and generalised nature of the above knowledge, one might quite confidently assert that the effectiveness research does not negate an attention to the social context of offending behaviour. Rather, the above would suggest that, in the design and delivery of effective programmes, workers would do well to also attend to the social context of individual offending behaviour.

Messages from the research – application
In considering what the effectiveness research can tell us about the relevance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance there is a need to also consider research findings from the *application* of that research. With few notable exceptions (for example, Rex et al forthcoming; Hurry and Moriaty forthcoming) discussion in this area has focussed almost exclusively on the application of cognitive behavioural approaches – reflecting both the dominance of this approach within contemporary probation practice and the, now all too familiar, piecemeal application of the research findings (Mair, 1997; Vanstone, 2000). However, despite the widespread adoption of cognitive behavioural methods across the UK, research relating to the effectiveness of these methods continues to be patchy and notably cautious in its conclusions.

Reviewing the application of cognitive behavioural programmes with offenders in the UK, Vennard et al (1997) conclude: 'even these approaches rarely produce major reductions in re-offending' (Vennard et al, 1997: vii). Underdown's (1998) survey of evaluation results for cognitive behavioural programmes operating in the UK reaches similarly cautious conclusions and identifies that, of the two hundred and sixty seven 'effective' programmes claimed to be in operation, solid evidence of effectiveness was available in relation to only

four. Further, Raynor and Vanstone's (1997) evaluation of the Mid Glamorgan STOP programme - though initially celebrated for its identification of positive results - is now increasingly noted for its attention to the fact that initially positive results were not sustained in the second year. More recent studies appear more bleak – or perhaps more bold - in their conclusions, frequently reporting 'no differences' in the reconviction rates for offenders who had participated in cognitive behavioural programmes and matched comparison groups (for example Cann et al, 2003; Falshaw et al, 2003; Wilkinson, 2005).

In a context where the 'roll out' of cognitive behavioural programmes shows no sign of abating, these 'disappointing' findings are significant in and of themselves. However, the richer findings perhaps lie in what we can learn from these results. Most of the aforementioned studies reach broadly similar conclusions regarding the way forward and identify the need for decisions about programme content to be more explicitly matched to individualised assessments of risk, need and responsivity. Moreover, an increasing number of studies point to the need to look *beyond* the programme itself, i.e. towards the wider contexts in which these programmes take place (Merrington and Stanley, 2004; Wilkinson, 2005). As Raynor and Vanstone (1997) concluded, now almost a decade ago, with reference to the limited 'sustained' success of the Mid Glamorgan Stop Programme: 'work on the thinking and behaviour of people who are at high risk of further offending [needs to be] complemented by attempts to assist them with the problems they encounter in their everyday lives in the real world' (Raynor and Vanstone, 1997: 282). As these messages become increasingly familiar to research evaluating the application of the effectiveness principles, there emerges a very clear theoretical and empirical rationale for attending to the broader social contexts in which offending and desistance decisions are made and sustained.

The Desistance Literature

The 'criminal careers' research has long been considered relevant to understanding the particular factors associated with the onset, persistence, escalation and, to a lesser extent, desistance of criminal behaviour (Farrington, 1997). However, recent emphases on desistance and crime reduction, alongside growing recognition of the limited and generalised nature of the effectiveness research findings (Maruna, 2000; McNeill, 2002), has resulted in a more critical attention to the factors associated with individual decisions to desist. As McNeill (2002) observes, by focussing on 'when, how and why' change occurs, the desistance literature pursues a broader agenda than that provided by the 'what works?' research and supports an approach to intervention 'which recognises the complex personal, inter-personal and social contexts of 'criminal careers' and their termination'. The relevance of this 'broader agenda' to developing our understanding of what works in supporting desistance is now well endorsed at an academic level and, increasingly, is coming to be seen as 'crucial for the development of effective crime prevention and criminal justice practices' (Farrall & Bowling, 1999: 253).

Traditional Theories of Desistance

Most reviews of the literature on desistance note that research in this area tends to fall within three theoretical perspectives, that is: maturational reform theory, social bonds theory, and narrative approaches (Maruna, 2000; Farrall, 2002; McNeill, 2002).

Maturational reform theory is the oldest and most influential explanation of desistance and is based on the now well evidenced correlation between age and criminal behaviour (Glueck & Glueck, 1940; Farrington, 1997). However, whilst this theory provides some general indication of 'when' desistance is likely to occur, as critics observe, research in this area has generally failed to unpack the meaning of age and as such does little to increase our understanding of 'how' and 'why' this change takes place (Maruna, 2000).

Social bonds theory highlights the correlation between desistance and a number of social and personal variables and in particular suggests that varying ties to family, employment or educational programmes in early adulthood explain changes in criminality. Certainly, there now exists a number of research studies which evidence that desistance is associated with positive change in one or more of the above areas, which, in turn, supports the rationale for attending to the social context of offending decisions. However, as Maruna (1999) observes, these correlations are by no means apparent in all of the research studies. Graham and Bowling's (1995) study of young people aged 14-25 found that whilst social transitions like leaving home and forming a new family unit were highly correlated with desistance for females, no such correlation was found for males of the same age. Further, Uggen's (1996) research found that the relationship between desistance and finding employment was age dependent and was most consistent for persons aged over 27 (Maruna, 1999). Whilst there is much debate as to what these differences tell us (i.e. recent studies suggest that the differences may be due to the fact that males need longer to mature and/or grasp opportunities for change (Flood-Page et al, 2000; Farrall, 2002), the complex and inconclusive nature of the findings should alert us to the fact that the relationship between the formation of social ties and desistance is by no means straightforward but rather is one which, as Sampson and Laub (1997) observe, has 'strings attached'.

Narrative approaches, informed largely by qualitative research, provide yet another perspective and suggest that individual desistance occurs as a result of subjective changes in the person's sense of self and identity (Maruna 1999, 2000). As Maruna (1999) observes 'from the narrative perspective, when an individual desists from crime, s/he acts as his or her own agent of change and is not merely the project of outside forces of social control or personality traits' (p.9). Whilst this perspective usefully recognises the element of human agency in decisions to desist, again, critiques of narrative theory point to the failure of this single perspective to attend to the question of 'why' and 'how' individual narratives change.

Towards an integrative theory of desistance

The above perspectives provide a useful insight into the particular factors associated with desistance though, as Farrall and Bowling (1999) observe, each have generally been considered in isolation and as such have failed to offer much assistance to practitioners in developing interventions to support desistance. More recent studies suggest that neither perspective can fully explain decisions to desist and point to an inter-play between the three perspectives (Farrall and Bowling, 1999; Maruna, 2000; Farrall, 2002; Maruna et al, 2004; Bottoms et al, 2004). Drawing on empirical research with 199 probationers, Farrall (2002) suggests that desistance is related to what he terms 'objective' changes in the offender's life (i.e. maturation, the gaining of employment or a significant relationship) and the offender's 'subjective' assessment of the relevance or value of these changes. Similarly, Bottoms et al (2004) call for an 'interactive theoretical approach... that gives proper weight to both structure and agency, in continuous interaction' (Bottoms et al, 2004: 372). This more 'integrative' theory of desistance – and the growing academic and professional interest associated with it – is to be welcomed. At the most basic level, it very clearly attests to the relevance of social context in supporting decisions to desist from offending. Though, perhaps more significantly, it offers a constructive path through the familiar, though increasingly futile, agency/structure debate towards a more integrated and individualised understanding of how these two paradigms interact and entwine within the process of desistance.

The precise implications of this research discourse for developing interventions capable of supporting the complex process of desistance are yet to be fully explored, far less understood (Bottoms et al, 2004). Nonetheless, there now exists sufficient research evidence to indicate that, in addition to addressing individual decision making, motivation and reasoning skills, interventions should pay greater heed to the social contexts in which these decisions and motivations are constructed. As McNeill (2002) observes, this 'requires that interventions be focussed not solely on the individual person and his or her perceived deficits' but rather should 'tend towards recognising the broader social contexts and conditions required to support change'. Farrall (2002), drawing on his own research findings, puts this point more directly and identifies the need to now 'conceptualise probation intervention as being aimed at altering some aspects of an individual's social and personal circumstances' (Farrall, 2002: 214).

Moving the agenda forward: from 'what' to 'how'

One might legitimately respond to the above discussion with a 'so what's new?' question. Practitioners, academics and even offenders themselves have long asserted the relevance of 'the social' in offending and desistance decisions, drawing upon (often in order of frequency) experiential, ethical and theoretical knowledge to bolster such arguments. The significance of the above discussion then does not lie in its originality of idea. Rather, in a penal climate where the 'get tough' doctrine appears to have taken up residence – as evidenced by recent research findings which suggest a reluctance amongst 'offence-focussed' probation staff to directly address family related obstacles, social and

environmental factors, or other 'underlying issues' (Maguire et al, 1998; McNeill, 1998; Farrall, 2002; Dowden and Andrews, 2004) - the first concern of this paper is to review and re-articulate the theoretical rationale which does in fact exist for attending to the social context of offending and desistance decisions. A rationale which empirical research suggests now needs to be asserted, and applied, confidently and without apology by those practicing in the field.

However, whilst the above discussion usefully contributes to our understanding of 'what' interventions should target, there is a danger in ending our enquiry there. Lipsey's (1995) contrasting findings in relation to employment programmes highlight that there is a great deal more to designing effective programmes than knowing 'what' to target. Indeed, as Palmer (1995) observed, now over a decade ago, at least as much attention needs now to be given to 'how' particular areas or obstacles are targeted. From another perspective, Maruna (2000) suggests that most practitioners are well aware that if their clients could find rewarding careers or develop satisfying relationships that they would likely 'go straight' (Maruna, 2000: 12). If this *remains* the case, then the more pressing question, suggests Maruna (2000), is how can probation interventions help individuals to achieve these social goals?

Noting probation's longstanding concern with - and, arguably, contribution to - the achievement of social justice (Smith and Vanstone, 2002), it is of some surprise that there can be traced relatively few studies which attend in any direct way to the efficacy or otherwise of methods used to support individuals or groups to achieve social change. Indeed, studies which do speak to this area tend to conclude by acknowledging the limitations of existing knowledge and the need for further research in this area (for example, Davies, 1974; Palmer, 1995; Farrall, 2002; McCulloch, 2004).

The effectiveness research and related commentary is particularly limited in its direction as to 'how' workers should tackle the social context of offending behaviour; though the research does highlight 'generally' effective methods of intervention (i.e. cognitive, behavioural, skills orientated and multi-modal programmes (Losel 1995)). Summarising these findings, Lipsey (1995) suggests that 'it is much better to target behaviour for change and approach it in a relatively structured, concrete fashion, than to target psychological process for change and approach it using variations in traditional counselling and casework technique' (Lipsey 1995: 74). Dowden and Andrews (2004) recent review of effective 'core correctional practices' builds on these 'general' messages and provides, what the authors describe as, 'strong preliminary evidence' (Dowden and Andrews: 203) regarding the effectiveness of the following five core practice skills:

- effective use of authority
- anti-criminal modelling and reinforcement
- problem solving
- effective use of community resources
- quality of interpersonal resources

Trish McCulloch

To date, the above findings appear to have been either lost in translation (Dowden and Andrews, 2004) or hi-jacked by programmes focussing on offending behaviour, attitudes or reasoning skills. However, there is nothing to suggest that these 'general' findings are not as relevant to tackling offenders' social needs as they are to tackling attitudinal and cognitive needs.

The desistance literature, noted for its broader attention to 'when, how, and why' change occurs is a little more forthcoming in this area. Attending directly to the question of 'how' probation interventions can help individuals to achieve their social goals, Maruna (2000) suggests that the task is to get the person to the point where they are 'employable' and 'marriageable' and in this respect identifies a need to better understand how to encourage 'cognitive changes' within the individual. Others point to the importance of the 'relational' element of supervision and, in particular, to the importance of probationers feeling valued and actively engaged in the change process (Pitts, 1999; Trotter, 1999).

