

Research Paper

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Is there a difference in perception of risk:
**between IPP prisoners and members
of the Parole Board**

Dawn McAleenan

www.thegriffinsociety.org

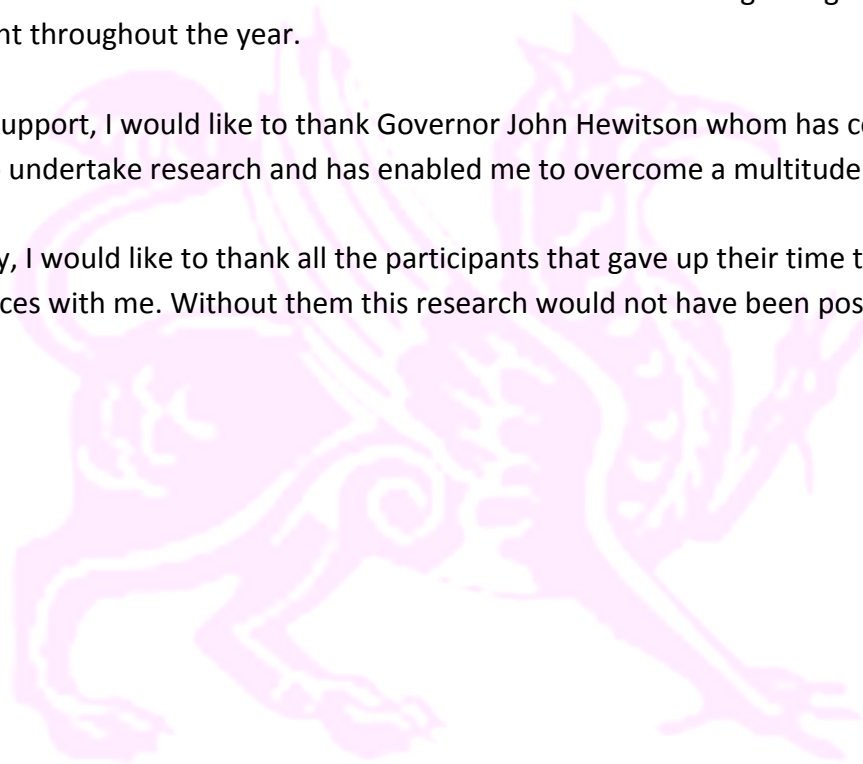
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Abstract

Background The IPP sentence is the fastest growing sentence in the UK. This growth in the population is due to large numbers of offenders being sentenced to IPP sentences and then becoming stagnant in the prison population, as they are unable to reduce their risk sufficiently and progress through the penal system. Despite this, few studies have explored risk in relation female IPPs and how this relates to public protection.

Aim The aim of the research is to explore perception of risk as it applies to female prisoners sentenced to imprisonment for public protection (IPP).

Method This research was conducted using semi-structured interview with ten female prisoners serving a sentence to imprisonment for Public Protection, two Legal Advisors and one Senior Member of the Parole Board.

Conclusion The research found that there was a clear difference in the perception of risk from the female IPP prisoners and the Parole Board. These differences potentially have a profound effect upon the identification of risk factors and the way in which they are reduced.

Introduction

Indeterminate Public Protection (IPP) was introduced in 2005 because certain categories of prisoner were considered to be so of 'risk to the public' and so unlike other prisoners, they do not have a specified date for release. Release will only be granted by the Parole Board when their risk has been significantly reduced. With this in mind, it is imperative that both IPP prisoners and the members of the Parole Board have a similar understanding of the term 'risk' in relation both to public safety and also the demonstrable ways in which this 'risk' can be reduced.

The general aim of this research then is to explore perception of risk. Three viewpoints will be considered: the perception of female prisoners sentenced to imprisonment for Public Protection (i.e. under an IPP order); the views of Parole Board Members when considering risk reduction; and the views of legal advisors who have experience in representing female IPPs at Parole hearings. The specific objectives of the research are to understand more about how:

- female IPP prisoners conceive risk and how this may be reduced
- the Parole Board conceive the concept of risk and how risk reduction can be demonstrated, and
- how this applies to public protection.

In doing so, the research will explore the extent to which IPP prisoners are aware of the elements making up their risk, how they address these risks and whether this is in accordance with the Parole Board's requirements.

The research was conducted over a period of seven months from February 2012 to September 2012 and utilises primary data. To set findings in context, the origin of an IPP sentence will be briefly described, followed by an overview of risk and an account of the role of the Parole Board. The themes discovered by the research will then be presented. This will be followed by a discussion that outlines the significance of the findings and the limitations of the research.

Imprisonment for Public Protection

The establishment of the IPP sentence can be traced back to the Justice for All (2002) White Paper, itself informed by two consultation reports: the 'Review of the Criminal Courts of England and Wales' (Auld: 2001) and 'Making Punishment Work' (Halliday: 2001). The White paper set the scene for the government's vision of the criminal justice system whose aim was to 'rebalance the system' and make it fair in light of the needs of victims, the

community, suspects and offenders. This vision was implemented through the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (CJA).

The CJA 2003 brought about substantial changes within every aspect of the criminal justice system from an offence being uncovered, to sentencing of the offender and to the offender's reintegration into the community. One significant change was the introduction of the IPP sentence and since implementation in April 2005 it has become the fastest growing custodial sentence option in the UK. This growth in the IPP prison population is due to large numbers of offenders being sentenced to IPP sentences and then becoming stagnant in the prison population, as they are unable to reduce their risk sufficiently and progress through the penal system (Owers 2008 and Rutherford et al 2008). By March 2011, 6,550 offenders, of whom 150 are female, had received an IPP sentence. Out of this 2,393 IPP prisoners were passed their tariff date however, only 86 male and 7 female IPP prisoners had been released into the community (Ministry of Justice (2011), www.justice.gov.uk).

Chapter 5 of the CJA 2003 introduced the new sentence of imprisonment for public protection (section 225). This sentence was made available for adult offenders assessed to be dangerous and who have been convicted of a specified sexual or violent offence. The specified sexual or violent offences range from criminal damage to manslaughter (a full list of these 153 offences can be seen in appendix I). The offences listed are considered to be serious as they would normally carry a minimum sentence of two years up to life imprisonment. But unlike 'normal' custodial sentences, IPP sentences do not have a specified date of release. The threshold for the imposition of the new sentence is the equivalent of a four-year sentence of imprisonment, of which the tariff is two years before the offender is eligible to apply to the Parole Board for release. The Parole Board then decides if the IPP prisoner can be released. This decision is based on whether, *'it is necessary for the protection of the public that the prisoner should be confined'* and they are satisfied that, *'The lifer's level of risk to the life and limb or others is considered to be no more than minimal'* (<http://www.hinesolicitors.com>). When released the management of these offenders in the community falls under the responsibility of the Offender Manager (allocated Probation Officer) for a minimum period of ten years and a maximum of life. A similar provision is made available for juveniles under the age of 18, but the provision is called Detention for Public Protection (DPP) rather than an IPP. Due to the seriousness an IPP or a DPP sentence option is only available to the crown court.

Process of Risk Reduction

For IPPs the process of risk reduction starts as soon as they enter the prison system. They need to demonstrate to the Parole Board that their character and behaviour has changed and in so doing they are less likely to commit further offences which may harm the public and that they can be safely managed in the community.

Part of this process includes identifying and addressing their individual risk factors in order to reduce the potential for harm. Risk factors are variables which impact on their offending behaviour and are often tied to the individual's circumstances. For example, if a person is violent after consuming alcohol, then alcohol is a risk factor in their circumstances.

Prison provides the IPP with opportunities to reduce risk through active engagement on a number of activities, such as therapeutic intervention, substance misuse support, offending behaviour courses, and enhancing skills to assist in resettlement. In addition to this, the behaviour of the IPP throughout their sentence is documented by prison and probation staff and provided to the Parole Board as evidence of change.

Another part of this process includes preparing the IPP prisoner for safe release into the community. This means that they need to have a strategy for their resettlement. This can include addressing factors such as housing and employment. They also need to have a risk management plan, which is created for them and agreed by the Offender Manager.

The role of the Parole Board

The Parole Board for England and Wales is an independent body that works within the CJS. In relation to IPP prisoners, the Parole Board is asked to consider whether they are safe to release into the community once they have passed their tariff date and also whether they are safe to re-release following recall for a breach of their licence conditions (The Parole Board:2011:4).

The Parole Board makes the decision whether or not to grant release based on a report, which is presented by means of either an oral hearing or a hearing based on paperwork. The reports contain information from prison staff regarding the IPP's behaviour during custody, information from their Offender Managers and Offender Supervisors, previous convictions, courses completed, psychological assessments and various other formal risk assessments, such as the Offender Assessment System (OASys) reports.

During the year 2010/2011 the Parole Board considered a total of 2,261 IPP cases, of which 220 were adjourned or deferred and 140 were granted release (The Parole Board:2011:39). No specific information was available in relation to the number or outcomes of female IPPs in this recording period.

Key themes in the literature

There are three key themes that are evident in the extant literature of relevance to this research. The themes are discussed below with some critical observations made about how the literature informed the lines of inquiry for the present research. These themes are:

- Aspects of risk as related to offending
- The role of risk within the IPP sentence
- The influence of Parole upon the release of IPP prisoners

Aspects of risk as related to offending

Researchers within the Criminal Justice field have long attempted to understand what factors drive an individual to commit crime. The general conclusion is that there is no single factor that leads to criminal behaviour, but the presence of several risk factors increases this probability (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/frd030127.pdf>). These risk factors are often referred to as 'criminogenic needs' and consist of both *static* and *dynamic* needs: a static need is something that cannot be changed such as place of birth, whereas a dynamic need can be changed such as number of educational qualifications (Hollin *et al*, 2006).

Much current policy and procedures regarding managing offenders and reducing risk focuses on addressing the individual's dynamic needs through targeted intervention (Hollin *et al*:2006:179; Fagan *et al*, 2007). As Farrington (2007) phrases it, "The basic idea of risk-focused intervention is very simple: Identify the key risk factors for offending and implement prevention methods designed to counteract them" (CJM:21). It is within this context that offenders are considered to be able to reduce their risk of re-offending. Furthermore, tools such as the OASys are used to calculate the level of risk as it relates to offending by taking into account the prevalence of the offender's criminogenic needs (Martin *et al*, 2009).

However, according to the literature there are mixed views in relation to the validity of this risk-focused approach that is at the heart of reducing an individual's risk. One view is that this approach enables recognition of the wider social and economic factors that influence individual behaviour, which in turn promotes an opportunity for these factors to be addressed and, as a consequence, reduce the risk of reoffending (Gunnison *et al*, 2007; McAlister:2008:15).

