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A Critical Evaluation of the Reintegration Experiences of Child Sex
Offenders in the Community

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by

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Abstract

Criminology has conventionally focussed on the onset and punishment of crime. Less attention is paid to how offenders reintegrate, exist, cope and move away from crime. However, there is a growing body of research interested in reintegration and desistance from crime. The literature on sex offender reintegration and desistance is limited but emerging, with studies exclusively involving child sex offenders remaining scarce. Therefore, this thesis has been designed to evaluate the reintegration experiences of child sex offenders in a community in England and Wales.

Using a qualitative, semi-structured, individual interview approach, data were collected from 10 men (the participants) who had at least one current and at least one previous child sexual offence conviction. The index offences ranged from internet related charges, to rape. Data were additionally obtained from 11 professionals working with child sex offenders in the community. The professionals worked for either the National Probation Service (NPS), the police or Circles of Support and Accountability (COXA). The themes of resettlement, risk management and stigma were discussed, and an illustrative model of child sex offender reintegration was developed.

The findings suggest the participants were vulnerable. They shared experiences of verbal and physical abuse at the hands of non-sex offenders, loss, fear, isolation and pressure. They were not afforded the opportunities to reintegrate with success in comparison to other offender types, with internet offenders' opportunities being lessened further. They used a variety of coping methods, including self-risk management, identity passing, avoidance and appropriate offence disclosure. In addition, the illustrative model highlighted how the men were active agents of their reintegration journey, rather than being passive. They shaped and negotiated their way through life in the community as men with child sexual offences in different and interesting ways, whilst being mindful of the stigma associated with this offence type.

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Glossary of Terms

AP	Approved Premises
COSA	Circles of Support and Accountability
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
ETS	Enhanced Thinking Skills
GLM	Good Lives Model
ISA	Independent Safeguarding Authority
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NPS	National Probation Service
OBP	Offending Behaviour Programme
OM	Offender Manager
PNC	Police National Computer
PSO	Prison Service Order
RMO	Risk Management Officer
RSO	Registered Sex Offender
SHPO	Sexual Harm Prevention Order
SOPO	Sex Offender Prevention Order
SOR	Sex Offender Register
SRO	Sexual Risk Order
SOTP	Sex Offender Treatment Programme
TSP	Thinking Skills Programme
USI	Unlawful Sexual Intercourse
ViSOR	Violent and Sex Offender Register

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The spectre of the child sex offender has increasingly been brought to popular attention over the last few years. High profile cases involving figures of entertainment such as Rolf Harris, Gary Glitter and Ian Watkins have helped keep the child sex offender in the media and public spotlight. Arguably, the level of attention directed towards the child sex offender has never been as acute as it is today. In part this is due to the shocking news of Jimmy Saville's improprieties, for which he never faced formal police charges. Only in death have the police and the media reported on his alleged behaviour, leading to police and public enquiries uncovering years of abuse at very high, institutional levels (Greer and McLaughlin, 2013). Furthermore, recent enquiries into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham for example, where approximately 1400 children were sexually abused over a period of 16 years between 1997 and 2013, by multiple offenders (Jay, 2014), have fuelled debates of how society should respond to these offences and the offenders.

Acceptance of child sexual abuse and the offenders responsible is 'rarely tolerated' (Horley, 2008: 1). This is due, in part, to campaigns in the 1980's from feminist challengers, the media and victims of abuse (Greer and McLaughlin, 2013) where the issues of institutional abuse were highlighted and were no longer denied or ignored. The taboo of institutional child sexual abuse was therefore in the public domain, with enquiries increasing public awareness of these crimes. Communicative information helped to improve public knowledge in the UK about the nature of child sexual abuse. It exposed the abusers, many of whom were in positions of significant trust, often working in care homes, schools and places of worship (ibid). Thus, the social problem of child abuse shifted focus from the institutional level (McAlinden, 2007) to a community one (Horley, 2008), where the most vulnerable could be targeted by the child sex offender spectre (ibid). The introduction of the Sex Offenders Register in 1997 was an example of the populist

political response to increased fear of ‘predatory paedophiles’ (Greer and McLaughlin, 2013: 4) and child sex offenders were once again on the political and social agenda, albeit for different, non-institutional reasons. Popular culture has therefore created a picture of the child sex offender as a monster (Silverman, 2003; Spencer, 2009) who is ‘high risk’ (Farmer and Mann, 2010: 18) and capable of committing the most indescribable offences, whilst being incapable of reform or reintegration.