Rex's (1999) work, drawing on the views of probationers, endorses this message though also notes that most probationers valued 'guidance' and 'advice' on how they might resolve social and personal problems rather than direct practical assistance. In contrast, Farrall's (2002) research questions the efficacy of, what he terms, purely 'talking' approaches to obstacle resolution and suggests that more by the way of 'direct action' is required to maximise probation supervision. Speaking to current preoccupations within penal policy and practice, Farrall (2002) goes on to argue that this will require a 'step back from the exclusive focus on cognitive behavioural work' (Farrall, 2002: 228) – which as Farrall notes is geared solely towards increasing probationers' 'human capital' (i.e. the skills and knowledge which enable individuals to apply for, achieve and sustain jobs etc) – towards the development of interventions capable of also building probationers' 'social capital' (i.e. sustainable opportunities for change, for example around education, training, employment and accommodation).

Whilst then the desistance literature provides some insight into 'how' interventions can enable offenders to achieve and sustain change in their social contexts, knowledge in this area remains very much in its infancy. One suspects that emerging findings from recent studies evaluating the effectiveness of programmes aiming to reduce re-offending through resettlement work (Lewis et al, 2003), community service (Rex et al forthcoming) and education, training and employment projects (Hurry and Moriaty forthcoming) - coupled with forthcoming findings from the Liverpool Desistance study (see Bottoms et al, 2004) and the wave of new research studies said to be prompted by that - will have much to tell us in this respect. At the very least these studies provide a welcome baseline for the now necessary development of knowledge in this area.

Conclusion
The above review provides a clear rationale for attending to the social context of offending behaviour in supporting desistance. Though the effectiveness research is not well known for its attention to the social and cultural contexts of offending behaviour,

closer attention to this body of research, and to its application in practice, suggests that in the design and delivery of effective programmes workers would do well to also attend to the social circumstances in which offenders live and change. This message is further endorsed by the desistance literature which, drawing on criminal careers research, suggests that agency and structure occur in a complex interplay and that workers concerned to support the complex process of desistance need to be addressing and working across each area.

Despite this increasingly clear message, both the effectiveness and the desistance literature suggest that recent developments in the design and delivery of effective programmes – in particular the current reliance on cognitive behavioural and 'general offending' programmes – have contributed to a neglect in attention to the wider social problems known to be associated with offending. Indeed, though these messages may now be familiar – even tiresome - research continues to emerge which suggests that workers concerned to be 'offence-focussed' may be reluctant to address underlying social problems.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, recent desistance studies suggests that where workers do recognise the importance of an offender's social context in supporting desistance, knowledge relating to 'how' these issues can be most effectively tackled remains limited

The implications of the above discussion for the development of effective probation practice are considerable. Almost two decades on from the initial inception of 'what works?', the pressure on probation services to demonstrate effectiveness in reducing re-offending shows no signs of waning. Moreover, the ethical rationale for developing interventions which have the capacity to support and sustain change which is in the interest of the victim, the offender and the wider community remains as strong as ever. In this context, the challenge for those involved in penal policy and practice is at once straightforward and challenging. Most obviously, there is a need to look beyond the allure of piecemeal, prescriptive and programmatic approaches to 'what works?' Secondly there is a need, without apology, to recover and reassert the breadth and complexity of what we do know – and have long known – on this subject. Lastly, there is a need to confront, with some urgency, what we don't know and now need to discover.

Endnotes

[1] For example, one might argue that it is now possible to detect a subtle shift in emphasis from the 'social' to the 'relational' within the critical discourses which surround the 'what works?' doctrine. Whilst trends and development are to be expected within any discourse there is a danger of valid critiques losing currency simply because they are no longer (at least academically) in vogue.

Trish McCulloch

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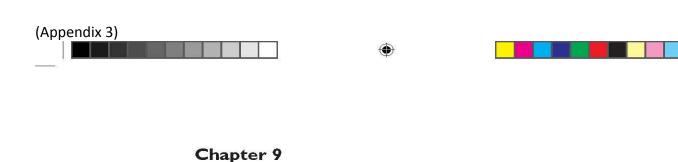Trotter, C. (1999) *Working with Involuntary Clients: A guide to practice*, London: Sage.

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Trish McCulloch

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Chapter 9
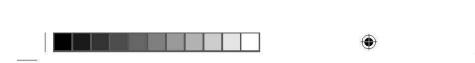
Desistance-focused approaches

Trish McCulloch and Fergus McNeill

Introduction

The pursuit of effectiveness in the treatment and management of offenders has been one of the few observed continuities throughout the history of penal policy and practice. Over the last two decades this pursuit has centred on the question of 'what works in reducing reoffending?' – a perhaps inevitable consequence of spiralling prison numbers and costs, politically unacceptable reoffending rates, emerging transatlantic research evidence and, perhaps most notably, an increasingly politicised public policy arena. More recently, it might be argued that the agenda has moved on somewhat, currently turning on the question of 'what works in offender management?' While it needs to be acknowledged that the rise of 'offender management' as a bold new headline for probation services has resulted, yet again, in a significant shift in emphasis – i.e. towards the creation of 'new and improved' structural arrangements and increasingly standardised technologies of control – there is much evidence to suggest that the increasingly elusive goal of reducing reoffending remains central to current concerns (Blunkett 2004; Carter 2004; Home Office 2004, 2005).

Conversely, despite well documented developments in our knowledge and understanding of 'what works?' in reducing reoffending, not to mention well-resourced practice initiatives in this area, research, policy and practice continue to highlight that our knowledge, and success, in this area remains 'embryonic'. Moreover, an increasing number of recent studies point to the limitations of the 'what works?' research evidence, resulting in renewed academic, political and professional attention to the broader factors and processes which may be associated with decisions to persist in and desist from crime.

'Criminal careers' research has long been considered relevant to understanding the particular factors associated with the onset, escalation and persistence of criminal behaviour. However, it is only recently that the related research around 'desistance' – that is ceasing and refraining from offending – has come to be recognised as having something to contribute

to contemporary debates about offender management and crime reduction (Farrall 2002; McNeill 2006; Maruna 2001; Rex 1999). By focusing on *when*, *how* and *why* change occurs and is sustained, the desistance literature pursues a broader agenda than that provided by the 'what works?' research. Consequently, it supports an approach to crime reduction which recognises the complex personal, interpersonal and social contexts of criminal careers and their termination. The relevance of this broader agenda to developing our understanding of 'what works' is now well endorsed at an academic level and, as Farrall and Bowling (1999) observe, is considered 'crucial for the development of effective crime prevention and criminal justice practices' (p. 253). Nonetheless, the muted impact that desistance research has had on policy and practice to date is both surprising and problematic, not least because knowledge about the process of desistance is clearly critical to our ability to influence and support that process.

This chapter will identify and discuss the theoretical perspectives associated with desistance theory and will examine recent research findings in this area. Consideration will be given to the implications of this emerging research discourse for working with people who offend, with particular attention given to the role of social context in supporting desistance. Having identified a theoretical rationale for 'why' workers should attend to the social context of offenders' lives and offending choices in supporting desistance, attention will be given in closing to 'how' probation can more effectively support change in this area.

Traditional theories of desistance

Most reviews of the literature on desistance note that research in this area tends to fall within three broad theoretical perspectives, that is: maturational reform theory, social bonds theory and narrative approaches (Maruna 2000; Farrall 2002; McNeill 2003).

Maturational reform theory is the oldest and most influential explanation of desistance and is based on the now well evidenced correlations between age and criminal behaviour (Glueck and Glueck 1940; Farrington 1997). While this theory provides some general indication of 'when' desistance is likely to occur, as critics observe, research in this area has generally failed to unpack the meaning of age and as such does little to increase our understanding of 'how' and 'why' this change takes place (Maruna 2000). More recent studies suggest that chronological age has little or no inherent meaning in and of itself. Rather, the term 'age' is seen to index a range of different biological, social and experiential variables. This is supported by a recent Scottish study which explored desistance and persistence among three groups of young people aged 14–15 (the peak age for recruitment into offending for boys), 18–19 (the peak age of offending) and 22–25 (the age by which many would be expected to grow out of crime) (McIvor *et al.* 2000). While the researchers identified some significant age-related differences, the

study also points to significant gender, attitudinal and narrative differences *within* the age groups. For example, the young women in the sample tended to offer moral as opposed to utilitarian rationales for stopping offending and were more likely to emphasise the importance of relational aspects of the process. Additionally, some young women linked their decisions to desist to the assumption of parental responsibilities whereas, in general, young men focused more on personal choice and agency. These findings alert us to the fact that while age remains a significant factor in explaining persistence and desistance patterns, those wider variables (i.e. gender, life transitions, etc.) which interact and are associated with particular ages and stages would appear to be equally significant.

Social bonds theory is the second influential theory within the desistance literature and highlights the correlation between desistance and a number of social and personal variables. Essentially, social bonds theory suggests that varying ties to family, relationships, employment or educational processes in early adulthood explain changes in criminality. Certainly a number of research studies now exist which indicate that desistance is associated with positive change in one or more of the above areas, a finding which, among other things, has legitimised a renewed attention to the social context of persistence and desistance decisions. However, as Maruna (1999) observes, these correlations are by no means apparent in all of the research studies. Graham and Bowling's (1995) study of young people aged 14–25 found that while social transitions like leaving home and forming a new family unit were highly correlated with desistance for females, no such correlation was found for males of the same age. Further, Uggen's (1996) research found that the relationship between desistance and finding employment was age dependent and was most consistent for persons aged over 27 years (Maruna 1999). There remains some debate as to what these differences tell us. Graham and Bowling (1995), for example, speculate that the formation of social ties and life transitions 'only provide opportunities for change to occur; its realisation is mediated by individual contingencies' (p. 35). More recent studies suggest, however, that the differences may be due to the fact that males need longer to mature and/or grasp opportunities for change (Flood-Page *et al.* 2000; Farrall 2002). Clearly, though our understanding is still evolving in this area, the complex and inconclusive nature of the findings alerts us to the fact that the relationship between the formation of social ties and desistance is by no means straightforward but rather is one which, as Sampson and Laub (1997) observe, has 'strings attached'.

Narrative approaches, informed largely by qualitative research, provide yet another perspective and suggest that individual desistance occurs as a result of subjective changes in the person's sense of self and identity – reflected, for example, in changing motivations, greater concern for others and more consideration for the future. Maruna's work (1997, 1999 2000, 2001), itself building on earlier work by Burnett (1992), has been particularly illuminating in this area and has done much to foreground the value of 'offender' perspectives in understanding desistance or the process

of 'going straight'. In an important recent study, Maruna (2001) explored the subjective dimensions of change by comparing the narrative 'scripts' of 20 persisters and 30 desisters who shared similar criminogenic traits and backgrounds and who lived in similarly criminogenic environments. In particular, the study highlighted the significance of the 'stories' or 'scripts' which individuals constructed and utilised to explain their persistence or desistance trajectories (past, present and future) and, perhaps more importantly, the 'roles' that individual actors assigned themselves within these scripts. While recognising the uniqueness of individual stories, Maruna identifies two core scripts as emerging from persisters and desisters, that of the 'condemnation script' and the 'redemption script' respectively. In the condemnation script the active offender typically occupies the role of the 'condemned victim', one who, perceiving their life script as having been written for them some time ago, generally considers themselves to be 'doomed to deviance'. By contrast, the accounts of the desisters revealed a different narrative in which the individual actor, normally with the support of a significant other, assumes the role of change agent and is no longer merely the object of outside forces:

> The redemption script begins by establishing the goodness and conventionality of the narrator – a victim who gets involved with crime and drugs to achieve some sort of power over otherwise bleak circumstances. This deviance eventually becomes its own trap, however, as the narrator becomes ensnared in the vicious cycle of crime and imprisonment. Yet, with the help of some outside force, someone who 'believed in' the ex-offender, the narrator is able to accomplish what he or she was 'always meant to do'. Newly empowered, he or she now seeks to 'give something back' to society as a display of gratitude. (p. 87)

Such findings foreground the significance of the subjective narratives and identities which persisters and desisters (often with the help of others) actively construct for themselves. While not negating the significance of these findings in developing our understanding of desistance, critiques of narrative theory again point to the failure of this single perspective to attend to the question of 'why' and 'how' individual narratives change.