Opposing this view, Case *et al* (2010) who perceive this risk-focused approach is based on, "poor science and flawed evidence" which oversimplifies complex experiences and behaviours that bears little resemblance to real life. Although Case *et al*, rejects this approach, other views in the literature offer a more objective position whilst echoing similar

concerns (Fagan et al, 2007; Hollin et al, 2006; Martin et al, 2009; Samre-Grewal et al, 2000; Taylor et al, 2004)

In relation to female offenders, the concerns raised highlight the fact that the approach is informed by evidence based on the male offending population which is then simply applied to female offenders (Hollin et al, 2006). It has widely been accepted that there are some different factors involved in male and female criminality (Martin et al, 2009; Fagan et al, 2007). However, the risk-focussed approach fails to take into account any gender-specific risk factors. Furthermore it has been suggested that this lack of acknowledgement of gender differences gives rise to false calculations of risk and ineffective use of targeted intervention (Martin et al, 2009).

Given these differences in opinions expressed in the literature, it could be suggested that;

- Professionals working within the Criminal Justice System are unable to identify appropriate risk factors relating to female offenders with much accuracy;
- The lack of acknowledgement of gender-specific risk factors gives rise, potentially to ineffective use of targeted intervention making it difficult to reduce risk in the female offending population.

These raise questions about the role of 'risk' how it is identified and addressed within the female offending population. As IPP prisoners can only be released once their risk to the public has been significantly reduced, this research wanted to examine the extent to which gender-specific risk factors are taken into account during sentence to aid risk reduction and what factors the Parole Board take into account when considering release of an IPP prisoner.

The role of risk within the IPP sentence

The CJA 2003 identified for the first time the purpose of sentencing adults that included: punishment, crime reduction, reform, reparation, rehabilitation and public protection. The latter, taking precedence (Fowles:2006:73). In 2008 the government reinforced this notion through the provision of the National Offender Management System (Spurr:2011). This new way of managing offenders enabled 'risk' to be at the focal point of decision-making processes.

The number of IPP prisoners now account for one in fifteen of the total prison population (HMI: 2010:2). This number puts pressure on the criminal justice system (Owers 2008) and to reduce the number of new IPP sentences the government introduced a seriousness threshold within the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. This means that an offender

can only be sentenced to IPP if their offence warrants a sentence in excess of two years imprisonment. Since then the number of IPP prisoners has fallen by half (NOMS: 2008:5). This seems to suggest the IPP sentence was being inappropriately used for low risk offenders and that the 2008 Act realigned the criteria to ensure the disposal was only used for those offenders who pose a high risk to the public.

However, the literature also suggests there are other factors which have an impact upon the creation and implementation of the IPP sentences. One view is that the creation of the IPP sentence was a political strategy which was symbolic of the 'tough on crime' mantra, as a means of securing public votes in the elections rather than a means of managing risk for public protection (Fowlers:2006, Frieberg et al:2009, Gelb:2009, Rutherford:2008). Another opinion is that the language used in the CJA ensures the sentence is imposed without due consideration being given to risk factors. For example, there is no definition within the statute of what constitutes a 'significant risk' (Bickle: 2007, Wood:2006) and the way in which the statute is phrased limits Judges' discretion (Baker:2010:42). In addition, Carter (2007) argues that rate of offenders being sentenced to IPP sentences was financially unsustainable and therefore the government curbed the number of IPP sentences for pragmatic reasons.

From the foregoing it is evident that;

- statute does not define 'significant risk'
- only after an unsustainable number of IPP prisoners were imprisoned did the government introduce a seriousness threshold.

These raise questions about the role of 'risk' within the IPP sentence. If definitions about risk are unclear from the start of the sentence, how can risk be handled throughout the sentence and more importantly the impact of risk reduction for purposes of release?

Therefore this research sought to establish whether or not IPP prisoners understand what constitutes a risk and what they need to do in order to reduce their risk to satisfy a parole hearing.

The influence of Parole upon the release of IPP prisoners

By October 2011, 6,550 offenders of whom 150 are female had received an IPP sentence since they were first established in April 2005. Out of this number only 86 male and 7 female IPP prisoners had been released into the community and 24 of them had been recalled (Ministry of Justice (2011), www.justice.gov.uk). It has been suggested that the number of releases should be higher as 2,393 IPP prisoners had passed their tariff date

(www.justice.gov.uk). The reason for this lack of movement through the penal system is not clear. However the literature offers some suggestions.

One view is the low number of IPP prisoners released into the community is due to the poor quality information sent to Parole which makes it extremely difficult to determine the true level of risk the offender presents to the public (Andrews:2006, Charlotte:2010, Davidson:2009, Fitzgibbon:2006).

However, Ball (2009) offers an alternative view. He suggests the low number of IPP prisoners released into the community is due to the Parole Boards' inability to assess the offender's risk without blurring the boundaries of punishment and rehabilitation. Although Ball was writing about the California justice system, his observations were founded upon indeterminate sentenced prisoners, similar to IPP prisoners in the UK. Other factors include the impact of attribution affecting Parole decisions rather than assessment of the 'risk' per se. Attribution theory idea suggests the perception that people construct their own opinions of others, events or situation based on their own experiences rather than necessarily an objective reading of evidence. In relation to Parole decision making it has been suggested that these preconceived notions are unconsciously applied to the offender during the assessment of their risk (Carroll:1978:1502). This in turn distorts the level of risk the offender is assessed to have towards the public (Giles:2000:170). Both views highlight the external influence upon the Parole Board that has an impact upon the decision-making process. It might then be concluded that

- This impacts on the quality of information sent to the Parole Board that impacts on the decision to release;
- The decision-making process is influenced by extraneous factors.

These raise questions about the role of 'risk' within the release of IPP prisoners. If the decision to release a prisoner is influenced by external factors, to what extent is risk reduction taken into account? Therefore this research wanted to establish what factors the Parole Board takes into account when considering release for IPP prisoners.

The Research Design

Conducting the research

The research was conducted using primary data. The primary data comprised of ten face-to-face interviews with female IPP prisoners, one telephone interview with a senior Member of the Parole Board and two telephone interviews with legal advisors.

The research proposal was granted ethical approval from the Griffins Society and the London School of Economics. (See details in the appendix 2)

The IPP sample

The IPP sample consisted of ten IPP prisoners who were serving their sentence at a closed female prison in the north of England. The research prison has an operational capacity of over 400 and holds both remand and sentenced prisoners. The sample of IPP prisoners was selected by giving the whole IPP population at the research prison the opportunity to take part in the research. There were 12 IPP prisoners in total: all 12 were given an information advice sheet and a consent form. Following this, 10 female IPPs agreed to take part. From the two that did not take part, one IPP declined and the other was considered too mentally unstable to participate.

All ten IPP prisoners were aged between 24 and 50 years. The mean age was 35 years. The crimes committed by the participants included street robbery, arson and section 18 wounding with intent. The main crime was section 18 wounding with intent that accounted for 70% of the total index offences. All IPP prisoners were sentenced between 2005 and 2011. The tariff lengths ranged between 1 year 206 days and 3 years 61 days. Seven IPP prisoners were over tariff and 4 had experienced a parole hearing.

Table one: IPP sample characteristics

ID	Index offence	Age	Tariff	Tariff expiry date
Tara	Street robbery	31	2 years	23/01/09
Tracy	Arson with intent	46	2 years 6 months	25/08/09
Jackie	Section 18 wounding with intent	26	2 years 155 days	25/09/10
Maura	Section 18 wounding with intent	50	3 years 61 days	04/06/14
Nicola	Section 18 wounding with intent and section 20	50	2 years	01/09/10
Helen	Arson with intent	25	2 years 8 months	01/08/14
Barbara	Section 18 wounding with intent	25	594 days	26/02/13
Lisa	Section 18 wounding with intent	36	1 year 206 days	01/10/07
Margaret	Section 18 wounding with intent	38	2 years	02/09/07
Sinead	Section 18 wounding with intent	21	2 years 62 days	29/04/12

IPP interviews

The interviews were conducted on an individual basis and the questions asked were semi-structured. The interview was designed to capture the perception of the IPP prisoner in relation to their own risk and the steps they have taken to reduce this risk. To explore their perceptions in depth, the research focused on the following areas:

- Perception of 'risk'
- Appropriateness of the IPP sentence
- Index offence
- Individual circumstances and risk factors
- Steps taken to reduce their risk
- Perceptions of Parole Board

The interviews were conducted over a period of three months from February 2012 to May 2012.

IPP procedure

Each participant was given a consent form (appendix 3) and an Information Advice Sheet (appendix 4) one week prior to the research. On the day of interview the researcher read through both documents with the IPP prisoners and had the opportunity to ask any questions about the research. Once the consent form was signed the interview commenced. All interviews were conducted in a confidential setting with only the interviewer present.

The Parole Board sample

The Parole Board's sample consisted of one senior member of the Parole Board. It was decided by the Parole Board that only one representative of the Parole Board would be able to take part in the research. The reasons for this decision were:

- There are 250 Members of the Parole Board; in their answers they might give an inconsistent version of policy and practice. This is because the many factors that may be taken into account in relation to risk are based on individual circumstances of the IPP prisoners. The Parole Board felt that the best means of overcoming this issue would be to have one senior member of staff to take part in the interview.
- The Parole Board were of the opinion that information provided by a number of participants could be taken out of context. This would mean that all responses given would have to be screened. It was therefore considered to be more practical to give one response, as this would be easier for them to review.

- One response would reduce any ambiguity and reduce confusion in relation to the Parole Boards perception of risk.
- Clarification regarding the objective of the question can be discussed in detail before the response is given.
- In acceding to The Parole board's concerns, the research was to get official recognition from the Parole Board and a judgment was made by the researcher to accede to these conditions because on balance it was felt that the research would benefit IPP prisoners when they are considering applying for Parole.

Consequently, only one interview was conducted and that with the Parole Board's Head of Quality and Standards.

The Parole Board Interview

The Parole Board's Head of Quality and Standards was interviewed in July 2012. The interview was conducted over the telephone and the questions asked were semi-structured. The interview was designed to capture the perception of the Parole Board in relation to risk assessment, risk reduction and risk management. To explore their perceptions in depth, the research focused on the following areas:

- Formal policies, procedures and guidelines for decisions relating to IPP prisoners
- Training pertaining to risk
- Identifiable risk factors
- Effectiveness of sentence planning boards
- How IPPs can reduce risk
- How IPPs can manage risk
- Barriers to release

That Member of the Parole Board was sent a copy of the research proposal (appendix 5) and draft questions prior to the interview (appendix 6). After the Parole Board gave ethical approval, a date was scheduled in for the interview.