Deviance and the popular construct of the stereotypes within deviant sub-groups, is often created by popular culture and the mass media (Cohen, 1972) and may be different from the truth. Tabloid reporting is powerful and can reach large audiences with their messages. Therefore, a moral panic (Ibid) may ensue if the message is powerful and convincing enough. An example of this was the Paulsgrove Estate riots in Portsmouth, June 2000¹. The *News of the World’s* naming and shaming campaign of 83 convicted child sex offenders in the community, helped to create this panic and was a causal factor in these disturbances (Born, 2000). The front-page tagline of ‘If you are a parent you **must** read this’ [emphasis in original] at the time (BBC, 2000), insinuated the report was developed with the aim of protecting the public. Ironically, media representation such as this, may not help the question of how to deal with child sex offenders in the community. Strong political views add further fuel to deviant stereotypes, helping form public opinion about the nature of child sexual abuse and what constitutes the best outcome from a criminal justice point of view. It is this political rhetoric that wins votes and public support, without giving full, well-informed consideration of the effects of this demonisation. In England and Wales, the fact remains that most child sex offenders, once they have been caught and convicted, will be released into the community. They must adhere to often strict legal conditions, whilst being expected to live in a

¹ This incident will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

socially acceptable fashion. The vilification of the child sex offender and the stereotype constructed by society, the media and politics, mixed with legal restrictions on movement, relationships, housing and employment can often lead to a socially excluded and isolated lifestyle, where reintegration into the community is difficult and fraught with personal challenges. It is this aspect of child sex offender reintegration that this thesis aims to highlight.

It is acknowledged here and throughout this thesis, how the need to protect the public from sexual offences is of paramount importance and the legal measures in place to achieve this are never in question. Some child sex offenders are dangerous (Laws and Ward, 2011) and they will reoffend despite the legal measures in place to help minimise their risks. However, many child sex offenders will not reoffend, a viewpoint that goes against popular opinion, meaning the spectre, introduced above is often different from reality. Therefore, the challenges for those who supervise and monitor child sex offenders are complicated because of the juxtaposition between public protection, public opinion and the needs of the reintegrating offender. If the goal of offender management is to protect the public and reduce reoffending, then the needs of the child sex offenders under its care must be addressed in a manner that compliments these complicated factors. This is a significant and further consideration for this thesis.

Most of the literature on sex offenders is concerned with understanding the onset of sexual deviance, rather than community reintegration. For example, previous projects have included the validity of risk assessment tools (Kingston et al., 2008; Leam et al., 2004), the assessment of Offending Behaviour Programmes (OBP) (Prescott and Levenson, 2010), the use of the Good Lives Model (GLM) (Laws and Ward, 2011), sex offender management (McCarten, 2012) and the use of the Sex Offender Register (SOR) (Thomas, 2009). Literature surrounding child sex offender reintegration is therefore scarce but emerging. Recent projects conducted by Russell et al. (2013),

Harris (2014), Farmer et al. (2015), McAlinden et al. (2016) and Lussier and McLiesh (2016) have highlighted the significance of producing empirical research on child sex offenders who live in the community, especially linking to how child sex offenders move away from crime, with some of them using a qualitative offender-centred approach. Despite these studies, the ‘voice’ (Davies et al., 2011: 142) of this marginalised group remains relatively under-studied. This is a gap in academic knowledge, and this thesis aims to investigate how child sex offenders in England and Wales experience community life, how they reintegrate and how they move away from crime, using their own words.