Towards an integrative theory of desistance

The three broad perspectives discussed above provide useful insights into the particular factors associated with desistance though, as Farrall and Bowling (1999) observe, each of them considered in isolation fails to offer much assistance to practitioners in developing interventions to support desistance. Moreover, as has been highlighted, more recent studies suggest that no one perspective can fully explain decisions to desist and increasingly

point to the interplay between the three perspectives (Farrall and Bowling 1999; Maruna 2000; Farrall 2002; Maruna *et al*. 2004; Bottoms *et al*. 2004). In the most recent, and perhaps most wide-scale study of probation and desistance, Farrall (2002) observes that desistance is related to what he terms 'objective' changes in the offender's life (i.e. maturation, the gaining of employment or a significant relationship) and the offender's 'subjective' assessment of the relevance or value of these changes:

> ... the desistance literature has pointed to a range of factors associated with the ending of active involvement in offending. Most of these factors are related to acquiring 'something' (most commonly employment, a life partner or a family) which the desister values in some way and which initiates a re-evaluation of his or her own life. (p. 11)

Similarly, Bottoms *et al*., (2004), in considering the various factors that might be involved in the process of desistance, call for an 'interactive theoretical framework ... that gives proper weight to both structure and agency, in continuous interaction' (p. 372). It would seem then that desistance resides somewhere in the interfaces between developing personal maturity, changing social bonds associated with certain life transitions, and the individual subjective narrative constructions which offenders build around these key events and changes. It is not just the events and changes that matter; it is what these events and changes *mean* to the people involved. This more integrative theory of desistance – and the growing academic and professional interest allied to it – is both timely and promising. At the most basic level it offers a constructive path through a familiar, though increasingly futile, agency/structure debate, towards a more integrated and individualised understanding of how structure and agency interact and engage within the complex process of desistance. More broadly, it provides a much needed baseline for developing our conceptual and practice knowledge in this area, legitimising renewed attention to key variables and processes all too easily overlooked in a penal climate increasingly preoccupied with standardised technologies of correction and control.

The precise implications of this research discourse for developing interventions capable of supporting the complex process of desistance are broad and yet to be fully explored, far less understood (Bottoms *et al*. 2004). Nonetheless, a small number of research studies have begun to explore the role that probation may play in supporting desistance (for example Rex 1999; Farrall 2002; McCulloch 2005). In one study of 'assisted desistance', Rex (1999) explored the experiences of 60 probationers. She found that those who attributed changes in their behaviour to probation supervision described it as active and participatory. Probationers' commitment to desist appeared to be generated by personal and professional commitment shown by their probation officers, whose reasonableness, fairness and encouragement seemed to engender a sense of personal loyalty and accountability. Probationers interpreted advice about their behaviours and

underlying problems as evidence of concern for them as people, and 'were motivated by what they saw as a display of interest in their well-being' (Rex 1999). Such evidence resonates with other arguments about the pivotal role that relationship plays in effective interventions (Barry 2000; Burnett 2004; Burnett and McNeill 2005; McNeill *et al.* 2005). However, the worker-client relationship is neither the only nor the most important resource in promoting desistance. Related studies of young people in trouble suggest that their own resources and social networks are often better at resolving their difficulties than professional staff (Hill 1999) – a finding which is echoed (and developed) by a growing number of probation studies, most notably Farrall's (2002) exploration of the progress or lack of progress towards desistance achieved by a group of 199 probationers (see also Haines 1990; Braithwaite 1999; McCulloch 2005). Reflecting something of a renaissance in attention to the social context of criminal careers and their termination, each of these studies suggest that, in addition to addressing individual decision making, motivation and reasoning skills, interventions concerned to support the complex process of desistance should pay greater heed to the community, social and personal contexts in which persistence and desistance decisions are taken. Necessarily, this requires a 'decentring' of the offending subject and his or her perceived deficits in favour of recognition of the broader social contexts and conditions required to support change. Farrall (2002), drawing on his own research findings, puts this point more directly and identifies the need to now 'conceptualise probation intervention as being aimed at altering some aspects of an individual's social and personal circumstances' (p. 214).

Moving the agenda forward: from 'what' to 'how'

While there is much evidence to suggest that the above messages may need to be restated in the current climate – not least recent research findings which suggest a reluctance among 'offence-focused' probation staff to directly address family-related obstacles, social and environmental factors, or other 'underlying issues' (Maguire *et al.* 1998; Farrall 2002; Dowden and Andrews 2004) – there is a danger in ending our inquiry here. Less than straightforward findings emerging from both the effectiveness and the desistance literatures indicate that there is a great deal more to designing effective interventions and programmes than knowing 'what' to target. Indeed, as Palmer (1995) observed over a decade ago, at least as much attention needs now to be given to 'how' particular areas or obstacles are targeted. Moreover, Maruna (2000) suggests that most practitioners are well aware that if their clients could find rewarding careers or develop satisfying relationships they would likely 'go straight' (p. 12). *If* this remains the case, then the more pressing question, suggests Maruna (2000), is 'how' can probation interventions help individuals to achieve these social goals?

Recalling probation's long-standing concern with – and contribution to – the achievement of social justice (Smith and Vanstone 2002), it is of some surprise that there are relatively few studies which attend in any direct way to the efficacy or otherwise of methods used to support individuals or groups to develop their social networks and achieve social change. Indeed, of the limited studies which do speak to this area, most tend to conclude by acknowledging the limitations of existing knowledge and the need for further research (for example, Davies 1974; Palmer 1995; Farrall 2002; McCulloch 2005).

The effectiveness research is particularly limited in its direction as to 'how' workers should tackle the social context of offending behaviour; though the research does highlight 'generally' effective methods of intervention (i.e. cognitive, behavioural, skills orientated and multi-modal programmes (Losel 1995)). Summarising these findings, Lipsey (1995) suggests that 'it is much better to target behaviour for change and approach it in a relatively structured, concrete fashion, than to target psychological process for change and approach it using variations in traditional counselling and casework technique' (p. 74). Dowden and Andrews' (2004) review of effective 'core correctional practices' builds on these 'general' messages and provides, according to the authors, 'strong preliminary evidence' (p. 203) regarding the effectiveness of the following five core practice skills:

- effective use of authority;
- anti-criminal modelling and reinforcement;
- problem solving;
- effective use of community resources;
- quality of interpersonal resources.

To date, the above messages appear to have been either lost in translation or hi-jacked by programmes focusing on offending behaviour, attitudes or reasoning skills (Dowden and Andrews 2004). However, there is nothing to suggest that these 'general' findings are not as relevant to tackling offenders' social needs as they are to tackling attitudinal and cognitive needs.

The desistance literature, noted for its broader attention to 'when, how, and why' change occurs, is a little more forthcoming in this area. Attending directly to the question of 'how' probation interventions can help individuals to achieve their social goals, Maruna (2000) suggests that the task is to get the person to the point where they are 'employable' and 'marriageable' and in this respect identifies a need to better understand how to encourage 'cognitive changes' within the individual. In a similar vein, but in relation to the reintegration of ex-prisoners to society, Maruna and LeBel (2003) make a convincing case for a shift towards 'strengths-based' (rather than needs-based or risk-based) narratives and approaches. Others point to the importance of the 'relational' element of supervision and, in particular, to the process of ensuring probationers feel valued and are actively engaged in the change process (Pitts 1999; Trotter 1999). As

noted, Rex's (1999) research endorses this message, though it also indicates that most probationers valued 'guidance' and 'advice' on how they might resolve social and personal problems rather than direct practical assistance. In contrast, Farrall's (2002) research questions the efficacy of what he terms purely 'talking' approaches to obstacle resolution and suggests that more by the way of 'direct action' is required to maximise the impact of probation supervision. For Farrall (2002), this requires a step back from the exclusive focus on cognitive behavioural work which he notes is geared solely towards increasing probationers' 'human capital' – towards the development of interventions capable of also building probationers' 'social capital' – i.e. sustainable opportunities for change, for example around education, training, employment and accommodation.

While then the effectiveness literature and, more notably, the desistance literature provide some insight into 'how' interventions can assist offenders to achieve and sustain change in their social contexts, it is fair to say that our understanding and knowledge in this area remains very much in its infancy. In an attempt to move this discussion forward we turn in this final section to the findings of a small-scale research study which, drawing on worker and probationer perspectives, sought to address this question directly.

Exploring the 'how' of social change – worker and probationer perspectives

Conducted by one of the authors, the study in question evolved from the author's (then a criminal justice social worker) experience-based conviction about the relevance of social context in supporting and sustaining desistance, coupled with a growing awareness of the limited success of probation interventions in supporting change in this area. As one active offender frankly put it: 'those that want to help you cannie help you'.[1] In addition, then, to gaining an insight into the level and nature of attention given to social context in contemporary probation practice, the study was principally concerned to better understand how workers could more effectively assist probationers to achieve and sustain change in their social circumstances. The study was conducted in a Scottish criminal justice social work agency in 2004 and involved 12, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with social workers and their probationers. The study set out to address the following three interrelated questions:

1 What attention is given to probationers' social problems within contemporary probation supervision?
2 What methods are used to address probationers' social problems?
3 What methods do workers and probationers identify as most useful in supporting change in probationers' social problems.

Addressing Offending Behaviour

Though our focus here relates primarily to the latter two research questions in light of concerns raised within recent literature regarding the diminishing attention being given to probationers' social context, it is worth noting that one of the surprising findings to emerge from the study was that, within the cases examined, considerable attention was given to addressing probationers' social problems as a means of reducing further offending. Moreover, participants' – both workers and probationers – apparent ease and cogent rationale for integrating these at times polarised objectives was encouraging and might suggest that the often cited tension between 'welfare' and 'offence-focussed' approaches is less difficult for workers and probationers to reconcile than it is for the wider academic and political community.[2]

Methods used to address probationers' social problems

The study found that the methods used to address probationers' social problems generally concur with the findings from wider probation research which identify the use of talking methods, referrals to other agencies and direct help as the most common methods used to address probationers' problems (Rex 1998; Farrall 2002). More particular to this study, participants highlighted the involvement of family members and being visited at home as methods also employed to address social problems. More generally, the study presented a relatively positive picture of the quality of local practice in addressing social problems and suggested that workers were approaching work in this area in a way which was broadly consistent with recent research messages (i.e. participants relayed what appeared to be an overarching task-centred or problem-solving approach to tackling social problems, the use of multiple methods to address single problem areas and, the matching of methods with the characteristics or 'learning style' of the probationer). However, the more troubling finding to emerge from the study was that, despite this fact, though in common with the findings of previous studies (Farrall 2002; McIvor and Barry 1998; Rex 1998), most workers reported limited success in enabling probationers to overcome their problems. Further, where 'improvements' were achieved, in common with Farrall's (2002) findings, most attributed improvements to a combination of the work done within probation and the wider normative processes going on in the probationer's life. As one probationer described in recounting the many and interrelated processes which impacted on his ability to address his social problems and, in turn, offending behaviour:

> It was just kenning [knowing] about all your stuff, all like in the one room, rather than just waking up in the morning and going what's happening. Kenning about everything and sort of like that's when I realised. Then wi' being on probation you have to be of good behaviour too so I was sort of like being alright and then once I got the job that was it. I've got a new job now too. That one was only temporary but the one I'm at now is permanent.

[How did you get the new job? (Researcher)]

My dad, like cos fae I got probation and I was trying to calm down, with stopping going out, not getting charged, getting a job. I think it sort of showed my dad tae I was able to dae it like, so he got [me] an application for his work and then I got a job.

On the one hand this illustration usefully underscores that probation cannot enable probationers to address their social problems in isolation – a finding which, in turn, highlights the need for workers to become more attuned to the normative processes which can and do facilitate change in this area and more adept at influencing and supporting these processes towards the resolution of social problems. However, noting recent research which suggests that probationers' failure to achieve and sustain behaviour change may be linked to the failure of traditional and recent interventions to enable probationers to overcome 'day-to-day' problems (Farrall 2002; Raynor and Vanstone 1997), probation's limited success in this area cannot be overlooked and (again) foregrounds the need to better understand the particular methods and processes which can assist probationers to overcome their personal and social problems and achieve desistance.