The legal advisor sample

Two female legal advisors were also interviewed. Both legal advisors specialised in offering legal advice to female prisoners serving indeterminate sentences throughout England and Wales. Although it was difficult to ascertain just how many IPP cases the legal advisors had represented, as this information was not routinely collated, it was clear that both had experience with presenting cases to the Parole Board. For instance, one legal advisor had 15 years experience and the other had eighteen months experience.

The legal advisors interview

The legal advisors were interviewed between August 2012 and September 2012. The interview was conducted over the telephone and the questions asked were semi-structured. The interview was designed to capture the perception of risk from their experience of representing IPPs at the IPP Parole hearings. To explore whether or not they viewed IPPs and Members of the Parole Board as having similar perceptions of risk, the research focused on the following areas:

- Identifiable risk factors
- Demonstrate risk reduction
- Perception of Parole Boards
- Barriers to risk reduction

Both legal advisors were sent a copy of the research proposal (appendix 5) and draft questions prior to the interview (appendix 7). Once the legal advisors consented to take part a date was scheduled in for the interview.

The legal advisors procedure

The sample was selected through recommendation from the Prisoner Advice Service, as both legal advisors specialise in female indeterminate sentenced prisoners and are considered to be the only two legal advisors in the UK that specialise in this field. After several discussions over the telephone and via email, both legal advisors agreed to take part in the research.

Analytic strategy

All the interviews were recorded on to a digital voice recorder and then transcribed as a means of ensuring detailed in-depth analysis of the information provided. The recorded interviews were then destroyed and any identifying data were anonymised through the use of codes.

The transcripts were then analysed through applying coding techniques drawn from the Grounded Theory Literature (Charmaz, 2006). The codes applied comprised of both initial and focus coding (Charmaz, 2006: 45-60). Initial coding consists of breaking the data down into small fragments, analysing the language used and then applying the code that asks analytic questions from the data. Focus coding is the next stage of coding, it is used to categorise the initial codes to discover the major themes found within the data. Through the use of this method a number of themes were discovered. These were:

- Meaning of the concept of 'risk'
- Application of risk factors
- Sentence plan
- Relationship between risk factor and reducing risk
- Barriers to reducing specific risk factors
- Managing risk
- Wider issues



Results

Analysis 1: Meaning of the concept of risk

The initial step towards understanding whether or not there is a difference in the perception of risk between IPP prisoners and members of the Parole Board (MPB) was to establish when the concept of risk was first established.

For MPB the concept of risk is first introduced to them during their mandatory week-long introductory training. This training package covers a range of topics such as the legal framework and procedural issues, as well as the assessment and management of risk. MPB described the training in relation to risk to be very detailed. In addition to this training, PBMs' practice is regularly reviewed and there is a process of identifying training needs which is used to inform annual training events. Furthermore, MPB have on-going opportunities to receive additional tailored training in the area of risk if they feel they need it.

“There is very detailed training on risk assessment and risk management and how to manage risk, so that members understand the concept of how to assess risk, to familiarise themselves with some of the standard risk assessment tools and approaches that are commonly used in practice in prisons and probation in England and Wales.” (MPB)

For IPPs their concept of risk was not informed by any training. Instead their concept of risk was formed by discussions with staff and other prisoners. For many, these discussions centred upon what action needed to be taken, rather than understanding the concept of risk per se. In many cases this led the IPPs to invent their own concept of risk. This subjective interpretation had a significant impact on the way IPPs conceived risk to apply to them. Furthermore, only 6 considered themselves to be a risk at the time they committed their offence.

It is clear from this finding that the MPB and IPP prisoners that their understanding of 'risk' derives from different sources. This may have led some IPPs to be confused about the meaning of 'risk' and how it applies to their sentence.

“Don't know, it's your behaviour isn't it?.....everyone said it's not about the courses it's about your behaviour” (Sinead)

“I honestly don't know, in here it [risk] means a lot of different things” (Helen)

Analysis 2: Application of risk factors

The second step towards understanding whether there is a difference in the perception of risk between IPP prisoners and members of the Parole Board (MPB) was to establish whether or not there is a similar understanding of risk factors. Risk factors are those factors that have an influence upon criminal behaviour.

The MPB was reluctant to give any specific examples of risk factors as it was stated that all IPPs are perceived as individual and therefore the risk factors they present are unique to their case.

“the really important point to make is that actually the decisions are made by a case-to-case basis, so the factors that are relevant to one particular offender may be completely irrelevant to another offender.” (MPB)

The Legal Advisors largely supported this view. Although they felt there were some key factors relevant in the majority of cases, the factors were certainly not present in all cases and therefore risk factors vary depending on the individual IPP.

“There are some quite general factors that would quite often apply to IPPs, for instance for the majority relationships are often an issue...drugs or alcohol...thinking skills...Some of those things come up a lot but you couldn't say categorically that they always do” (Legal Advisor 2)

However, the MPB did say that when they assess risk, the process involves members asking themselves methodical questions about the offender's character and circumstances in order to discover which factors had an influence upon their behaviour.

“what are the characteristics of the offender? What is it about that individual in terms of their life experience, their attitude, their behaviour that contributed to the offending? What was it about the circumstances that they offended? You know what was their relationship to the victim?” (MPB)

Although this answer is somewhat imprecise, it does give an insight into the way MPB members are asked to consider and analyse the information presented to them and how they extracted the factors they deem relevant to each case.

To establish whether the IPPs had a similar understanding, they were asked which factors contributed to their offending. In total they gave 29 different responses, which have been summarised into 7 main areas (Table 1). These 7 areas all relate to their character and

circumstances. This seems to suggest the IPP prisoners have developed their understanding of risk factors based on their own unique case.

Table one: identified risk factors that IPPS considered contributed to their offending

Theme	Initial code	participants referred to an initial code	TOTAL
Substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol Drugs 	8 14	22
Unable to deal appropriately with emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angry Being young Feeling betrayed Inability to deal effectively with emotions Use violence to deal with emotions 	2 1 1 5 3	12
Impact of negative relationships upon behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence Feeling scared Lack of confidence Negative childhood experience Peer group/ family influence Poor relationships Self defence 	3 2 4 1 2 3 1	16
Noting constructive to do in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board no accommodation No day structure no employment No life goal 	2 1 1 1 1	6
Short term goals take precedence over long term impact of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention seeking Finding violence fun No respect for authority Unable to foresee impact of action upon others Unable to weigh up pros and cons 	2 3 2 1 1	9
Poor communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No one to talk to Poor communication 	1 2	3
Impact of health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health Physical health Self harm 	4 1 3	8

However, the significance of each risk factor was said to be subjective, as the relevance of each risk factor is assessed by the MPB. This could mean that IPPs have a difference in opinion regarding which risk factor they need to focus on in order to reduce their risk.

“that is part of the panel’s job is to determine what factors are relevant in that case.” (MPB)

This notion that risk factors are subjective was reinforced by the Legal Advisors.

“[IPPs] may not feel for example, that misusing alcohol and drugs all the time makes a risk whereas the Parole Board may think that it does make a risk and the very fact that they don’t have insight into that may make the Parole Board very worried about that particular risk factor” (Legal Advisor 2)

Analysis 3: Sentence plan

It became apparent that the link between the identification of relevant risk factors relied heavily upon Sentence Planning Boards. The Sentence Planning Board comprises staff from Offender Management and Interventions. Their role is to highlight which risk factors need to be addressed to reduce re-offending and to improve the prisoner’s chances of re-settlement into the community.

For the MPB the Sentence Planning Board is vital, as it enables the prisoner to learn about their own relevant risk factors and what actions they need to undertake in order to reduce their risk.

“that [sentence planning boards] is the only means where an offender can actually have a proper discussion with the prison staff and managers about what their risks are and what they need to do in order to address them. I think that that is a very important mechanism in place.” (MPB)

For four of the IPPs the significance of the Sentence Planning Board was evident, as they conceived it as a mechanism to identify their relevant risk factors and what actions they needed to address in order to reduce their risk. Although two IPPs had not had the opportunity to take part in a sentence plan and they considered the sentence plan to be detrimental.

“[Offender Manager] selected the courses that he felt was best for me. I was under the influence when I committed the offence, so he asked me to do the PASRO [Prisons Addressing Substance Related Offending] course. Then because I didn’t show any remorse ...they wanted me to do victim awareness”. (Jackie)

“I have not had a sentence plan yet, so I am unsure what my risk is” (Helen)

However, the remaining four IPPs had undertaken a sentence plan, but were not confident in their ability to identify the relevant risk factors to their case. Three of these IPPs had

previously been through parole and therefore it may be that they had more of an idea of what risk factors were considered significant by MPB. One IPP felt that there was a clear difference in the way MPB and Sentence Planning Boards analyse risk. In her view, Sentence Planning Boards relate risk factors to the crime committed rather than focusing on the individual circumstances of the offender, whereas the MPB focus on the latter.

“They [Offender managers] treat us all the same. They think we need the same therapeutic correction. We need the same chip implemented to put us right, like we are robots. Each person is individual, we need to tackle our own individual problems. Not just stick a label on us, like your in for burglary, so you need to do this that and the other. They don’t look at the person themselves.” (Tracy)

Another IPP stated that the progress of her case was hindered by the Sentence Planning Board, as they focused on activities which enabled her time constructively rather than address specific risk factors.

“They [sentence planning board] told me to do, so that’s what I did. They said that I needed to gain qualifications, so I did.... nobody mentioned risk....I think as the years have gone on they have focused more on risk, but in the first few years that I was sentenced no. No, it was more about using your time constructively and gaining qualifications.” (Margaret)

This finding was interesting as it raised questions about the ability of the Sentence Planning Board to identify relevant risk factors. It also suggests a pragmatic response in managing prisoners rather than specifically addressing their risk reduction needs. This concern was also echoed by the Legal advisors, as they felt some Sentence Planning Boards were ‘out of sync’ and unable to identify the same risk factors as the PB. The main reason for this was that the Sentence Planning Board only view risk from a narrow perspective whereas the PB view risk from a broad perspective. This means risk factors are not always identified or addressed during sentence.

“I have had it happen quite a lot is that the Offender Supervisor may look from one narrow perspective in terms of risk and then the PB may come in and think there are some other risks that maybe have not been fully explored. I would say often that maybe they do mirror each other but there may be times where they are out of sync”. (Legal Advisor 2)

One reason for this could be that the MPB do not routinely contribute towards the training for staff that undertakes the Sentence Planning Boards, which could account for this inconsistent approach to risk evaluation.