1.1 Aims of the Thesis

The reintegration of child sex offenders, post-conviction is not a factor the criminal justice process should ignore. England and Wales rarely convict child sex offenders for their natural life, although it is an option in the most serious cases, most are given determinate sentences that have a release date². Punishment in England and Wales is varied, depending on the crimes committed and some child sex offenders will not be imprisoned. The risk management of child sex offenders varies also, with some offenders being categorised at the highest risk levels, where monitoring and legal restrictions are plentiful, to those who pose the lowest risks of reoffending, where risk management is minimal. Child sexual offences vary in nature, from Unlawful Sexual Intercourse (USI) through to rape and the Sexual Offences Act 2003 defines over 70 sexual offences. Child sex offenders vary in nature and there is not one specific type, despite the stereotypes and media portrayals

² It is noted here that there are child sex offenders who are serving indeterminate sentences for public protection, or those given a life sentence. However, these offenders still have the potential to be released into the community after they have spent a specific time in prison and have satisfied the Parole Board that their risks of further offending has decreased sufficiently to allow their risk to be managed upon release.

introduced above. This diversity specifically identifies the child sex offender as a heterogeneous group and so a one-size-fits-all approach to criminal justice may not in fact be the best-fit. Research projects that investigate policy, the views of probation, the effectiveness of OBP's for example, may not fully acknowledge this diversity. The omission of the voice of those involved directly within the criminal justice system, the offenders, may impact negatively on the development of academic knowledge. This project will give a voice to this marginalised group.

One possible solution is to determine what the social processes are that child sex offenders face in the community. Social processes refer to the everyday interactions that many child sex offenders face post-conviction. Giving them the opportunity to explain life from their point of view is important, because their lives are seemingly managed by others in authority with the potential for their privacy to be interrupted. It is therefore important to gain an understanding about how child sex offenders manage these processes and what daily life is like for them. Further investigation concerning who child sex offenders are in contact with and what effective resettlement looks like, leads to questions regarding the impacts of risk management on their reintegration journey. Alongside this, the gap of stigma remains. It has been identified earlier how the stereotypical view of child sex offenders is of significance in the societal reaction to these crimes. Therefore, the manifestation of stigma within child sex offenders should also be questioned, along with the potential impact that stigma may have on the opportunities to reintegrate with purpose and to move away from criminal behaviour.

This presents a challenge for social science and a challenge for this thesis. Any thoughtful research project must acknowledge the difficulties of researching child sex offenders. Issues with access, sampling, ethics, confidentiality, anonymity, researcher bias and recruitment are all prevalent in a study of this kind. Although this could be said of many studies that research sensitive

topics, because of the taboo subject nature or the vulnerability of the participant (Davies et al., 2011), the child sex offender is classed as a sensitive topic and a hard to reach group. This is one of the main reasons why they remain under-studied and why many projects have focused on secondary sources of information. The development of this study presented these challenges, some of which were unique, due, in part to the researcher's professional experience³.

A primary study on the community experiences of child sex offenders is vital, because it will provide a voice and further academic understanding by building upon previous studies, whilst offering unique and original information from a specific cohort. This allows an evaluation of how child sex offenders who live in the community to occur, whilst analysing what helps reintegration and the strategies they use to negotiate the potential effects of risk management and stigma. These perspectives will be considered in detail alongside the views of professionals who work with child sex offenders in the community. This simple comparative design will draw solutions based on the diverse nature of these offenders and will help to add a rich layer of data to the overall thesis, with the voice of the offenders being of primary importance. This personal and professional data will give a specific account of the nature of community reintegration and will help to establish whether any links to desistance from crime⁴ can be made. The challenges posed with child sex offender research has resulted in a methodological approach designed to cover the themes of risk management, stigma and resettlement. The three themes were utilised to shape the interview schedule and to allow continuity to the data collection, the dissemination of the results and the subsequent analysis. Semi-structured interviews with 10 child sex offenders⁵ living in the

³ This will be considered in more detail in Chapter 3.