Most helpful methods in addressing social problems

A common theme in probationer accounts of what was most helpful in assisting them to address their social problems was the value of being listened to, closely followed by talking about social problems and receiving advice and guidance. The provision of advice and guidance is now well recognised as a useful method in helping probationers to resolve a range of problems (McIvor and Barry 1998; Rex 1998), though the value of talking and, more significantly, listening to probationers is less well documented. The findings from this study suggest that listening to probationers is not only *as* important as providing advice and guidance but is integral in assisting probationers to take on board advice given. As one probationer explains:

Until [Worker 1] came on the scene I didnae hae anyone to confide in … so I was just hitting the tins or hitting the bottle. She's different. She'll sit down and she'll listen to [me] … ken she doesnae try and hurry [me] up or anything, she'll just sit there until I'm finished and then she'll say, right, is there anything else you want to talk about? If I say yes then she'll let [me] carry on and if I say no I'll say, right, is there anything you want to speak to me about. If she says yes, I'll say, I'm ready to listen.

This message sits well with aforementioned probation research which emphasises the importance of the relational element of supervision and of

Addressing Offending Behaviour

probationers being valued and respected if they are to engage in the process of change (Rex 1999; Trotter 1999). However, it is a message which sits notably less comfortably with the current correctional-managerial paradigm driving penal policy and practice developments. For now, it remains unclear how these tensions are to be resolved in the current landscape though the findings from this and other studies suggest that if politicians, managers and practitioners are committed to enabling probationers to overcome the problems and obstacles which lie in the way of desistance then these less fashionable or politically palatable messages need to be heard and more routinely embedded into the rhetoric, policy and practice of probation.

The process of 'talking about' problems also emerged as a more crucial and complex process in addressing social problems than is often recognised. For example, in common with Rex's (1998) probationers, probationers in this study indicated that talking about their problems often involved a process of problem clarification and identification, a process considered central in enabling probationers to understand their problems and in turn address them. Talking about problems was also frequently used to refer to dialogue which incorporated the provision of advice and guidance, the development of thinking skills and practical problem-solving. As one worker elaborates:

> We just talk … talk through, play through scenarios, in terms of when he gets approached by these people, how he could deal with the situation so he doesn't get into trouble; like identifying ways of coping with that and withdrawing. A lot of it is to do with developing his thinking skills and the way he deals with difficult situations, confrontational situations and just showing him how he can cope with that.

In addition then to underlining the range of processes denoted by the term 'talking about' problems, the above account highlights what appeared to be a very natural, and at times unconscious, ability among workers to effectively combine more traditional talking methods with more directive methods of intervention (i.e. cognitive training and concrete problem-solving). In light of more recent studies which have questioned the efficacy of talking methods in supporting change these findings are worth noting and suggest that talking to probationers about their problems can be a more complex, structured and useful process than is often assumed. More specifically, the considerable emphasis placed by probationers on gaining a thorough understanding of their problems *in order to* address them suggests that greater attention needs to be given to the process of assessment *within* probation supervision, a process which the wider findings of the study suggest needs to be participatory, individualised and contextualised. Further, the value placed by participants on dialogue which incorporated direct attempts to develop probationers' thinking skills (cognitive training) and ability to resolve real problems (concrete problem-solving) suggests a need for workers to more routinely integrate traditional talking methods with more structured and directive methods of addressing problems.

Also included within participant accounts of what was 'most helpful' was the involvement of family members (cited as a useful method of intervention by almost half of the study's participants). While this could be seen to reflect the age and life stage of the probationers involved in this study[3], the value placed by participants on the involvement of family members seemed to reflect either a recognition that efforts to address social problems were most effective when workers worked alongside, and in one case mobilised, the support of family members, or a conviction that efforts would have been more effective had significant family members been involved. This finding sits well with wider research studies which stress the importance of probationers' personal and community networks in addressing social problems (Braithwaite 1999; Haines 1990; Maruna 2001). However, the limited and more often than not chance use of this method – at least in the cases examined – suggests that workers are still some way from routinely utilising what Smith and Vanstone (2002) refer to as 'the naturally occurring guardians' (p. 824) within probationers' lives. This perhaps forgotten 'method' of addressing social problems would appear to be ripe for recovery in contemporary probation practice, leading some to highlight the need for more active collaboration between probation, significant others and local community agencies (Rex 2001). More fundamentally, however, it will require more active collaboration between workers and probationers themselves towards identifying the network of family members, friends and community agencies which can be mobilised to help probationers address the social problems which lie in the way of desistance. Again, this highlights the importance of workers engaging in participatory, individualised and contextualised assessments that focus as much on the needs and problems underlying a probationer's offending behaviour as they do on the natural supports and networks which can be utilised to address these problems. Naturally, once workers and probationers have identified the potential pro-social networks which surround probationers, the challenge will be to strengthen, support and mobilise those networks – a process which, as Farrall (2002) observes, will involve 'the probationer's social circumstances and relationships with others [becoming] … both the *object* of the intervention and the *medium* through which … change can be achieved' (p. 214).

Finally, in light of recent studies which suggest that more in the way of 'direct help' (i.e. providing probationers with training/employment contacts – or indeed 'real jobs', preparing probationers for interviews, providing relationship counselling, etc.) is needed to assist probationers to overcome their problems (Farrall 2002), one of the surprising findings to emerge from the study was that none of the participants identified direct help among their discussion of most helpful methods. Rather, in common with the probationers in Rex's (1998) study, probationers reported that they didn't expect probation to 'resolve' their problems for them but wanted advice and guidance as to how they themselves could do that, coupled with encouragement and support as they engaged in that process. Although it is possible that probationers' views on this issue were constrained by their

current experience of probation, the impression gained from conducting the research was that probationers had a sufficiently informed, critical and realistic view of what they expected from probation – more so, it might be argued, than can at times be said for policy-makers, academics and practitioners. However, this is not to suggest that probationers did not value 'direct help' in resolving social problems, the study merely indicated that probationers did not expect or need that help to come directly from probation workers. As one probationer put it:

> I think [more direct help] would help for the likes of us but I don't think it's a job for the probation officers themselves, like I think they've got enough on their plate without having to find jobs for people … I think that's up to the job centre and that.

In slight contrast then to Farrall's (2002) vision of a Probation Service which works to directly resolve probationers' social problems – i.e. by 'creating jobs locally for their caseloads' or providing the counselling necessary to restore broken relationships (p. 221) – the findings from this study suggest that it is perhaps more desirable, as well as more realistic and inclusive, for probation to direct its efforts towards developing the individual and community partnerships needed to enable probationers to achieve these goals themselves. However, even this more modest vision of probation presents a considerable challenge for current policy and practice. As has been argued, at a practice level it will require a more participatory, contextualised and solution-focused approach to probation assessment, a more active commitment to working collaboratively with the individuals and resources within probationers' communities (which will inevitably require workers spending more time in these communities) and a more explicit attention to motivating, supporting and enabling probationers to do the same. In addition, any success on the part of probation services to work more collaboratively and effectively with probationers, those around them and community resources will be wholly dependent on those resources being in place.

As others have already noted, this is a challenge which reaches beyond the realms of probation and penal policy (Chapman 1995; Farrall 2002; Rex 2001) and will require targeted, integrated and evaluated action on the part of government to ensure that resources exist within communities which are both accessible to individuals and capable of enabling them to overcome their problems and realise their potential. Moreover, the wider challenge lies not only in resourcing communities to foster and support desistance in practical ways, it lies in working actively to *persuade* communities (and society more generally) that making such efforts is necessary for both moral and pragmatic reasons. If, therefore, criminal justice and social work agencies are to work effectively to support desistance, they will need to revisit and revive earlier concerns with the role of community development in crime

prevention (Gilling 1995; McNeill 2000) and to engage more effectively with more contemporary debates about public attitudes to offenders, to punishment and to reintegration (Maruna and King 2004).

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide an overview of the theory base associated with the desistance literature, giving attention to the particular factors understood to impact on and support the complex process of desistance. There now exists a growing body of evidence which indicates that in addition to addressing individual decision-making, motivation and reasoning skills, interventions concerned to support the complex process of desistance should pay greater heed to the community, social and personal contexts in which offenders live and change – a perspective which has done much to legitimise renewed attention to core variables and processes all to easily overlooked in the present 'get tough' penal landscape. However, as has been argued, until recently there appears to have been a tendency for debate and discussion in this area to become somewhat stuck on the 'what' of intervention, with little direction provided for practitioners as to 'how' particular areas, obstacles or problems are most effectively targeted and overcome. The small-scale research study drawn upon in this chapter provides some insight into how workers might more effectively assist probationers to overcome the personal and social problems which lie in the way of desistance though the preliminary and generalised nature of these findings highlight the need to now develop our curiosity, knowledge and skill in this area. At the very least, we can be confident that the process of developing our knowledge and skill in supporting desistance will require us to attend more keenly to the wealth of experience, knowledge, and expertise which resides within those persisters and would-be desisters we seek to assist and work alongside.

Discussion questions

1 What can we learn from the desistance literature regarding 'what' we should be focusing on in our efforts to support individuals to achieve and sustain desistance from crime?
2 What does existing research and our practice experience have to tell us about 'how' workers can support individuals to overcome the personal and social problems which lie in the way of desistance?
3 What are the opportunities for, and obstacles to, the development of desistance-focused practice within your own professional practice, your organisation and the wider socio-political climate?

Addressing Offending Behaviour

Further reading

Farrall, S. and Calverley, A. (2006) *Understanding Desistance from Crime: Theoretical Directions in Resettlement and Rehabilitation.* Berkshire: Open University Press. A comprehensive introduction and overview of the desistance research literature, drawing on detailed interviews with both persisters and desisters.

McNeill, F. (2006) 'A desistance paradigm for offender management', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 6 (1): 37–60 In the context of a review of earlier paradigms for probation practice, this paper explores the theoretical, empirical and moral arguments for an alternative and novel paradigm based largely on desistance research.

Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good.* Washington DC: American Psychological Association. Drawing on offenders' own stories, Maruna offers a fascinating and accessible analysis of the lived realities of repeat offenders who, against all the odds, have managed to 'make good' and desist from offending.

Notes

1 Of course it is worth considering this perspective in the light of Maruna's (2001) aforementioned work on the narrative scripts constructed by persisters and desisters.

2 Though welcome, the above finding needs to be treated with caution on two counts. Firstly, the finding reflects the perspectives of a small sample group and is not entirely congruent with the findings of other Scottish or UK studies. Secondly, the finding emerges from a time and place when the delivery and content of probation supervision is subject to considerable scrutiny and change, reflecting the ongoing influence of the effectiveness research on Scottish probation practice alongside wider political concerns to reform and, it might be argued, 'rebrand' Scottish criminal justice social work services (McNeill and Whyte, 2007).

3 All of the probationers interviewed were aged between 17 and 35. This decision was based on methodology considerations identified by previous studies which suggest that probationers within this age range are more likely to be experiencing a number of salient life changes and social circumstances which relate to decisions to persist in or desist from offending.

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(Appendix 4)

078863_CRJ_223-242.qxd   16/4/07   12:49 PM   Page 223

Consumer society, commodification and offender management

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Abstract

This article aims to set current developments in 'offender management' services in England and Wales and in Scotland within the contexts first of a discussion of Bauman's analysis of crime and punishment in consumer society and second of wider debates about the commodification of public services. Rather than examining the *formal commodification* of offender management through organizational restructuring, 'contestability' and marketization, the authors examine the extent to which the *substantive commodification* of offender management is already evidenced in the way that probation's *products, consumers* and *processes of production* have been reconfigured within the public sector. In the concluding discussion, they consider both some limitations on the extent of commodification to date and the prospects for the containment or moderation of the process in the future.