“The Parole Board does, from time to time, provide training and contribute to workshops, conferences etc for Offender Managers and, to a lesser degree Offender Supervisors. This is

because responsibility for training these individuals rests with NOMS. However, the Board has in the past been consulted about the content of training.” (MPB)

Analysis 4: gender specific provision

It was apparent from the interview with the Legal Advisor that the difference factors involved in male and female criminality are not considered in Sentence Plans. In her opinion Offender Managers ‘lack of insight’ into male and female criminality which in turn impacts negatively upon their ability to identify relevant risk factors and provide tailored sentence plan that enables the IPP to reduce their risk.

“I am sure lots of offender supervisors and managers are used to dealing with males and there are different issues that women face or IPPs with mental health problems, yes, I think they are not always addressed and that can be quite heart breaking sometimes”. (Legal Advisor 1)

However, this suggested ‘lack of insight’ could be interpreted as a ‘lack of awareness’, as it was not clear gender differences in criminality were factors routinely assessed by the PB.

“I think that the reality is that they [male and females] can be different, they can be remarkably different but they can also be similar. But again two male IPPs may present with very similar or very different risks. So again it comes back to we have to look at each case in its own merit to understand that case. When we are training members we do acknowledge that as a group women offenders can have quite different life experiences and challenges in terms of abuse and those sorts of things. I think that the reality is that when we are making a decision about a prisoner we are not making it on the basis of what we know about that group we are making it on what we know about that individual”. (MPB)

According to the literature, the lack of acknowledgement of gender differences gives rise to false calculations of risk and ineffective use of targeted intervention (Martin et al, 2009). If this is true, then the female IPP are subjected to added difficulties in the identification of appropriate risk factors that impact negatively upon their ability to reduce risk.

“the Offender Supervisor may look from one narrow perspective in terms of risk and then the PB may come in and think there are some other risks that maybe have not been fully explored”. (Legal Advisor 2)

Analysis 5: The relationship between risk factor and reducing risk

It was apparent from the research, that an integrant part of the Parole Boards’ decision-making process includes an assessment to establish how far the IPPs risk has been reduced.

Part of this process involves looking at the relationship between the individual risk factor and the activity undertaken.

This may sound relatively straight forward, but from the analysis it is clear there are a number of influential variables which impact upon the IPPs ability to strike an appropriate balance between their own risk profile and the risk reduction activity. For example, the majority of IPPs relied heavily upon their own interpretation of the concept of risk, which risk factors were relevant to their case and subsequently which activities they needed to engage in as a means of reducing their risk. To test whether or not the IPPs had got the balance right, the research focused on two questions:

The first question focused on which factors contributed to the IPPs offending (Table 1). The three most common factors were substance misuse, relationships and inability to deal with emotions.

The second question asked the IPP participants which factors they needed to address in order to reduce their risk (table 2). The three most common factors were dealing with emotions, focusing on resettlement and being able to assess the impact of their actions.

Table two: Identified factors to reduce risk

Theme	Initial code	TOTAL
Addressing substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstinence from alcohol and drugs • Alcohol awareness • CARATS • PASRO 	11
Enhanced skills to deal with emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to forgive • Bereavement counselling • Control behaviour • Growing up • Let go of anger • Psychology • Remove from situation • Stress management • Understanding triggers • Understanding why angry 	17
Addressing issues related to negative relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertiveness • Confidence • Counselling • Learnt to deal with past abuse • Like myself • Negative relationships • Not frightened anymore 	11
Resettlement plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Goal in life • Having a job goal • Housing 	15

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open conditions • Qualifications/ certificates • Rebuilding family ties 	
Understanding long term impact of actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline • More to lose in prison • Restorative justice • Understanding consequence of sentence • Understanding consequences of crime • Victim awareness 	12
Enhanced communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Listening 	6
Improved health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health under control • Self harm under control 	2
Attending courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSR course • Complete sentence plan • Doing OBC • ETS or TSP course • Learning from OBC 	12
Valuing others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal awareness • Respecting other people are different • Understanding you are not always right 	3
Change in attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Want to change 	3

As can be seen there is some disparity between factors considered contributing to offending and priorities given to risk reduction interventions. This is suggestive of either some of the IPPs not having a clear understanding of the relationship between risk factors and how to reduce their risk or some mismatch in sentence planning and risk reduction needs or indeed provision capacity and offenders needs. To further explore this, the most common factor will be discussed:

Substance misuse

Nine out of the 10 participants identified substance misuse as the key factor that contributed to their offending behaviour (1 used drugs, 3 used alcohol, 5 used a combination of drugs and alcohol and 1 did not use substances). The IPP should have identified this as a key factor to address in order to reduce their risk. For example, if 'drugs' were a risk factor in the participant's offending then they should have identified the need to work on 'drugs' to reduce their risk. Table 3, highlights the matching between risk and intervention. It is clear from this table that only two participants (Maura and Sinead) were able to identify and address the appropriate risk factor in relation to their substance misuse.

Three participants (Tracy, Barbara, Margaret) had substance misuse issues, but had not recognised they needed to do work in this area to address their risk and one participant (Lisa) had no substance misuse issues, but had undertaken work to reduce her risk in both the area of drug and alcohol misuse. This result seems to suggest that the IPPs need more

help to identify the appropriate action to reduce the risk factor in relation to substance misuse.

Table 3: The relationship between substance misuse and risk reduction

Factors that contributed to offending

		Drugs	Alcohol	Both drugs & alcohol	No substance misuse
Factors identified to reduce risk	Drugs			Jackie	
	Alcohol		Maura Sinead	Nicola	
	Both drugs & alcohol		Helen		Lisa
	No substance misuse	Tara		Tracy Barbara Margaret	

Analysis 6: Barriers to reducing specific risk factors

During the interviews, a number of IPPs raised concerns about their ability to reduce their risk. These concerns can be summarised in three sub-headings; lack of provision, inability to access offender behaviour courses and willingness to address subjective risk factors.

Lack of provision

Three IPPs felt that they were unable to reduce their risk because there was either limited or no provision in place at the prison they were in. For some IPPs this meant that they had to request a transfer to another establishment that was able to cater for their specific requirements.

“I went to the other side of the country....to do my courses, because they weren’t available in any other jails. So I didn’t see my family for two years.” (Lisa)

Two IPPs stated the PB told them that they needed to speak to a psychologist in order to reduce their risk. However, due to lack of psychologists available in prison they have been unable to reduce particular risks that in turn delayed release.

“...during the last two years, I have accessed everything apart from psychology [one to one work with a psychologist]. They told me back in September that I am at the top of the list, but I am still waiting.” (Tara)

One Legal Advisor stated she had represented a number of cases where the lack of access to Psychologists had impacted upon the IPPs case. She felt that this lack of provision was common knowledge to MPB as they often empathise with the IPP dilemma, but they could not make a positive recommendation because the level of risk remained unchanged.

“I have got quite a lot of cases...even though it [one to one work with a psychologist] is a recommendation on their sentence plan and even though that person may have deferred their parole for it etc, they still don't get a chance to do it...They [PB] may say in their decision that they appreciate the fact that that person may not be able to do it, but that doesn't really help the prisoner because at the end of the day they are not going to be assessed as a low enough risk to move on.” (Legal Advisor 2)

According to the Legal Advisors, the reason for this lack of provision is due to the current penal system being unable to accommodate those prisoners whom require a fast track intervention to support their application to the PB.

“in terms of trying to get them [IPPs] through the system is it quite a difficult one, because if someone has a very short tariff, often only two years, the process just isn't quick enough because it is set up for people with really 15 years”. (legal Advisor 2)

Inability to access offender behaviour courses

The second barrier was inability to access offender behaviour courses. This was due to the IPP not meeting the required criteria for that course even though the course was identified by the Sentence Planning Board or by Parole following a hearing.

“When I had my first Parole, my solicitor asked the Parole board what they wanted me to do and they said that they wanted me to do anger management, victim awareness, and things like that. Well I tried to do anger management but I don't fit the criteria for it... Just because the Parole board say they want you to do something, you are not always qualified to do it. (Lisa)

However, MPB said that part of their mandatory week-long introduction training they covered topics such as the different types of courses available to IPPs and how these courses can support the reduction of risk.

“...they also have detailed training on prison regime, so what opportunities will be provided to offenders in custody to address there offender behaviour work.” (MPB)

Despite the above challenges to accessing courses, it could be said that IPPs put too much emphasis on the importance of the offender behaviour course. According to MPB, courses are not the only tool available to support risk reduction. Therefore MPB take into account a range of other factors, such as change of behaviour when they assess a person’s risk.

“ the reality is that we don’t make any assumptions on the fact that just because a person has been on a treatment programme, doesn’t automatically show that their risk has been reduced. Actually what we need to see, putting aside whether or not they have accessed a treatment programmes or not, actually if they have got risk factors around criminal attitude, poor anger management or substance issues, irrespective of whether or not they have done a programme or not when we come to see them is there evidence to say that they are better at managing their anger, so if they are provoked by somebody in the wing or is there evidence to say that they are no longer getting positive drug tests in prison. We are looking for the evidence for a change in behaviour. And some people are able to evidence their behaviour change in other ways than attending an offender behaviour course. Of course OBC can be helpful, so that can be a factor. (MPB)

Willingness to address subjective risk factors

The third barrier was willingness to address subjective risk factors, as some IPPs did not understand why a particular action was identified for them and how this would address their unique risk factors. One IPP described how she was told she needed to do work around weapons even though she had never used weapons during any of her previous criminal behaviour.

“I have not done any work around weapons, which I don’t understand ‘cos I never have or use weapons.” (Tara)

It was clear that the IPPs willingness to address identified risk factors impacted on whether or not Offender Managers would recommend them for release to the Parole Board. Furthermore, this willingness to comply was dependent on whether or not the IPP viewed this factor relevant to their case.

“I am sitting my parole in March and no one is recommending me for it cause I self harmed at Christmas. ...I didn’t get sentenced for that; I didn’t get sentenced against myself. I got sentenced for being a risk to other people.” (Tara)

Analysis 7: Managing risk

It was obvious from the research that the focus of the Parole Board has changed over time which means risk reduction is not the only factor they take into account when making a parole decision. Now, assessing the extent to which the IPPs and Offender Managers can manage their risk in the community is also an integrant part of their role.

“...the other significant shift that has happened not just within the PB but the CJS in thinking about risk is that we think about how far risk can be reduced by change of the individual but also about how the risk can be managed by external control. For example, can risk be managed by preventing a particular offender from having access to their victims, so for example a child sex offender be restrained from re-offending simply by removing access to young children.” (MPB)

It became apparent that managing risk by external control was not an area that was considered by the IPPs, although Resettlement featured highly when they were asked which factors they needed to address in order to reduce their risk. The responses that were given all centred upon the ‘resettlement pathway’. This meant that employment, education, family and housing featured heavily, but input from external control such as Probation was not discussed. One Legal Advisor supported this view, as in her experience some IPPs were unable to foresee how their risk can be managed in the community. She felt this was due to lack of problem solving skills.

“Often the women struggle with that in terms of that unless they have done some sort of problem solving work they can struggle with anticipating the same sort of management of risks” (Legal Advisor 2)

The possibility of this misconception is further strengthened by the way professional opinion is viewed by the majority of IPPs as conflicting and inconsistent.

“Like probation [in prison] say one thing and outside probation say another thing, psychology say one thing and prison service say another. They don’t see the same.” (Margaret)

Analysis 8: wider issues

The MPB also stated that their role is to assess if there are any ‘wider issues’ that may impact upon the IPPs ability to comply or take part in treatment programmes. For example learning difficulties could impact upon an individual IPPs ability to comply. In which case the Parole Board would assess what further actions have been taken to enable the IPP to understand and whether or not this would have assisted them to comply upon release.

“There may be some mental health issues that might not just affect their ability to take part in a treatment programme and prison but there may be issues about how able they are to comply. There might be a good risk management plan that the probation has put into place but if they are unwell in terms of their mental health then there might not be a deliberate action to undermines the purposes of the plan but they may struggle with the requirements intended to keep them safe. So we take this into account when assessing whether or not they can be managed in the community.” (MPB)

Yet only one IPP had made reference to a wider issue. In this case the IPP said that she felt she could not comply with her licence conditions as she did not have a relationship with probation and that she needed to have a relationship before she would be able to work with that person for the next ten years.

“I don’t know them [external Probation Officer], but yet I am expected to work with this person for a minimum of ten years. I think there should be some kind of relationship beforehand.” (Lisa)

It was difficult to find evidence that explained why there were no other responses that took into account ‘wider issues’. One hypothesis could be that these ‘wider issues’ only apply to a small number of IPPs and therefore not applicable to all IPPs in the participant sample. Another hypothesis could be that the IPPs simply did not take into account ‘wider issues’ when they assessed their own level of risk.

Discussion

The general aim of this research was to explore perception of risk from the viewpoint of the female IPP prisoners, Legal Advisors and the Parole Board. In taking these perspectives in to account it was clear that the female IPP prisoners and the Parole Board do have different concepts of risk and how they apply this to public protection.

The research demonstrated the concept of risk for both the Parole Board and the IPP prisoners derived from different sources. For the Parole Board, their understanding comes from mandatory and on-going training, whereas the IPPs get their understanding from discussions with staff within the prison and other prisoners.

As a consequence, risk is conceived differently and there is some disjunction between the parties when considering a parole decision. For the majority of IPPs they found linking the relationship between a risk factor and reducing risk difficult. For example, three participants reported that they were more likely to be violent to others when they were under the influence of alcohol and drugs, however all three failed to recognise that they needed to address their substance misuse issues if they were to reduce their risk to the public. This

situation was further exacerbated by the element of subjectivity applied by the Parole Board that measured the relevance of each risk factor to each case. This is due to each case being considered by the PB as unique and therefore the type of risk factors they want the IPP to address will vary depending on variables, such as circumstances of the offence and character of the individual. Yet IPPs conveyed the impression that they are treated in general rather than as individuals, as one IPP put it, it's if, "*we need the same chip implemented to put us right, like we are robots*". As there is no formal guidance regarding which risk factors are necessary to complete, the end decision lies with the PB. However, the PB only get involved once the IPP has passed their tariff date and has presented their case to the board. Although Sentence Planning Boards were perceived to counteract this subjectivity, it sometimes leads to further distortion.

It was also clear that gender-specific differences in criminality were not taken into account during sentence planning or at the Parole stage. However, the literature suggests that lack of acknowledgement to gender differences gives rise to false calculations of risk and ineffective use of targeted intervention (Martin et al, 2009). This could explain why four IPP prisoners had experienced a parole hearing, but were not granted release, as the risk they posed to the public had not been significantly reduced.

The results indicate a number of barriers that denied the IPPs the opportunity to reduce their risk. The main barrier was the lack of resources, despite the Court of Appeal (2007 R (James) v Secretary of State for Justice) that ruled that it is unlawful to keep a prisoner in custody due to the lack of necessary provision to enable IPP prisoners to reduce their risk. Despite this ruling, the research shows that lack of resources still have a significant negative effect of the IPPs opportunity to reduce their risk. This potentially has a detrimental influence upon the Parole decision, as MPB will only grant release when they are satisfied that the level of risk posed by the offender has significantly reduced and that the prisoner can be supervised safely in the community.

Other barriers included the IPPs willingness to engage in identified activities in order to reduce their risk. It was apparent throughout the research that this 'willingness' to engage, was influenced by the IPPs original concept of the term risk and how they conceived risk to apply them. For example, one IPP was reluctant to undertake counselling as she felt it would not reduce her risk, as it was not relevant to her circumstances, even though this activity was outlined on her sentence plan. Another was asked to address self harm issues although this was not part of her original offending and she could not see the relevance of the need for such an intervention.

The findings also demonstrated the concept of 'risk' to have various dimensions and the breadth of these dimensions are influenced by the perception of the IPP prisoner and role of the professionals. It was apparent that the IPPs and to some degree Offender Managers

who undertook Sentence Planning Boards, viewed risk to be confined to specified risk factors and offences, whereas the Parole Board conceived risk to be much more extendable and included both wider factors and long term provision to assist in risk management and availability of external support to manage risk on release. As a result the PB expect the IPP to address a wide number of risk factors, many of which are unforeseen by the IPP and Offender Managers. As a consequence the Parole Board view the IPP to have a lack of insight in to risk and are unable to prepare for release that caused delay in release decisions.

Although it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which external factors influence Parole decisions, the Parole Board made clear that risk reduction was paramount when considering the release of IPP prisoners. Given this, the results highlighted a number of concerns regarding inconsistencies to the perception of risk and the knock on effect this has upon the assessment of risk reduction. It can be said that without a solid and consistent foundation of the concept of risk across the CJS, IPP prisoners will be unable to address appropriate risk factors and therefore experience delays in their ability to reduce risk and progress through the system.

Strengths and limitations of the research

The research took into account the perceptions of ten female IPP prisoners who were serving their custodial sentence, whilst simultaneously trying to reduce their risk in order to be granted release from the Parole Board. The official view of the Parole Board was explored alongside the view of Legal Advisors who have experience in representing female IPPs at Parole hearings. With these three viewpoints the research was able to compare and explore current issues in relation to the perception of risk.

The research used qualitative methods that enabled a degree of flexibility to shape discussions and the analytic strategy that was applied enabled an in-depth analysis of the interviews. This led to the discovery of eight themes. All these themes echo the initial concerns identified from the literature review which support the validity of the research.

However, this research does have limitations. The research is based on a small number of participants from one prison in the North West, which means it is not possible to extrapolate to the general population of female IPPs from the present findings. There are different types of sentences that require a parole hearing, such that offenders are likely to have different experiences and needs that mean the findings of this research may not relate to other populations. However, the research does provide a foundation to create some baseline data for comparison.

“most women lifers certainly for quite a lot of them it is their first offence, they don’t have a long history, not all some do with drugs etc, but the vast majority it is quite an isolated offence almost. IPPs are very different, for IPPs it is often a pattern of offending.” (Legal Advisor 2)

The research was unable to ascertain the extent to which external factors influence Parole decisions; this was due to the researcher’s lack of access to Members of the Parole Board. The initial research proposal aimed to interview 5 Members of the Parole Board using qualitative techniques, but this was not possible, as the Parole Board would not give permission for them to be approached. The main reason was that the information provided by MPB members during an interview could not be monitored and might therefore lead to unofficial responses being given which was felt to have possible legal ramifications.

The research methods were revised taking the above comments into consideration and it was decided a survey would be used. However, after various discussions and changes to the survey the Parole Board still refused permission to carry out the research with MPB [The original survey can be seen in appendix 8]. The reasons for this was that the questions asked in the survey were considered to be subjective and therefore MPB members might still give inconsistent responses. It was considered by the PB that these potential discrepancies by MPB could exacerbate the challenges IPPs might raise with the Board.

Finally it was agreed that the present research could interview one senior MPB, as this would enable the presentation of the corporate view-point of the PB. Although the research did benefit from the input of the PB, the lack of access to PBM impacted upon the researcher’s ability to explore external factors that could have an influence upon Parole decisions. However that said, the official representation given by the PB was extremely valuable to the research. Having one representative from the PB gave clarity over the PB position on risk and a baseline to which other MPB are expected to assess IPPs risk as it applies to public protection.

A further omission was from the Offender Managers and Supervisors. The research would have greatly benefited from input from Offender Managers and Offender Supervisors as they create the Sentence Plans for IPPs prisoners. Sentence Plans have a significant role to play in identifying appropriate risk factors and linking them to the necessary activities to support the IPP in reducing their risk which in turn increase the possibility of a positive parole outcome. It would have been interesting to explore whether their perception of risk is able to bridge the gap of incongruity between the IPP prisoners and MPB. However, given the limitations on time and resources this was not possible.

Recommendations

As a consequence of the key research finding in differences in perception of risk, this is amenable to a practical policy change. To overcome some of the differing perceptions the following recommendations are proposed;

- IPPs should be given mandatory training on risk. This training should be similar to the training given to the PB and should cover relevant areas pertaining to the evaluation of risk, such as risk assessment tools, procedures, guidelines and risk management.
- IPPs should have ongoing training on risk factors and how they apply in individual circumstances. (A suggested method is through practical application of a training framework equivalent to the National Vocational Qualification, which enables the IPP to measure their level of risk against their ability to reduce risk. The framework would include modules that the PB want addressed in all cases, such as risk management plans. Furthermore this framework would provide a baseline of information that would assist IPPs, Offender Managers, Legal Advisors and MPB to evidence progression and levels of readiness for release).
- Staff who support the implementation of Sentence Plans should have the same mandatory training as PBM, so that they are able to bridge the gap between the IPPs perception of risk and that of the PB.
- Offender Managers, Offender Supervisors and MPB should all have training on gender differences in criminality so that they can calculate risk accurately and understand what appropriate intervention is for the female IPPs.
- External Offender Manager should have training to enable them to prepare appropriate release plans which take into account risk management and wider issues.
- Sentence Planning Boards should take place within 3 weeks of the prisoner being sentenced to IPP.
- IPPs should have their progress reviewed every 3 months. Any barriers, such as lack of provision, which have prevented them from reducing their risk should be identified and highlighted at Her Majesties Prison Service (HMPs) Area Office.
- The HMPs Area Office should keep a record of all barriers that have prevented risk reduction and these factors should be addressed in the HMPs strategic plan.
- Each prison should have a directory of services that outline what services are available in the establishment, how they can support risk reduction and the criteria for accessing them.
- MPB should be given further training on barriers to risk reduction including lack of provision.