Key Words

commodification • consumer society • offender management
• penality • probation

Introduction

In a rapidly changing policy climate, the commodification of probation or 'offender management' has been understood and interpreted differently by different actors in the penal system. For politicians and policy makers (even

those who at one stage expressed concern at the privatization and commercialization of state services), commodification seems to have become almost synonymous with innovation and reform—a necessary feature of recent governments' relentless commitment to the modernization and 'continuous improvement' of public sector bureaucracies. For private industry, the commodification of probation presents an evolving opportunity to share in and, perhaps more significantly, shape a market previously demarcated as 'off limits'. For many within the probation service, commodification presents yet another challenge which, at best, will likely result in the further emulation of the mechanisms of the market in service delivery and, at worst, will see the emergence of a thoroughgoing mixed economy which 'intentionally and systematically destroys the near-monopoly of the public sector, in order to institutionalize a permanently competitive—and in the Government's terms more desirable—environment' (Nellis, 2006: 55). For these reasons, the future forms and functions of the probation service in England and Wales are currently the subject of much needed speculation and debate (for several important recent contributions to this debate see Hough et al., 2006).

Necessarily, much of this discussion has been concerned with the imminent threat of what we might term the *formal commodification* of probation through contestability, marketization and further organizational re-structuring. However, this is not the main focus of this article. Here, we aim to set these developments within the broader context of the emergence of consumer society, illustrating the extent to which consumer society has already affected the *substantive commodification* of probation both as a penal product and as a penal process, largely within the state sector. To this end, the article begins with a brief discussion of Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of crime and punishment in consumer society. We then examine three key aspects of the commodification of probation and offender management services in the UK, exploring how probation's products, consumers and processes of production have been reconfigured. In exploring each of these themes attention will be given to key problems intrinsic to the commodification of probation and, in closing, to potential opportunities for the containment or moderation of that process.

Commodification, crime and punishment

For Bauman, consumer society is inherently individualistic and insecure; indeed, it compels its citizens to sacrifice collective security in the pursuit of individual liberty. Individualism is itself the source of insecurity not just because, in the absence of collective provision, it compels us to look after ourselves, but because of the inherently competitive nature of consumption which 'sets individuals at cross purposes, often at each other's throats' (Bauman, 1997: 39). Whereas societies focused on production found mechanisms to discipline and regulate citizens through their productive roles,

consumer society generates both new problems of and new anxieties about social order. Bauman (like Young, 1999) sees rising criminality as an '*inescapable* product' not of social and material inequalities per se, but of 'market seduction' which is 'simultaneously, the great divider and the great equalizer' (Bauman, 1997: 40, emphasis in original). Consumer society 'integrates-through-seduction'; it creates common desires and it functions through high consumer demand, but because some are denied the means to satiate the desires thus created, it produces high levels of crime and disorder. Thus, for Bauman:

> The growing volume of behaviour classified as criminal is not an obstacle on the road to the fully fledged and all-embracing consumerist society; on the contrary, it is its natural accompaniment and prerequisite. That is so, admittedly, for a number of reasons; but I propose that the main reason among them is the fact that those 'left out of the game' (the *flawed consumers*—the unfulfilled consumers, those whose means do not measure up to the desires, and those refused the chance of winning while playing the game by its official rules) are precisely the embodiment of the 'inner demons' specific to the consumer life.
>
> (1997: 41–2, emphasis in original)

For our purposes, the most important aspect of Bauman's analysis relates to how consumer society, for both instrumental and expressive purposes, goes about 'disarming, disempowering and suppressing' these 'flawed consumers' in and through the criminal justice system:

> The impotent, indolent players are to be *kept outside the game*. They are the waste-product of the game, but a product that the game cannot stop sedimenting without grinding to a halt and calling in the receivers. Also, the game would not benefit from halting the production of waste for another reason: those who stay in the game need to be shown the horrifying sights of (as they are told) the only alternative—in order to be able and willing to endure the hardships and the tensions which life lived as play gestates.
>
> Given the nature of the game now played, the hardships and misery of those left out of it, once treated as a *collectively caused* blight which needed to be dealt with by *collective means*, can only be redefined as individual crime. The 'dangerous classes' are thus redefined as *classes of criminals*. And so the prisons now fully and truly deputize for the fading welfare institutions.
>
> (Bauman, 1997: 41, emphases in original)

Both the very broad sweep and the dystopian tone of Bauman's analysis has been rightly criticized both for being insufficiently differentiated in relation to varied forms and socio-cultural contexts of consumption (even within western societies) and for underplaying countervailing dynamics and means of resistance. None the less, many of his themes resonate through contemporary discussions of crime (Young, 1999) and punishment (Garland, 2001) in general, and in the emerging literature on the commodification of specific penal services and practices. Precisely because it seems, in some

senses, counter-intuitive to talk of *consuming* punishment, the field of penality represents a particularly interesting site within which to examine both processes of commodification and means of resisting them. However, to date discussions of the commodification and the consumption of penality have tended to address mainly the privatization or contracting out of penal services. Recent articles have discussed, for example, the rise of private prisons (Feeley, 2002; Genders, 2002), security and policing (Loader, 1999; Lynch, 2002) and the development and administration of new surveillance technologies (Feeley, 2002; Nellis, 2003, 2006). Although the impact of consumer society (through commodification) is easiest to identify where whole services are being contracted out to private providers, as for example in the cases of private prisons, prison escorts, private security and electronic monitoring, processes of commodification also operate *within* the state sector through the disciplines of managerialization, marketization and standardization employed in the process of developing mixed economies of penal provision (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2000). The possibility of such an ongoing process of *substantive* commodification is implicitly recognized by Leys (2001), in his analysis of governments' push to commodify services traditionally deemed 'non-market spheres'. Leys argues that the process of commodification is complete when four conditions are met:

1. The services produced must be changed into commodities—that is they must be 'broken down and "reconfigured" as discrete units of output that can be produced and packaged in a more or less standardised way' (2001: 84).
2. There must be a change in public understanding of the service, so that it is regarded as something whose value is comprised only of use-value to its consumer, which value, Leys argues, should also be large enough to justify its price.
3. Commodification must be accompanied by a redefinition of the nature of work, so that an existing labour force is redefined as 'wageworkers producing commodities to generate a surplus for stakeholders' (2001: 84).
4. Governments will take steps to minimize the risk that is borne by private firms as they enter into newly marketized spheres.

With this in mind, we now turn to an analysis of how far the substantive commodification of probation *within* the state sector has progressed.

Products[1]: what is probation selling?

What Garland has referred to as 'the crisis of penal modernism' (2001: 53) plays a central role among the multiple and diverse forces underpinning the commodification of probation. The failure (perceived or otherwise) of the modernist project's grand rehabilitative ambitions resulted in a profound loss of faith (among policy makers if not practitioners (Vanstone, 2004)) in the legitimacy of the traditional aims and purposes of probation. In terms of public sensibilities, Garland (2001) argues that penal welfarism has been

eclipsed in large part because of the decline of support for its measures among the middle classes, now increasingly insecure as they navigate the risks and uncertainties of late modernity. In this context, and given Bauman's (1997) similar analysis of the decline of collective provision and the privatization of risks, it becomes clear why probation's traditional justification—as a means of reclaiming or helping disadvantaged people through rehabilitation, in all of our collective interests—has lost its cultural purchase. Although, in Scotland at least, rehabilitative and socially inclusive probation *practices* survive, they are increasingly subsumed by and subordinated to policy discourses that increasingly stress that probation's intended product is 'reduced re-offending' (Scottish Executive, 2004a, 2004b). For many managers and practitioners working within the context of an insecure society, the pursuit of reduced re-offending in fact re-legitimizes helping offenders, focusing on the relational aspects of their work and setting individual change processes within their wider social context (Robinson and McNeill, 2004; see also O'Malley, 2004; Hannah-Moffat, 2005). However, while there is certainly evidence of welfarist concerns and practices surviving in the pursuit of reducing re-offending, it is perhaps more accurate to conceptualize rehabilitation in this reconfigured field less as an end (or product) in its own right and more as a means to an end (or as a 'process of production'—more of which later). As Lewis observes:

> The key texts [of the new penal policy] give the impression that rehabilitation is just one means of achieving 'the overall aim of crime reduction'. Rather than having a duty to provide rehabilitation then, the state may decide to do so if such strategies are deemed the most likely means of reducing recidivism.
>
> (2005: 126)

Within this discursive reconfiguration focused on reducing re-offending, probation services' more traditional preoccupations with the production of saved, cured and, more recently, rehabilitated offenders (see McWilliams, 1983, 1985, 1986) are reshaped and subsumed within the promotion of a 'new', or at least newly super-ordinate, product; the promise of public protection (Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, 2000; Justice Department, 2001). Significantly, this product is designed primarily to appeal to and to reassure society's 'non-offending' citizens. However, despite the broad consensus which now appears to surround public protection as probation's chief purpose (McCulloch, 2004; Robinson and McNeill, 2004) there remains some uncertainty—or as Robinson and McNeill (2004) observe, 'elasticity'—around what precisely 'public protection' means. First, there is the issue of which members of society are to be included within probation's notional 'public'. Does it relate to all 'citizens' (a problematic concept in itself), or does is refer primarily to victims and future victims of crime? Moreover, are offenders to be permitted access to and inclusion within this consumer grouping? Second, and from a different perspective, we might ask what precisely is being promised in this offer of 'protection', and is it something which probation, even in

partnership with others, has the capacity to deliver? For the time being these questions have been largely silenced by a climate in which the *promise* of public protection has become almost more important than the product itself. This is perhaps unsurprising, for as Goldman observes, in a society increasingly structured by commodity relations, 'what a product stands for is more important than what it is' (1992: 19).

Given Bauman's analysis of the pervasiveness of insecurity within consumer society, probation has little choice but to stand for the promise of protection, but the question remains open as to what kind of protection and which mechanisms of protection it can or should promise to deliver. Because most of the academic, policy and practice literature about probation and public protection focuses on the technicalities of delivering on this objective more effectively, much of the debate rests on an implicit (and highly optimistic) assumption that the public will *feel* better protected by a more effective service. Of course, as recent research on high-crime communities and public punitiveness suggests, there is no straightforward relationship between experiences of crime and attitudes to punishment (Bottoms and Wilson, 2004). Recognition of the need to address directly insecurity and anxiety about crime at the local level underpins the use of high-visibility patrols, the targeting of 'signal crimes' and the development of informal controls through communities that characterize 'reassurance policing' (Innes, 2004). If, as Bottoms and Wilson (2004) suggest, probation were to target these same insecurities and anxieties, in part by responding to signal crimes with 'control signals', then perhaps the measure of its success would not necessarily be communities that were 'objectively' better protected from crime, but rather that communities were subjectively less anxious about crime and, more specifically, less anxious about the management of offenders within the community. Put simply, it might be that probation's intended product should not be communities that are objectively better protected, but rather communities that *feel* safer. At the practical level, the implication that probation would need to engage more visibly and more effectively with local communities raises interesting possibilities, as well as significant problems (Dickey and Smith, 1998).

In the absence of the development of an approach to public protection and community safety focused on such forms of community engagement and involvement, what might seeking to protect and re-assure the public as consumers of probation mean in practice? Fundamentally, the service would have to weigh up the relative merits of two core strategies; one involving the promise of producing more effectively controlled and contained offenders in the community, the other offering to produce more effectively changed or rehabilitated offenders. While these two approaches are neither incompatible nor mutually exclusive, they do suggest divergent emphases for the service and they make different kinds of appeals to the public as the service's consumers. Community-based control appears to offer a form of protection that is more immediate and more reliable but which is only as good as the technologies for surveillance and enforcement on which it

depends; moreover, it offers little prospect of longer-term protection when the control measures are removed. Change-based forms of protection are more incremental and perhaps less reliable in their short-term effects, but where they work they may offer better protection in the longer term.[2] However, as Bauman's analysis suggests, the relative appeal (or lack of appeal) of each of these strategies is likely to be determined less by rational calculations of long-term cost-effectiveness, than by the more urgent and more subjective need of consumers to feel safer now. In any event, existing research on public attitudes to community penalties (recently reviewed by Maruna and King, 2004) tends to suggest that neither of these strategies represents a strong sales pitch for probation managers. Indeed, there is evidence that the wider public are frankly sceptical of probation's capacity to protect and are somewhat ambivalent, at best, about the complex notion of rehabilitation.