Further research

This research has taken into account a number of viewpoints in order to establish whether there is a difference in the perception of risk between IPP prisoners and members of the Parole Board. However the validity of the research would have been strengthened by a greater number of interviews with;

- Female IPP prisoners from across the county
- Practicing MPB that currently hear IPP cases
- Retired MPB that have experience of hearing IPP cases

If this research were to be conducted again, it would be interesting to explore other perceptions of risk, from the viewpoint of;

- Offender Managers
- Offender Supervisors
- Male IPP prisoners

This research was time limited and due to the time constraints, it was not possible to carry out any further interviews, with that said the research does provide a foundation to which data can be compared and built upon.

Conclusion

The general aim of this research was achieved. The research was able to explore perception of risk from the viewpoint of the female IPP prisoners, Legal Advisors and the Parole Board. Through exploring these viewpoints the research found that there was a clear difference in the perception of risk from the female IPP prisoners and the Parole Board.

Although this is a small-scale study, it was able to highlight a number of areas where the 'perception of risk' had been influenced for both the IPP and MPB. This was confusing for a number of IPPs and as a result often led to different risk factors being identified. This impacted upon the IPPs ability to address their risk to the public. Furthermore, it is the MPB role to decide which factors are relevant in each case. This often means that the IPPs are denied the opportunity to reduce their risk because they are not informed about which risk factors are significant to them until they present their case at Parole. Although Sentence Planning Boards are used to highlight which risk factors need to be addressed to reduce re-offending and to improve the prisoner's chances of re-settlement into the community, they were often 'out of sync' and unable to identify the same risk factors as the PB.

It is apparent throughout the research that risk factors are considered by the PB to be unique to the individuals' circumstances and character, but without a similar understanding of the concept of risk, how can IPPs begin to reduce their risk? Without understanding what MPB want from them in terms of risk, how can IPPs demonstrate what is relevant?

The research has suggested a number of recommendations that could be used to target areas where a misconception of risk can occur. This would enable professionals in the CJS and IPPs have consistency in the perception of risk.

END

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Appendices

Appendix I

SPECIFIED OFFENCES FOR PURPOSES OF CHAPTER 5 OF PART 5

PART 1

SPECIFIED VIOLENT OFFENCES¹

- Manslaughter.
- Kidnapping.
- False imprisonment.
- An offence under section 4 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861 (c. 100)(soliciting murder).
- An offence under section 16 of that Act (threats to kill).
- An offence under section 18 of that Act (wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm).
- An offence under section 20 of that Act (malicious wounding).
- An offence under section 21 of that Act (attempting to choke, suffocate or strangle in order to commit or assist in committing an indictable offence).
- An offence under section 22 of that Act (using chloroform etc. to commit or assist in the committing of any indictable offence).
- An offence under section 23 of that Act (maliciously administering poison etc. so as to endanger life or inflict grievous bodily harm).
- An offence under section 27 of that Act (abandoning children).
- An offence under section 28 of that Act (causing bodily injury by explosives).
- An offence under section 29 of that Act (using explosives etc. with intent to do grievous bodily harm).
- An offence under section 30 of that Act (placing explosives with intent to do bodily injury).
- An offence under section 31 of that Act (setting spring guns etc. with intent to do grievous bodily harm).
- An offence under section 32 of that Act (endangering the safety of railway passengers).
- An offence under section 35 of that Act (injuring persons by furious driving).
- An offence under section 37 of that Act (assaulting officer preserving wreck).
- An offence under section 38 of that Act (assault with intent to resist arrest).
- An offence under section 47 of that Act (assault occasioning actual bodily harm).
- An offence under section 2 of the Explosive Substances Act 1883 (c. 3)(causing explosion likely to endanger life or property).
- An offence under section 3 of that Act (attempt to cause explosion, or making or keeping explosive with intent to endanger life or property).

- An offence under section 1 of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 (c. 34)(child destruction).
- An offence under section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (c. 12)(cruelty to children).
- An offence under section 1 of the Infanticide Act 1938 (c. 36)(infanticide).
- An offence under section 16 of the Firearms Act 1968 (c. 27)(possession of firearm with intent to endanger life).
- An offence under section 16A of that Act (possession of firearm with intent to cause fear of violence).
- An offence under section 17(1) of that Act (use of firearm to resist arrest).
- An offence under section 17(2) of that Act (possession of firearm at time of committing or being arrested for offence specified in Schedule 1 to that Act).
- An offence under section 18 of that Act (carrying a firearm with criminal intent).
- An offence under section 8 of the Theft Act 1968 (c. 60)(robbery or assault with intent to rob).
- An offence under section 9 of that Act of burglary with intent to—
 - (a) inflict grievous bodily harm on a person, or
 - (b) do unlawful damage to a building or anything in it.
- An offence under section 10 of that Act (aggravated burglary).
- An offence under section 12A of that Act (aggravated vehicle-taking) involving an accident which caused the death of any person.
- An offence of arson under section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 (c. 48).
- An offence under section 1(2) of that Act (destroying or damaging property) other than an offence of arson.
- An offence under section 1 of the Taking of Hostages Act 1982 (c. 28)(hostage-taking).
- An offence under section 1 of the Aviation Security Act 1982 (c. 36)(hijacking).
- An offence under section 2 of that Act (destroying, damaging or endangering safety of aircraft).
- An offence under section 3 of that Act (other acts endangering or likely to endanger safety of aircraft).
- An offence under section 4 of that Act (offences in relation to certain dangerous articles).
- An offence under section 127 of the Mental Health Act 1983 (c. 20)(ill-treatment of patients).
- An offence under section 1 of the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 (c. 38)(prohibition of female circumcision).
- An offence under section 1 of the Public Order Act 1986 (c. 64)(riot).
- An offence under section 2 of that Act (violent disorder).
- An offence under section 3 of that Act (affray).

- An offence under section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33)(torture).
- An offence under section 1 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (c. 52)(causing death by dangerous driving).
- An offence under section 3A of that Act (causing death by careless driving when under influence of drink or drugs).
- An offence under section 1 of the Aviation and Maritime Security Act 1990 (c. 31)(endangering safety at aerodromes).
- An offence under section 9 of that Act (hijacking of ships).
- An offence under section 10 of that Act (seizing or exercising control of fixed platforms).
- An offence under section 11 of that Act (destroying fixed platforms or endangering their safety).
- An offence under section 12 of that Act (other acts endangering or likely to endanger safe navigation).
- An offence under section 13 of that Act (offences involving threats).
- An offence under Part II of the Channel Tunnel (Security) Order 1994 (S.I. 1994/570)(offences relating to Channel Tunnel trains and the tunnel system).
- An offence under section 4 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (c. 40)(putting people in fear of violence).
- An offence under section 29 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (c. 37)(racially or religiously aggravated assaults).
- An offence falling within section 31(1)(a) or (b) of that Act (racially or religiously aggravated offences under section 4 or 4A of the Public Order Act 1986 (c. 64)).
- An offence under section 51 or 52 of the International Criminal Court Act 2001 (c. 17)(genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and related offences), other than one involving murder.
- An offence under section 1 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (c. 31)(female genital mutilation).
- An offence under section 2 of that Act (assisting a girl to mutilate her own genitalia).
- An offence under section 3 of that Act (assisting a non-UK person to mutilate overseas a girl's genitalia).
- An offence under section 5 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult).
- An offence of—
 - (a) aiding, abetting, counselling, procuring or inciting the commission of an offence specified in this Part of this Schedule,
 - (b) conspiring to commit an offence so specified, or
 - (c) attempting to commit an offence so specified.
- An attempt to commit murder or a conspiracy to commit murder.

PART 2

SPECIFIED SEXUAL OFFENCES

- An offence under section 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 (c. 69)(rape).
- An offence under section 2 of that Act (procurement of woman by threats).
- An offence under section 3 of that Act (procurement of woman by false pretences).
- An offence under section 4 of that Act (administering drugs to obtain or facilitate intercourse).
- An offence under section 5 of that Act (intercourse with girl under thirteen).
- An offence under section 6 of that Act (intercourse with girl under 16).
- An offence under section 7 of that Act (intercourse with a defective).
- An offence under section 9 of that Act (procurement of a defective).
- An offence under section 10 of that Act (incest by a man).
- An offence under section 11 of that Act (incest by a woman).
- An offence under section 14 of that Act (indecent assault on a woman).
- An offence under section 15 of that Act (indecent assault on a man).
- An offence under section 16 of that Act (assault with intent to commit buggery).
- An offence under section 17 of that Act (abduction of woman by force or for the sake of her property).
- An offence under section 19 of that Act (abduction of unmarried girl under eighteen from parent or guardian).
- An offence under section 20 of that Act (abduction of unmarried girl under sixteen from parent or guardian).
- An offence under section 21 of that Act (abduction of defective from parent or guardian).
- An offence under section 22 of that Act (causing prostitution of women).
- An offence under section 23 of that Act (procuration of girl under twenty-one).
- An offence under section 24 of that Act (detention of woman in brothel).
- An offence under section 25 of that Act (permitting girl under thirteen to use premises for intercourse).
- An offence under section 26 of that Act (permitting girl under sixteen to use premises for intercourse).
- An offence under section 27 of that Act (permitting defective to use premises for intercourse).
- An offence under section 28 of that Act (causing or encouraging the prostitution of, intercourse with or indecent assault on girl under sixteen).
- An offence under section 29 of that Act (causing or encouraging prostitution of defective).
- An offence under section 32 of that Act (soliciting by men).
- An offence under section 33 of that Act (keeping a brothel).

- An offence under section 128 of the Mental Health Act 1959 (c. 72)(sexual intercourse with patients).
- An offence under section 1 of the Indecency with Children Act 1960 (c. 33)(indecent conduct towards young child).
- An offence under section 4 of the Sexual Offences Act 1967 (c. 60)(procuring others to commit homosexual acts).
- An offence under section 5 of that Act (living on earnings of male prostitution).
- An offence under section 9 of the Theft Act 1968 (c. 60) of burglary with intent to commit rape.
- An offence under section 54 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 (c. 45)(inciting girl under sixteen to have incestuous sexual intercourse).
- An offence under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978 (c. 37)(indecent photographs of children).
- An offence under section 170 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 (c. 2)(penalty for fraudulent evasion of duty etc.) in relation to goods prohibited to be imported under section 42 of the Customs Consolidation Act 1876 (c. 36)(indecent or obscene articles).
- An offence under section 160 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33)(possession of indecent photograph of a child).
- An offence under section 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (c. 42)(rape).
- An offence under section 2 of that Act (assault by penetration).
- An offence under section 3 of that Act (sexual assault).
- An offence under section 4 of that Act (causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent).
- An offence under section 5 of that Act (rape of a child under 13).
- An offence under section 6 of that Act (assault of a child under 13 by penetration).
- An offence under section 7 of that Act (sexual assault of a child under 13).
- An offence under section 8 of that Act (causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity).
- An offence under section 9 of that Act (sexual activity with a child).
- An offence under section 10 of that Act (causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity).
- An offence under section 11 of that Act (engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child).
- An offence under section 12 of that Act (causing a child to watch a sexual act).
- An offence under section 13 of that Act (child sex offences committed by children or young persons).
- An offence under section 14 of that Act (arranging or facilitating commission of a child sex offence).

- An offence under section 15 of that Act (meeting a child following sexual grooming etc.).
- An offence under section 16 of that Act (abuse of position of trust: sexual activity with a child).
- An offence under section 17 of that Act (abuse of position of trust: causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity).
- An offence under section 18 of that Act (abuse of position of trust: sexual activity in the presence of a child).
- An offence under section 19 of that Act (abuse of position of trust: causing a child to watch a sexual act).
- An offence under section 25 of that Act (sexual activity with a child family member).
- An offence under section 26 of that Act (inciting a child family member to engage in sexual activity).
- An offence under section 30 of that Act (sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder impeding choice).
- An offence under section 31 of that Act (causing or inciting a person with a mental disorder impeding choice to engage in sexual activity).
- An offence under section 32 of that Act (engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a person with a mental disorder impeding choice).
- An offence under section 33 of that Act (causing a person with a mental disorder impeding choice to watch a sexual act).
- An offence under section 34 of that Act (inducement, threat or deception to procure sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder).
- An offence under section 35 of that Act (causing a person with a mental disorder to engage in or agree to engage in sexual activity by inducement, threat or deception).
- An offence under section 36 of that Act (engaging in sexual activity in the presence, procured by inducement, threat or deception, of a person with a mental disorder).
- An offence under section 37 of that Act (causing a person with a mental disorder to watch a sexual act by inducement, threat or deception).
- An offence under section 38 of that Act (care workers: sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder).
- An offence under section 39 of that Act (care workers: causing or inciting sexual activity).
- An offence under section 40 of that Act (care workers: sexual activity in the presence of a person with a mental disorder).
- An offence under section 41 of that Act (care workers: causing a person with a mental disorder to watch a sexual act).
- An offence under section 47 of that Act (paying for sexual services of a child).
- An offence under section 48 of that Act (causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography).

- An offence under section 49 of that Act (controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography).
- An offence under section 50 of that Act (arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography).
- An offence under section 52 of that Act (causing or inciting prostitution for gain).
- An offence under section 53 of that Act (controlling prostitution for gain).
- An offence under section 57 of that Act (trafficking into the UK for sexual exploitation).
- An offence under section 58 of that Act (trafficking within the UK for sexual exploitation).
- An offence under section 59 of that Act (trafficking out of the UK for sexual exploitation).
- An offence under section 61 of that Act (administering a substance with intent).
- An offence under section 62 of that Act (committing an offence with intent to commit a sexual offence).
- An offence under section 63 of that Act (trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence).
- An offence under section 64 of that Act (sex with an adult relative: penetration).
- An offence under section 65 of that Act (sex with an adult relative: consenting to penetration).
- An offence under section 66 of that Act (exposure).
- An offence under section 67 of that Act (voyeurism).
- An offence under section 69 of that Act (intercourse with an animal).
- An offence under section 70 of that Act (sexual penetration of a corpse).
- An offence of—
 - (a) aiding, abetting, counselling, procuring or inciting the commission of an offence specified in this Part of this Schedule,
 - (b) conspiring to commit an offence so specified, or
 - (c) attempting to commit an offence so specified.

Appendix 2

The research proposal was granted ethical approval from the Griffins Society and London School of Economics. The reason for gaining this approval to ensure the purpose of the research is justified within the guidelines code of research ethics within the British Society of Criminology and that any ethical concerns were assessed prior to the research taking place.

Appendix 3



Consent Form

Title: Risk, perception and release of IPP prisoners.

Researcher: Dawn McAleenan (Dawn.McAleenan@nacro.org.uk)

I have worked for Nacro for the past six years. Nacro is the biggest crime reduction charity in the UK working with over 83,000 people each year in 300 communities. In my current role as Project Coordinator, I am responsible for Nacro's involvement in the Department of Health Strategic Partners Programme. My role in this programme is to support third sector organisations to exercise strategic influence on health and social care policy in relation to offenders, prisoners and their families.

In addition to my role at Nacro, I have been awarded a Fellowship from the Griffins Society. The Griffins Society researches and promotes effective practice in working with women who are in prison or subject to criminal justice interventions in the community. The fellowship has given me this opportunity to research the process of risk reduction for IPP prisoners alongside my employment. Throughout the research I will receive support from an academic based at the London School of Economics.

Invitation to take part in the research:

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project (details are available in an information sheet). This research will involve answering a number of questions about what you think risk means and what you have done to reduce risk arising from your behaviour during your sentence.

If you would like to take part, it is very important that you understand how the research will be carried out, what will happen to the information you give me and the way in which the research works, especially your involvement. Once I have explained all of this to you, please can you initial the boxes and sign below to indicate you are happy to be a participant:

1. I understand the interviews will be carried out at the prison in a confidential setting. All of the information will remain confidential and my answers will be kept anonymous – no names or anything that might identify me will be used.
3. I understand that the interviews will be recorded and transcribed but will be destroyed in confidential waste once the research has been completed.
4. I understand that the researcher will require access to my Dossier and any correspondence with my Parole Officer.
5. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and that there is no penalty for withdrawing.
6. I understand if I disclose any information in relation to: committing a crime; hurting myself and, or hurting others that this information will have to be acted upon and will be disclosed to relevant person / agency /organisation e.g. service manager and, or police.
8. I understand that the findings arising from this research will be made available to a range of relevant organisations and be made available on the Griffin Society website.
9. I understand that I will not be identified by name in any writing up of the research, and that what I say may be used as examples but will be referred to by a code

I agree to take part in the research and do so by signing below in the presence of the researcher.

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix 4



INFORMATION SHEET (January 2012)

Title: Risk, perception and release of IPP prisoners

Researcher: Dawn McAleenan

Invitation

As a prisoner currently serving an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence you are invited to take part in a research interview. This research involves answering a number of questions in relation to your own understanding of risk and what you have done to reduce this risk during your sentence. The interviews will take place between January and March 2012.

Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish, before you decide whether or not you would like to take part. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask the researcher or

Researcher's background information

I have been awarded a Fellowship from the Griffins Society. The Griffins Society researches and promotes effective practice in working with women who are in prison or subject to criminal justice interventions in the community. The fellowship has given me this opportunity to research the process of risk reduction for IPP prisoners alongside my employment. Throughout the research I will receive support from an academic based at the London School of Economics.

I have worked for Nacro for the past six years. Nacro is the biggest crime reduction charity in the UK working with over 83,000 people each year in 300 communities. In my current role as Project Coordinator, I am responsible for Nacro's involvement in the Department of Health Strategic Partners Programme. My role in this programme is to support third sector

organisations to exercise strategic influence on health and social care policy in relation to offenders, prisoners and their families.

Prior to my current role, I was employed by Nacro, as a Senior Policy Development Officer within the Mental Health Unit. The Mental Health Unit (MHU) works across both the Criminal Justice system and the Health and Social Care system; the key aim was to support the development of effective policy and practice for working with offenders and those at risk of offending, with mental health needs.

Between 2005 – 2008, I was employed by Nacro as a Housing Advice Co-ordinator and I managed several of the North West prison Accommodation Resettlement Services for approximately three years. Within this period the creation of the IPP sentence had been established and was in operation by the courts.

Given my current role within Nacro, my previous experience of working with prisoners and my interest in criminology, I have chosen to conduct this research with IPP prisoners.

What is the purpose of the research?

The aim of the research is to explore the process of risk reduction from the perception of female IPP prisoners and their Parole Officers.

The wider objective of this research is to help develop effective policy and practice for working with IPP prisoners within the Criminal Justice System.

What is involved in the research interview?

If you decide to take part you will be asked a number of questions in a confidential interview room which will take approximately one hour depending on the depth of the information you want to give. Should you require a break at any time during the interview, the researcher will be able to accommodate this.

Before the research interview takes place the researcher will go over the information on this sheet and the consent form in detail to make sure you have understood everything. You will be given a copy of both forms. The researcher will then give an overview of the questions to which you will be asked before asking you to sign the consent form if you are happy with taking part.

Even if you agree to take part and sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw from the research at any time and without giving any reason.

What do I have to do?

- Read the information sheet
- Read the confidentiality statement
- Sign the consent form
- Answer questions put to you by the researcher

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no real risks other than you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions, for example what steps you have taken to reduce your risk to the public. Please remember at any time if you feel uncomfortable answering a question, you are free to withdraw or not answer. However, the research will be carried out in a professional and confidential manner.

What if I feel distressed after the interview?

The prison psychologist will be informed that you have taken part in the research. You will be able to contact him/her after the interview to discuss any distress you may be feeling. To contact them you need to submit a wing application to Psychology

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The benefits would be that you will have the opportunity to share your views and opinions about the process of risk reduction in relation to your experience as an IPP prisoner. The information you provide will be collated, along with other participants responses and the finding will be used to inform future discussions in relation to the process of risk reduction for IPP prisoners.

Will my taking part in this research interview be kept confidential?

Yes, you will not be identifiable from the findings in this evaluation since no names will be mentioned in the resulting reports. The consent form which you sign will be kept separate to the questions you have answered. Staff at the prison will not know what answers you personally have given, unless a member of staff is required to sit in the research interview. If this is the case, the member of staff will not discuss what you have said with anybody since they will be aware of confidentiality,

What will happen to the results of the research interview?

The results will be presented in a report, and present an analysis of all the respondent. None of those taking part will be identified by name in the report. The report will be made available to the Griffins Society, as part of the Fellowship programme. The findings from the research will then be made accessible on the Griffins Society website from November 2013.

Who has approved this research?

Before this research can commence, it will have the approval of the following:

- The Griffins Society
- London School of Economics
- The prison Governor

The reason for gaining this approval before commencing this research, is to ensure the purpose of the research is justified within the guidelines code of research ethics within the British Society of Criminology and that any ethical concerns are assessed.

Contact for further information

If you would like further information relating to this research interview, please put in an application with and he/she will make arrangements for you to discuss your enquiry with the researcher Dawn McAleenan.

Appendix 5



Is there a difference in perception of risk between IPP prisoners and members of the Parole Board?