Even leaving such public scepticism aside, as Robinson and McNeill have suggested, there is a more fundamental 'paradox at the heart of public protection' (2004: 293). Successfully selling an offer of protection *from* offenders simultaneously depends upon and seeks to address the public's fear *of* offenders. In turn, the ever more intrusive and demanding measures imposed on offenders in pursuit of protection (intensive supervision, tagging, partnership working and so on) serve only to confirm the existence of a threat, the potency of which can only be partly mitigated, even by the best policies and practices. Thus, when research evidence of *general* effectiveness is set against inevitable but spectacular 'failures' to protect in *specific* high-profile cases (consider, within the last year or so, the murders of Marian Bates, Mary-Ann Leneghan, John Monckton and Naomi Bryant by offenders under supervision) the credibility of agencies of protection must suffer, increasing public anxiety and diminishing public trust. Particularly when set against a backdrop of penal populism, this dynamic has driven both policy makers and perhaps the leaders of these agencies in the direction of ever more coercive, constraining and incapacitating methods of protection (see also Rutherford, 1998) in order to sustain popular, political and fiscal support for their activities. Thus there is an inherent dynamic towards control and containment within the prioritization of public protection as probation's overarching purpose or intended product. In Bauman's (1997) terms, appealing to and thus reinforcing public insecurities may prove 'seductive' for consumers, but it will ultimately enflame desires that cannot be satisfied by probation services (at least as we currently conceive them), necessarily resulting in the supplanting of such services by more satisfying and more certain means of controlling 'flawed consumers'.

Rather than ratcheting up the technologies of control to which they subject offenders therefore, probation services might be better advised to confront the challenge of finding ways to moderate consumer demand by fostering more modest and realistic expectations about the extent of protection that they can provide. Optimistically, we might hope that, in due course, recognition of the paradox of protection may drive both policy

makers concerned with the burgeoning costs of increasingly incapacitating sanctions and probation managers in this direction. Indeed, there are alternative futures for probation, even within an increasingly commodified penal field. As well as working to moderate expectations of its public protection 'product', probation services might also seek to offer other products. Two obvious possibilities might be the promise (to consumers) of producing offenders who had been appropriately punished (in the community) and the promise of producing offenders who have been held to account for making good in other ways (for example, through restorative processes). Of course, the first of these options was indeed imposed, in England and Wales, on a reluctant service in the mid-1990s (Worrall, 1997), but the available evidence about whether the wider public ever bought into community penalties as a robust form of punishment is ambivalent at best. Reviewing the research evidence on this question, Maruna and King pithily observe: 'No matter how tough the restrictions, community penalties simply cannot compete with the iron bars, high walls and razor wire of the prison in the battle for being the "toughest"' (2004: 104).

In speaking both to issues of punishment and protection, and more generally to both the instrumental and the expressive aspects of penal sanctions, this quotation neatly sums up the difficulties of marketing probation against other sanctions which are more visible in various forms of cultural discourse (news media, literature, television and films) and, therefore, more present in the public mind. However, there are recurring themes in these same forms of cultural discourse that could lend themselves to the re-marketing of probation. Intriguingly, Maruna and King's (2004) recent work on public attitudes points to the significance of belief in redeemability as a key predictor of support for community penalties. Earlier public attitudes research suggests that the related notions of restitution, restoration and reparation—both as punishment and as evidence of reform—seem to be penal processes and products that the wider public might be willing to buy into (see, for example, Mattinson and Mirlees-Black, 1998; Stead et al., 2002). While Bauman's (1997) analysis might suggest that, in consumer society, insecurity is ultimately a more powerful driver of penal consumption even than any need to see justice done in some positive sense, the latter need, when allied to the remarkable durability of our common cultural interest in 'redemption stories', may leave open the possibility of an ongoing market for probation-as-restitution-redemption.

Consumers: who is buying probation?

If the above discussion has tried to explore what products probation might sell, then the logically proceeding question is: who is buying these products? In the discussion above, we have tended to write as if the public are the presumed consumers of probation services. However, as others have noted (Williams, 1999; Morgan, 2003), the concepts of customer or consumer sit

easily neither within the context of criminal justice in general nor within the context of probation in particular. Morgan suggests that we would do better to ask: 'who does the probation service principally have to satisfy in order that its services continue to be demanded?' (2003: 8). One might also ask who is intended to benefit from provision of these services? Part of the answers to these questions is apparent in the above discussion. In the commodification of probation's purposes we very clearly see the ascendancy of an 'insecure public' who now occupy the position of the service's primary and most 'legitimate' customer. Thus, in the Home Office (2004) response to the Carter report (Carter, 2004), it is clear that the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) exists to provide a *service* to the law-abiding public both by punishing offenders and by reducing re-offending (Home Office, 2004: 4). As its name makes clear, this service exists not *for* offenders, but to manage 'them' for 'us'. In Bauman's (1997) terms, NOMS has been created to help consumer society to manage its 'inner demons'. But beyond this very public polarization and dichotomization of the public *versus* offenders, there are others who might be considered legitimate consumers and beneficiaries of probation.

For Morgan (2003), sentencers constitute probation's primary and only 'real' customers, on the basis that it is they to whom probation services are promoted and offered:

> Like suppliers or producers, in any commercial market place, the probation service, steered by its Home Office budget-holder, seeks to condition sentencer opinion. New sentencing options are introduced or withdrawn, by statute. New programmes are made available … and programmes are branded.
>
> (2003: 10)

While Morgan (2003) is right to identify sentencers as *a* core customer, in fact their position as consumers of probation is peculiar and problematic in many respects. On the one hand, it is clear that sentencers are, by definition, the arbiters of the public interest in making decisions about sanctioning and that they therefore control the *demand* for community penalties; in this sense at least, sentencers are also, for practical purposes, the pre-eminent judges of the *value* of these services. However, despite the provisions of section 170 of the 2003 Criminal Justice Act (which requires the Sentencing Guidelines Council in England and Wales to take into account the costs and effectiveness of different sentences), in so far as sentencers are purchasers of community penalties, they are purchasers with little or no concern about *prices* and for whom services have no real *cost*. Another key peculiarity of the sentencers' position is that s/he need not necessarily be particularly concerned with the effectiveness or quality of the services that s/he consumes; if a sentencer is operationalizing a primarily expressive or retributive approach (as many are when they impose prison sentences—see Hough et al., 2003), then the consequences of the punishment need not be of much concern, so long as the penalty is just, proportionate and sends 'the right message'.

By contrast, the Home Office in England and Wales (and the Scottish Executive in Scotland) concerns itself very much with the costs, prices, quality and effectiveness of sentences. It is the State after all which, using tax payers' money, allocates resources to probation services; one might argue then that, at the macro level, it is the State that is the primary and most powerful customer or consumer of probation services (and of all justice services). Thus, though the individual sentencer selects a particular sentence in a given case, to a significant extent the State governs the sentencer's range of options, whether by statute, through guidelines or by determining which options to make available and at which levels in each locality. Indeed, the increasingly frequent interventions of government within the field of criminal justice might suggest a Baumanesque frenzy of consumption of penality *by* the State. Thus, despite the suggestion that the governance of crime in late-modern neo-liberal states involves forms of responsibilization which fundamentally alter the State's role from 'rowing' to 'steering' in terms of crime *prevention*, the State's position in relation to *punishment* is different:

> … the 'minimal state' of neo-liberalism—the state which is … in some degree 'hollowed out' by globalization—is also a penal state in ways that are often more intense and more politically central than was the case for its predecessor 'state regimes' of the post-war period.
>
> (Loader and Sparks, 2002: 95)

As Bauman (1998) argues, deprived by globalization of control in other areas of government, neo-liberal states collude with and encourage the associations between insecurity and criminality precisely because these associations allow the weakened state to bolster its flagging legitimacy by flexing its atrophying muscles against flawed consumers.

In this context, an unlikely fourth candidate for consumer status would be 'flawed consumers' or offenders themselves. Although probation has always been a mediating institution (Davies, 1981), working for both society and offenders and operating, Janus-faced, in the space between them, we have noted already the ways in which probation's relationship with offenders has been reconfigured. Thus, earlier conceptions of the offender as a legitimate individual subject, service user and even partner (Bottoms and McWilliams, 1979) have been supplanted by a new discourse in which the offender is rebranded as an object of risk-reducing intervention. That said, a number of recent studies would suggest that probation agencies and, more significantly, probation practitioners, have been less than wholesale in their adoption of centrally prescribed reconstructions of the probation officer/offender relationship (Robinson, 2002, 2003). Indeed, while still HM Chief Inspector of Probation, Morgan (2003) acknowledged the still prevailing insistence among probation staff to construe offenders as 'core customers' of probation, or, at the very least, 'stakeholders', 'beneficiaries', 'consumers' or 'clients'. Despite this, the drift in both policy and practice is towards constructing the 21st-century offender as a predetermined set of risks/needs, at which a discrete suite of intervention products are then targeted, rationed and evaluated.

Driven by the complementary rationales of 'what works?' and managerialism, this convenient commodification of offenders from legitimate and complex individuals to standardized 'portable entities' is increasingly apparent within contemporary probation practice and, as Robinson argues, reveals a process of production more akin to 'pass-the-parcel supervision' (2005: 312) than skilled professional intervention. In this context, the offender is quite clearly neither subject nor consumer but rather the object or 'material' on which the process of production operates. As Morgan clarifies:

> Offenders can scarcely be considered the customers of the probation service. It is not they who decide whether or not to have contact. Others do that for them. Offenders are instructed to comply. They constitute the *material* on which the service works. If the probation service can be said to have a *product*, it is 'changed' or 'controlled offenders.
>
> (2003: 9, emphases in original)

While for many (see, for example, Pease, 1999; Hudson, 2001; Mantle and Moore, 2004), Morgan's depiction of offenders might reflect the 'corruption of care' now considered to be firmly established within the probation service, for Morgan, to gloss over this reality reflects the 'seriously woolly thinking within the probation service'; which, if allowed to prevail, severely 'prejudices its future operation' (Morgan, 2003: 8).

Arguably, such developments further attest to the impact of consumerism on probation policy and practice—most notably through processes of individualization. While it might have been hoped that the trend towards individualization could have pushed the probation service towards a more participative, needs-led and individually tailored service, the reality, at least for offenders, has been bleaker: offenders have been placed in a lose–lose situation. As Bauman (2002) observes, individualization is characterized by two evolving trends; that of the disintegration of previously existing social forms and collective provisions (such as class, family, neighbourhood, state, etc.) and the emergence of a new construct in which 'social' responsibilities, controls and constraints are now placed very firmly upon individuals (regardless of whether those individuals have the opportunity or capacity to deploy these new found options or responsibilities). In this brave new world, offenders now find themselves grappling with the full weight of their status as flawed consumers. On the one hand, they find themselves culpable for their own 'offending' actions—past, present *and* future—and thus for their share in the 'blight' of crime generally. On the other hand, they are charged with the challenge of 'making good' in an increasingly punitive, competitive and regulated environment; an environment which, by affording them neither the resources or supports necessary for participation as citizens (Vaughan, 2000)—far less change—not only actively excludes them from 'the game being played' but effectively removes any incentive to play by its rules. While the contradiction and disconnection at the heart of this penal trend may be familiar in our late-modern landscape it would appear to be yet another step towards a penal climate in which concepts such as

justice, inclusion and reintegration become the casualties of the insecurity that lies at the heart of consumer society.

The process of production

There are many possible examples of the commodification of probation's processes of production and space does not permit the detailed analysis required to do justice to the depth and breadth of this process. However, in an attempt to capture the main features of this area of development, our attention focuses on two complementary trends currently evident in probation's evolving processes of production—that of, 'the practice of managerialism' and 'the managerialization of practice'.

The development of managerialism within probation pre-dates the current administration but has arguably reached its apotheosis as part of New Labour's broader modernizing project, a project that has sought to address the perceived inadequacies of semi-autonomous, inefficient and allegedly self-serving public sector agencies. Public sector reform under the Conservatives in the 1980s and 1990s heralded a new era of centralized control and bureaucratic governance, operating through the disciplines of the New Public Management; under New Labour the relentless pursuit of modernization since 1997 has refined rather than replaced managerialist disciplines (Newman, 2000). Key features of the progress of managerialism within probation have included the early erosion of the service's social work (vis-a-vis welfare) affiliations in favour of an organizational culture and framework more malleable to the late-modern penal discourses of punishment and control; the introduction and revision of national standards (in England in 1992, 1995 and 2000 and in Scotland in 1991, 1996 and 2000) and the related 'audit explosion' which accompanied, and more importantly secured, the routine implementation of this new framework of governance; through to more recent innovations, not least the emerging National Offender Management Service itself.

In addition to these '*meta*-commodifications', the probation process has also seen the introduction of numerous '*micro*-commodifications' to its methods and technologies of production—a process which might helpfully be construed as 'the managerialization of practice'. Examples of these new technologies include the introduction, adoption and increasing reliance upon: practice checklists, standardized procedures, risk assessment tools and accredited programmes—each vying to provide consistency and assure 'security' in areas of production where consistency, security and certainty of outcome cannot be guaranteed. As Robinson (2003) observes, this increasingly technicized and reductionist process of production has been seen by many as ushering in a new climate of ideological and technological 'proletarianization'—a process which sees the increasing devaluation of practitioner expertise and influence in the process of production, in favour of prescribed, standardized and routine processes.[3] Further examples of the

managerialization of practice include the recent ascendancy and adoption of select 'knowledge' structures—most visibly demonstrated in the adoption and dissemination of 'what works' (Robinson, 2001)—and the related reliance in policy and practice on bought-in external 'expertise' (McNeill, 2001). If, as seems likely, increasing levels of centralized political control will become apparent in NOMS, these trends seem likely to continue and develop—inevitably advancing the continued subordination of 'experiential knowledge'—that is, 'knowledge' arising from the experience and practice wisdom of practitioners and offenders themselves.

The net effect of the managerialization of both probation services and probation practices is an increasingly micro-managed process of production in which officially prescribed 'tools', 'programmes' and 'knowledges' (each now products in their own right), come to be bestowed with more investment, status and 'trust' than the practitioners—or 'obedient functionaries' (Nellis, 2003)—reluctantly entrusted to use them. It requires then only a very small leap of the imagination to conceive how such processes might lend themselves to a future service in which the component parts of the production process, now more discrete and more mechanized, are more readily outsourced or contested.

Problems in commodifying probation

On the basis of the above discussion it might appear that the commodification of probation and offender management is already well advanced. At the outset, we noted Leys' (2001) four preconditions for concluding that a process of commodification has been completed—the services produced must be changed into standardized and discrete units of output; public understanding of the service must be altered so that its value is comprised only of use-value to its consumers; the nature of work itself must be re-defined so that an existing labour force is recast as 'wageworkers producing commodities to generate a surplus for stakeholders' (2001: 84), and; governments must have taken steps to minimize the risk that is borne by private firms as they enter into newly marketized spheres.

The immediately preceding discussion of probation's 'processes of production' might suggest that the first and third of these conditions are close to being met to a significant extent, both in the increasing standardization of practice and, albeit to a lesser extent, in the reconfiguration of the workforce, even if the nature of their surplus production remains unclear. The second condition is more problematic, largely because, as our discussions of probation's products and consumers revealed, there remains a considerable degree of debate and uncertainty both about probation's 'use-value' and about who might constitute its consumers. In respect of the fourth condition, the precedents in relation to the privatization of prisons and the use of the private sector in electronic monitoring provide ample evidence that this condition is likely to be met in relation to offender management more generally.

However, to assume that probation is now a wholly commodified enterprise, or even that its commodification is nearing completion, is to ignore the numerous problems and points of resistance equally evident in this evolving process. For example, a number of moral problems can be associated with the buying and selling of 'punishment', not least the marginalization of fundamental issues of morality, social justice and social citizenship in the 'competitive fray' of the market (Loader, 1999; Leys, 2001). As Loader observes, with reference to the commodification of policing services, though with equal relevance to probation:

> The more the police resort to market imperatives as a means of reconfiguring police–public relations, the more difficult it will be for them to speak and act as the ultimate guardians of order and security; to stand above the competitive fray and appeal successfully to other principles and loyalties.
>
> (1999: 377)

From another perspective, and as Bauman's (1997) analysis of consumer society might suggest, Feeley (2002), Lynch (2002) and Vaughan (2002) argue, that far from ushering in a new era of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness, the ascent of consumerism and the related commodification of corrections has *contributed to* a notable increase in public punitiveness, an exploitation of public fears and an ever expanding, unregulated and entirely profit driven, industry of social control—which, they argue, has expanded not only the control functions of the State but also its associated costs. Perhaps the most obvious example in this respect is the ever expanding and largely uncritical use of electronic monitoring—a sentencing option initially sanctioned as an alternative to punishment for medium to high-risk offenders though increasingly emerging as the private sector panacea for almost all offenders at almost every stage of the criminal justice process (Scottish Executive, 2004b).[4]

Beyond the realms of punishment and control, the commodification of probation poses considerable problems when considered in relation to the continuing objective of 'producing' changed offenders. This much coveted, though defiantly resistant, 'individualized outcome' seems to be far from amenable to the ministrations of cost-effective, standardized and 'offence-focused' technologies of production—each of which it would seem are designed to produce measurable but largely inconsequential 'generalized outputs' (such as, programme attendance and completion) (Garland, 2001). Indeed, as our knowledge of the complex process of desistance grows, what emerges is an inherently subjective, interactive and often perilous process which, if valued, will need to be supported accordingly (McNeill, 2006). Additional problems can be identified in the longstanding challenge of attributing 'cause' and 'effect' within the individual change process, including the ability to distinguish between technical and moral variables in supporting change. There are good grounds, for example, for supposing that the rendering of the offender as a mere object of increasingly standardized interventions, robbed of their relational and normative qualities, will progressively

undermine the legitimacy (from the offender's point of view) of probation work and thus its potential to support desistance (see Bottoms, 2001; McNeill, 2006). While it may be tempting in a punitive climate for probation services to strip offenders of their status as 'clients', 'consumers' or even 'stakeholders' of probation, given the problems of programme attrition in particular (Kemshall et al., 2002) and non-compliance more generally (Hearnden and Millie, 2004; Hedderman and Hough, 2004), the politically required neglect of the question of 'what's in it for offenders?' is paradoxically likely to jeopardize significantly its future success.

A similar argument can be made in relation to practitioners who, after two decades of 'reform', have inevitably become demoralized, inward looking and, to some extent, disengaged from the prescribed probation enterprise (Farrow, 2004). While such characteristics may be acceptable, even desirable, in the clockwork administrations of punishment and control, they are unlikely to be conducive to the attainment of the already elusive product of changed offenders. At the time of writing, few, if any, of these issues appear to have been acknowledged, far less addressed, in recent developments.

Conclusions

In summary, we have suggested that rehabilitation has survived the advent of consumer society, but not as an intended product in its own right of probation services. Rather, it has become a mere process of production; one among many techniques for reducing re-offending and thereby delivering public protection. However, *over-selling* the promise of public protection poses serious risks for offender management services by creating a dynamic that drives up consumer demand for more controlling and incapacitating measures. Closer examination both of the extent of protection that probation might properly promise and of the mechanisms of protection that it might properly use is required.

More generally, by positioning the public as the notional consumer of probation, the State has created and exploited an increasingly antagonistic dichotomization of the 'law-abiding' public and offenders. The balance that probation services have historically tried to maintain, as 'mediating institutions', between offenders' needs, rights and interests and the wider public's needs, rights and interests, seems in serious danger of being lost in this process. One corollary of this un-balancing has been the objectification of offenders as the 'raw material' *on which* probation works, rather than one of the intended beneficiaries *for whom and with whom* it works. As we have seen, this fundamental shift does not merely exclude the offender as Bauman suggests; rather, through the process of individualization, it installs a far more demanding (and far less rewarding) relationship between the State and the offender in which the obligations of conditional citizenship flow principally *from* the offender *to* the State rather than vice versa. In terms of the technologies and processes imposed on offenders as the raw materials

increasingly compelled to engage in this exacting process, probation has been managerialized in two senses; first, its management and organization has been subjected to managerial disciplines and, second, its practice processes have become increasingly prescribed and standardized in the pursuit of consistency, quality and effectiveness. However, there is some evidence that these very disciplines have already begun to frustrate their own ends, principally because the processes of change through which they seek to protect the public are inherently individualized and affective; requiring human warmth and moral legitimacy as well as technical competence. Relegating these features of intervention to the margins seems to have left both practitioners and offenders predictably disaffected. Thus, the net effect of the commodification of production has been to undermine the pursuit of positive changes in the lives and behaviour of offenders.

Ultimately, it may be that, in the field of offender management at least, a 'change' product is less reducible to routine production processes than a control or punishment product. While this may represent an opportunity for the containment or at least the moderation of the commodification of probation's practice processes, in a penal climate where the commodities of 'change' and 'rehabilitation' seem to possess declining appeal, the greater danger is that the market solution to these problems will be simply to dispose of an overly troublesome product. As Bauman observes: 'the question of "rehabilitation" is today prominent less by it contentiousness than by its growing irrelevance' (2000: 210). Though this is a chilling observation, it need not lead to a loss of faith in the potential of probation services to continue to offer genuinely rehabilitative services to offenders. Rather, Bauman's warnings about the marginalization of rehabilitation and the intensification of insecurity in consumer society should direct probation's supporters to look within and beyond public protection discourses for opportunities to preserve the best of the service's past. The strongest glimmer of hope that we discern in this regard is to be found in the emerging evidence that, through the development and exploitation of enduring belief and interest in people's redeemability, probation services might be able to recast themselves as producers of community justice, delivered through constructive restitution, reparation and restoration which, in the longer term, may make communities safer and which, if located within effective forms of community engagement and development, may also make communities *feel* safer. In an increasingly individualistic consumer society, it may be that these kinds of processes represent the only real chance of reintegrating 'flawed consumers'.

Notes

1 To talk of 'services' rather than 'products' might seem to reflect better the similarities between probation (and other social) *services* in contrast to the obvious differences between probation and, for example, manufacturing industries. However, we persevere with the term product because we are primarily interested (in the context of Bauman's analysis) in what it is that the service ultimately delivers as a product to and for its consumers. In this sense, all service industries none the less aim to generate, to market and to sell 'products'; arguably the product is not the service per se, but rather whatever the service produces within and for the consumer.

2 We are grateful to Mike Nellis for pointing out the significance of this important distinction and for his other helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article. Richard Jones, Barry Vaughan and an anonymous reviewer also provided very useful feedback on an earlier version.

3 However, it should be noted that Robinson's study—drawing on a case study examination of the implementation of a structured risk/needs assessment tools in two area probation services—concludes, albeit with some caution, that the increasing use of standardized tools and technologies does not necessarily herald the deprofessionalization of probation and its practitioners.

4 That said, in the Scottish context, it has been interesting to note just how sceptical the press and the public have been (fairly or otherwise) about the work of Reliance, the only private sector firm significantly involved in the justice system, through the provision of prison escorts and electronic monitoring. Indeed, high-profile 'failures' in relation to a convicted murderer who escaped during a prison escort and in relation to a tagged offender who committed a murder seem to have created (or sustained) a widespread presumption against the capacity of the private sector to provide effective public protection. Indeed, within the past year Reliance has lost its contract with the Executive and has been replaced by Serco.

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TRISH MCCULLOCH has been a Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Dundee since 2003. Previously she has worked as a social worker in criminal justice and youth justice settings.