**The Griffin Society Fellowship
The Griffin Society Fellowship**

October 2012

The needs of IPP prisoners, before, during and beyond custody

I am Nacro's project co-ordinator for the Department of Health's Strategic Partners Programme. An integral part of my role is to highlight barriers to health and social care services for offenders, so that access to services improved. I am particularly interested in the barriers faced by prisoners sentenced to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) in relation to risk reduction and the types of interventions that would support their successful resettlement back into the community.

I have previously conducted research with a small sample of male IPP prisoners. This experience gave me a valuable insight into the complexities involved in IPP sentences, in particular the process of risk reduction. Given the fact that most available research regarding IPP prisoners is based on the male population, it is important to explore how this sentence impacts upon the female population and identify what can be done to support successful rehabilitation back into the community for this particularly vulnerable and marginalised group.

Aim: To explore the process of risk reduction from the perception of female IPP prisoners and Members of the Parole Board.

Rationale: The IPP sentence was implemented through the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and has since become the fastest growing custodial sentence in the UK. Prisoners that receive an IPP sentence do not have a date of release, only a minimum tariff that they must serve before they can apply to the Parole Board for release. The Parole Board decides whether or not to grant release based on evidence that the IPP prisoner has reduced their 'risk to the public'. Upon release the IPP prisoner will be subject to licence conditions, for a minimum of 10 years to a maximum period of life.

Over the years, there has been much political and public attention regarding the systematic problems the IPP sentences has created for the criminal justice system. These problems have led to changes in the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 which aim to reduce the number of IPP sentences handed out by the court. However, the current Coalition Government has gone one step further, with the proposal for IPP sentences to be abolished and replaced by a tougher determinate sentence framework through the provision of the Legal Aid and Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill.

However, it can be argued that these changes to the legislation and subsequent Bill have still not addressed the problems associated with the process of risk reduction. With over half of the IPP prison population currently over tariff, it can be said that there are significant

barriers to IPP prisoners being able to effectively demonstrate to the Parole Board that their 'risk to the public' has been reduced. If this is the case, then it is possible IPP prisoners are being imprisoned longer than required for the purpose of public protection, which in turn is likely to continue have a devastating impact on individuals and a costly impact upon the prison population.

There is limited research that investigates the process of risk reduction for the IPP population and no research that examines whether or not there is a mutual understanding between the IPP prisoner and the Parole Board of what constitutes a risk to the public and how this risk can be reduced. Furthermore, the majority of the available research has been based on the male population.

Objectives: The objective of the research is to explore the process of risk reduction from the perception of female IPP prisoners and their Parole Officers. The research will examine whether or not the two cohorts have a mutual understanding of what constitutes 'risk to the public' and how they conceive this risk to be reduced. The research will also examine the extent to which their risk has been reduced during the different stages of the criminal justice system. The intended outcome is to produce a set of recommendations that incorporates a gender specific approach for women in order to promote risk reduction and support successful rehabilitation.

Method: The research will be based on a qualitative approach to exploring a range of primary and secondary data. The primary data will consist of the following;

- Semi structured interviews with 12 individual female IPP prisoners
- Semi structured interviews with 5 Members of the Parole Board

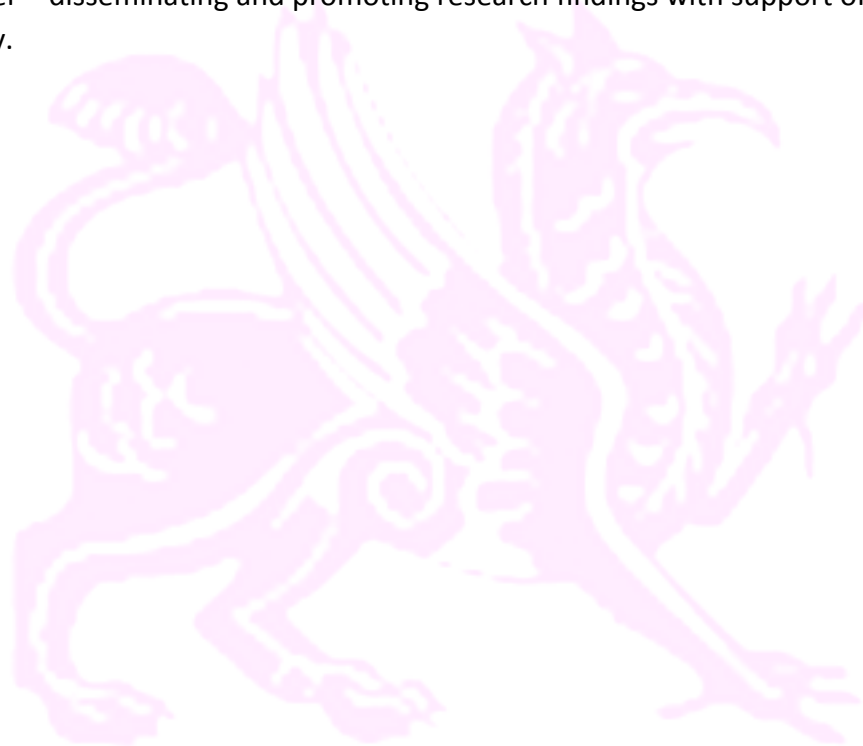
The secondary data analysis will consist of the following;

- An in-depth literature review of current policies and procedures regarding IPP prisoners, journal articles and other publications.
- A review of individual participants Dossier papers and letter of response from their Parole Officer (if available).

Timetable:

- October to December – preparatory work
 - Literature review
 - Research aims and methods revised
 - Questionnaires produced
 - Access to research site and subjects secured

- January to June – practical research
 - January present stage plan to Griffin Society
 - Undertake primary data analysis
 - Undertake secondary data analysis
- June to September – write up finding
 - Write up research paper and research briefing
 - Present findings to the Griffins Society
- October – disseminating and promoting research findings with support of the Griffins Society.



Appendix 6

1. When Members of the Parole Board (MPB) make decisions regarding IPP prisoners what formal policies/ protocols/guidelines have to be taken into account?

Are these accessible?

2. Are MPB given training and what is this

3. Is there any specific training in relation to risk? if yes, what?

4. When making an assessment of risk what factors do the MPB take into account?

5. What in particular might indicate an IPP prisoner to be either high or low risk?

6. What are the MPB looking for in IPP prisoners to demonstrate that their risk has been reduced?

7. In the experience of PBM, do they think that IPP prisoners have a clear understanding of the concept of risk and how it applies in their own individual circumstance?

8. To what degree do you think that that some IPP prisoners may be telling the Parole Board what they think they want to hear in order to increase their chance of release?

9. Are the risks presented by male and female IPP prisoners are different? If yes, how?

10. What are the barriers that may prevent MPB from making a decision about an IPP prisoner?

11. Some prisoners feel that when the IPP sentence was first introduced to the prison system the focus was on using their time constructively, but now it is more focused on risk management, is this true?

12. Are sentence plans effective in addressing the right factors which will reduce the risk of individual offenders?

13. All IPP prisoners we interviewed stated offender behaviour courses are significant in reducing the risk. Would MPB agree?

14. Do all IPP prisoners need to experience open conditions before they are released?

15. Does self harm factor into risk assessment of an IPP prisoner?

Appendix 7

1. How many IPP prisoners have you represented at a Parole Hearing?

2. How many of these were women?

3. Do you think the issues for men and women IPPs are different if so what?

4. When representing an IPP (whether men or women) what are the key factors you need to consider?

5. How do you interpret the term risk in terms of the requirements of the Parole Board?

6. What background information do you take into consideration when presenting a case to a Parole Board?

7. In your view, what does the Parole Board want to know about your client in terms of risk?

8. In your experience do you find the parole board and the IPP prisoner have similar understanding about risk? In general what ways are their views similar or different?

9. What factors do you consider when demonstrating to the Parole Board that risk has been reduced?

10. What factors/ circumstances of clients frustrate their case?

11. What role does client insight play in receiving a positive outcome from a parole board hearing?

12. If you have presented cases before different parole boards, do you find them to be reasonable and consistent or idiosyncratic and difficult to predict?

13 Are you generally successful and what would you put that down to?

Appendix 8

Survey for Members of the Parole Board

1. In everyday life how do you define the term 'risk'?

2. Can risk taking be positive? Please tick which response best reflects your opinion

- often
 sometimes
 rarely
 never

3. Do you think IPP prisoners have a clear understanding of the term risk and how it applies in their own individual circumstance?

- yes no

4. What factors do you take into account when assessing the risk of an IPP prisoner? Please tick as many as are appropriate

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Type of Offender Behaviour courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Abstinence from alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Number of Offender Behaviour courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Abstinence from drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to manage emotions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour during sentence | <input type="checkbox"/> Time served |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour relevant to index offence | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment history |

- Remorse
- Relationship with staff
- Resettlement plan
- Constructive use of time
- Relationship with other prisoners
- Qualifications
- Self harm
- previous offending history
- Religion
- any other, please list in the box below

Other factors taken into consideration:

5. What in your opinion indicates that an IPP prisoner is a high risk?

6. What would a pen portrait look like of a high risk female?

7. Which particular protective factors, would indicate the IPP prisoner is a low risk?

8. What would a pen portrait look like of a low risk female?

9. From your experience, how would IPP prisoners demonstrate that their risk has been reduced?

10. Do you think the risks presented by male and female IPP prisoners are different?

yes no

Please explain your answer:

11. When considering risk in an IPP prisoner how much weight do you give

- their index offence _____ %
- their recent behaviour in prison _____ %
- home circumstances _____ %
- demeanour at a hearing _____ %

12. How confident are you in staffs' ability to create an effective sentence plan which will reduce the risk of the offender?

- Very confident
 Somewhat confident
 Not very confident
 No confidence

13. Some prisoners feel that when the IPP sentence was first introduced to the prison system the focus was on using their time constructively, but now it is more focused on risk management, would you agree?

yes no

Please briefly explain your answer:

14. How significant are offender behaviour courses in reducing the risk of an offender?

- Extremely important
- Somewhat Important
- Not important

15. Do you think there are the benefits of sending an IPP prisoner to open conditions?

- yes
- no

16. Does self harm factor into risk assessment of an IPP prisoner?

- yes
- no

17. Which do you think is the more effective for making prisoners address their issues and reduce their risk?

- Indeterminate sentence
- Determinate sentence

18. To what degree do you think that that some IPP prisoners may be telling the Parole Board what they think they want to hear in order to increase their chance of release?

- High degree
- Moderate degree
- Low degree

19. Do you have any other comments to make about IPP sentences or the remaining IPP prisoners?

Thank you very much for completing this survey.

Please can you return your completed survey to xxxxxxxx at xxxxxxx@paroleboard.gsi.gov.uk by or before 15th June 2012

Many thanks

Dawn McAleenan