FERGUS MCNEILL is a Senior Lecturer in the Glasgow School of Social Work and a Network Leader in the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research at the University of Glasgow. Previously he has worked in drug rehabilitation and as a criminal justice social worker.

(Appendix 5)

Verification re Academic Papers

This document provides verification of the breakdown of contribution in respect of the following 2 academic papers:

1.

McCulloch, T. & McNeill, F. (2008) Desistance-focussed approaches. In Green, S., Lancaster, E. & Feasey, S., *Addressing Offending Behaviour,* Collumpton: Willan

The breakdown of contribution by the authors in respect of the above chapter was McCulloch: 60% and McNeill: 40%.

2.

McCulloch, T. & McNeill, F. (2007) 'Consumer society, Commodification and Offender Management' *Criminology and Criminal Justice,* 7 (3), 223-242.

The breakdown of contribution by the authors in respect of the above paper was McCulloch: 50% and McNeill: 50%.

Signed: Fergus McNeill (by email)   Date: 23rd September 2009

Signed: Trish McCulloch (e.version)   Date: 02 October 2009

(Appendix 6)

SCQF Level 12

Knowledge and Understanding

Characteristic outcomes of learning include the ability to demonstrate and/or work with:	Abbreviation
A critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts	KU1
A critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms	KU2
Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline	KU3

Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding

Characteristic outcomes of learning include the ability to:	Abbreviation
Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and materials associated with a subject/discipline	P1
Use and enhance a range of complex skills, techniques, practice and materials at the forefront of one or more specialisms	P2
Apply a range of standard and specialised research/equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry	P3
Design and execute research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues	P4
Demonstrate originality and creativity in the development and application of of new knowledge, understanding and practices.	P5
Practice in the context of new problems and circumstances	P6

Generic cognitive skills

Characteristic outcomes of learning include the ability to:	Abbreviation
Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues	G1
Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues	G2

Develop creative and original responses to problems and issues	G3
Deal with very complex and/or new issues and make informed judgements in the absence of complete or consistent data	G4

Communication, numeracy and IT skills

Characteristic outcomes of learning include the ability to use a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline – for example:	**Abbreviation**
Communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose	C1
Communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms	C2
Use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work	C3
Critically evaluate numerical and graphical data	C4

Autonomy, accountability and working with others

Characteristic outcomes of learning include the ability to:	**Abbreviation**
Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities	A1
Take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others	A2
Demonstrate leadership and/or originality in tackling and solving problems and issues	A3
Work in ways which are reflective, self critical and based on research/evidence	A4
Deal with complex ethical and professional issues	A5
Make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes	A6

Source:

The Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (2007) The SCQF Handbook, Volume 1, p.53. Available at:http://www.scqf.org.uk/Resources/Downloads.aspx

(Appendix 7)

From:	Fergus McNeill <fergus.mcneill@strath.ac.uk>
To:	Patricia McCulloch <P.Mcculloch@dundee.ac.uk>
CC:	Susan Rodrigues <S.Rodrigues@dundee.ac.uk>
Date:	3/3/2009 9:01 pm
Subject:	RE: reference

Dear Ms Rodrigues,

Re: Trish McCulloch

I am writing to provide a reference in connection with Trish McCulloch's application to study for a Professional Doctorate. I have known Trish since 2004, when she first contacted me shortly after her appointment at the University of Dundee with a view to discussing potential collaborations. We have subsequently co-authored two papers one of which has been published in the journal Criminology and Criminal Justice, and the other in an edited collection entitled 'Addressing Offending Behaviour'. I am also familiar with other recent outputs that she has produced.

From the outset I was impressed by Trish's enthusiasm, drive and intellectual curiosity. She struck me immediately as (and has proved subsequently to be) adept at connecting theory, research and practice in a way which is, in my experience, a relatively rare and precious commodity not just in social work but in the social sciences. Her aptitude in this connection was demonstrated clearly in our first collaboration -- a conference paper presented at an invited panel session in the British Criminology Conference, which was later published in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Though as co-author I can hardly be impartial in judging this paper, it has been described by Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms (one of Europe's most eminent criminologists) as 'outstandingly original' in its application both of Bauman's ideas around consumer society and critical scholarship around the commodification of public services to the processes and practices of 'offender management'.

In addition to this kind of capacity for theoretically-grounded scholarship, Trish has done exceptionally well in disseminating the findings of her MSc research on probation, social context and desistance from crime. Having read her sole-authored paper on this study in the Probation Journal (and having cited it frequently), I was delighted to collaborate with her on a recently published book chapter of desistance-focussed approaches to probation work. Though it is too soon to assess the impact of this paper, I am confident that it makes an original and thoughtful contribution to academic and practice debates in this field.

It should be obvious therefore why I am happy to wholeheartedly support her application. Not only do I have no doubts whatever about her academic ability, I hope that the formal support and structure that the Professional Doctorate should provide will further nurture her considerable talents -- and in particular her capacity to work critically and constructively at the interfaces between theory, research and practice. I can't think of a more sensible use of the university's resources.

Yours sincerely,

Fergus McNeill
Professor of Criminology & Social Work
University of Glasgow

(Appendix 8)

Probation Journal

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Probation Journal

Probation's heritage and future

At the time of writing (December 2004), the implications for the future of probation work of the new National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in England and Wales are becoming a little clearer. The NOMS leadership has indicated that by 2007 all 'offender managers', 65 per cent of the current probation service, will be responsible to the regional offender managers. The remaining 35 per cent of probation staff will become part of 'public sector interventions', where they will be in direct competition with private, voluntary and community sector service providers. Although details are still in short supply, it seems clear that by 2007 there will no longer be a National Probation Service. The dangers of such changes have by now been well rehearsed, both in this Journal and elsewhere. A recurring theme is the impact of the new structure upon the professional identity of probation staff, and on what might be termed probation's 'soul'; that is, the values that have emerged from the historical circumstances and enduring concerns which have driven the service on to achieve its care and control balancing act over the last hundred years.

Several articles in this issue consider the drivers of change in nearby jurisdictions at different stages of professional and political development. Their analyses allow for interesting comparisons to the approaching era of post-probation in England and Wales (the word 'probation' is not even mentioned in the latest Criminal Justice Act), and the concerns expressed in these articles will certainly resonate with stages of the English and Welsh experience.

Fergus McNeill's 'Remembering probation in Scotland' encourages the development of the historical literacy which is essential to a clear sense of professional identity for those working in changing services on both sides of the border. His review of the early history of probation in Scotland provides the backdrop against which the recent move towards a service underpinned more by the requirements of public protection than by welfare concerns can be better understood. Since the acceptance of this article, the debate about the future shape of criminal justice social work in Scotland has moved on. In December 2004, the Scottish Executive published 'Supporting Stronger, Safer Communities: Scotland's Criminal Justice Plan'. The measures outlined in this document include the establishment both of

a 'National Offender Management Advisory Body', chaired by the Minister of Justice, and of local Community Justice Authorities charged with delivering consistent and effective services. The Executive also plans to create a new statutory framework for closer collaboration between social work and prison services so as to ensure seamless 'offender management'. Though these measures represent new and significant challenges for criminal justice social work in Scotland (and for the Scottish Prison Service), they fall some way short of the single correctional agency promised by Scottish Labour in its 2003 election manifesto. The continuation of significantly different organizational arrangements in Scotland should provide an interesting contrast to developments south of the border.

'Probation, social context and desistance: Retracing the relationship', by Trish McCulloch, makes a case for the kind of integrated, multi-faceted approach to work with offenders that may be difficult to achieve in a more fragmented service where 'offender management' and interventions become separated functions. McCulloch draws on a small-scale Scottish study, which found that practitioners and probationers had little difficulty in reconciling the apparently polarized objectives of welfare support and offence focused work. The author develops a careful argument for more probation involvement in families and local communities, and a greater focus on reintegration. Whether the necessary integration between offender management and local social inclusion services is better facilitated under the new arrangements in Scotland or in England and Wales may be key to the relative successes of services in the two jurisdictions in their common objective of reducing reoffending.

Providing further comparative perspective, 'Probation in the Republic of Ireland: Context and challenges' by Deirdre Healy and Ian O'Donnell notes that the most influential legislation in Ireland remains the Probation of Offenders Act 1907, which came into force prior to independence from the United Kingdom. Though the notion of advising, assisting and befriending as key statutory objectives for Irish probation officers might provoke nostalgia amongst some readers in England and Wales, the authors argue that it illustrates a concerning and unacceptable level of inertia in Irish criminal justice policy-making. They call for a more developed statutory framework and a research base which can effectively underpin it. It will be interesting to see the extent to which the development of probation in Ireland reflects the varying experiences of England and Wales, and Scotland, where the way that these objectives have repeatedly been revised has provoked much criticism.

The importance of organizational context is a theme that also resonates through 'Listening to young homeless problem drug users: Considering the implications for drug service provision' by Emma Wincup, Rhianon Bayliss and Gemma Buckland. This article links with the December 2004 special issue on 'Rethinking Drugs and Crime', and argues convincingly that there is a need for dedicated and tailored drug services for homeless young drug users, which take account of the multiple difficulties they face.

Finally, in the context of debate about whether or not the NOMS description of 'contestability' is simply another word for 'privatization', Curtis R. Blakely and Vic W. Bumphus provide a timely examination of 'The print media's portrayal of the private prison'. They detect declining media, and possibly public, support for

private prisons, which their survey found were associated primarily with profit, efficiency and overcrowding, rather than operational quality, staff and prisoners.

The next extended special issue will contain a range of articles on the theme of 'Violence'. As always, any responses to the articles in the current issue, in the form of articles or letters, are welcome.

Hindpal Singh Bhui

Appendix 2

Co-producing criminal justice:
A joint project between University of Dundee and Positive Prison? Positive Futures

Discussion areas

This document sets out the broad areas we will talk through when we meet. It has been prepared so that you know what to expect and so that you can think about the areas we will discuss before (if you want to). It is a loose plan and is open to re-direction on the day.

1. **Establish our starting points & meanings**

- Introductions:
    - o   To the project, people, purpose and process
    - o   To 'co-production' as a term
    - o   To you/can you tell me a little about yourself?

- Why Positive Prison? Positive Futures (P?PF)
    - o   why did you decide to get involved in PP?PF/its work?
    - o   What do you want to do/achieve through PP?PF, why is that important to you?

- What does 'co-production'/'user involvement' *mean* for you, in the context of criminal justice?

- Does co-production fit in the context of criminal justice/'punishment'/'corrections'?

2. **Experiences of co-production** in the development, delivery or evaluation of criminal justice services.

The aim here is to unpack what co-production means in reality: what is it, when does it work, how does it work, why does it work; or, when does it not work, why does it not work?   Basically, I'm interested in your experiences of co-production, or lack of.

- What is your experience of co-production in the development, delivery or evaluation of criminal justice services?
    - as a prisoner/probationer/person on a criminal justice order

- as a 'provider'/'giver' of services/support to others, i.e. peer support, mentoring schemes, prison listener, member of PP?PF …

- What is the relationship between your experience of co-production and your journey of progression?

- (if co-producing …) How did you get there/what was your journey (as co-producer of services/support)? Why and how were you motivated, able, resourced to 'co-produce'?

- What, in your experience, makes co-production:
    o possible, …
    o meaningful, …
    o productive … within CJ processes? (what makes it 'work'?)

- What are the benefits of co-production within CJ processes? (for service users – prisoners/probationers?)

- What are the: obstacles … barriers … limits to co-production within CJ processes?

- What are the costs/risks of co-production within CJ processes?

3. **How to progress co-production with people who offend** (within and/or beyond the CJS)

- What, in your opinion, needs to happen to make co-production possible … meaningful, … productive?
    - What matters in co-production/what are the key features, parts, processes
    - What should it look like/feel like
    - What would a sentence look/feel like if it was co-produced

- What is the role of the different parties in this process?:
    o prisoners/people on community orders
    o people who have come through the system, ie PP?PF
    o professionals
    o communities, volunteers, <u>others</u>

- What else matters?

Thanks, Trish, Jim, Janey and Shazzy (the project team)
5 April 2013