⁴ Further explanation of desistance will be made in Chapter 2

⁵ From herein, the child sex offenders who partook in this study will be termed 'the participants' or the 'the men'. This is to help minimise the stigma that 'child sex offender' evokes.

community, post-conviction, were conducted, along with 11 interviews involving professionals who work with child sex offenders in the community.

This study has been purposeful in its design. The qualitative nature was deemed to give the best results when gaining experiential information because of the quality of the data, which is more meaningful than simple surveys or questionnaires. These experiences only provide a snap-shot into the lives of the men and it is acknowledged that a longitudinal study would give the greatest accuracy on the participant's reintegration journey. This methodological approach would also help to create further understanding into the nature of child sex offender desistance, as the men would be able to recount any further convictions. This approach was not possible but is a consideration for the future. The semi-structured interviews conducted were designed to allow the participants to expand on each question and offer the most information they felt comfortable to relay. This allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions designed to gain further understanding of the topic being discussed and to allow for clarification of points to be achieved. This is of importance when interviewing marginalised groups, as the information gathered must be accurate, giving a valid account of their experiences. Therefore, the original contribution that this thesis makes to academic knowledge is based within the unique diversity of the participants, their accounts, the comparisons made with the professional accounts and the links to reintegration and desistance from crime. It set out to establish what life is like for a person with child sex offences in the community and it discovered that the men interviewed were vulnerable, had suffered loss due to their convictions and were isolated. Often they were subjected to abuse and violence at the hands of others especially when living in an approved premises setting and that they had to employ self-risk management techniques to help them refrain from risky situations or behaviours. Furthermore, reintegration was harder for internet offenders than their contact only counterparts, as they faced

more legal restrictions which resulted in increasingly difficult ways to interact in a technological age.

1.2 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 3 covers the methodology. This is where the overall design and theoretical underpinning of the study combine to give a rationale behind the methods used, sample and theory development. Chapters 4 – 6 contain the main elements of discussion and presentation of the results of the interviews. There are separate discussions of resettlement, risk management and stigma, here the voices of the participants are heard for the first time. Chapter 4 highlights the participant's experiences of resettling into the community and covers topics of housing, employment and relationships. Chapter 5 mixes the theme of risk management with a discussion on the efforts the participants have made to move away from offending behaviour. The self and identity are major themes for chapter 6, which discusses the topic of stigma.

Chapter 7 analyses the results and links them together with the literature on reintegration, desistance, resettlement, risk management and stigma. It highlights several themes that are most prevalent in this study. For example, limited positive relationships, offending on the internet and identity. Chapter 7 ends with a revision of the theoretical model introduced in Chapter 3. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis and answers the research questions, drawing together all the findings. It explores recommendations for policy and highlights areas for further research.

However, the next chapter consists of the literature review undertaken with explicit reference to the child sex offender. The literature review will introduce the child sex offender and

will explore the themes of reintegration which include resettlement, risk management, stigma and the law. A final discussion considering the desistance of child sex offenders will be undertaken.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The theoretical underpinning of this thesis, is based on the ensuing discussions below, within this literature review. The very nature of living as a child sex offender in the community is a complicated and diverse one, where no two cases are the same, although similar experiences may be shared. The interactions between elements of risk management, stigma and resettlement are often separated within current discourse surrounding child sex offender reintegration and desistance. This literature review provides a holistic view of what is known about the child sex offender, reintegration and desistance from crime. As a result of this, this chapter forms the basis for the theoretical model introduced in Chapter 3 which provides context and meaning to the experiences of child sex offenders in the community. It was termed a 'theoretical model' at the start, because this study intended to build theory from it. However, as the research process continued, it was clear the triangle was an illustrative model, not a theory.

The triangle was not developed through theory alone, more from the literature reviewed and from the researchers own professional understanding. The model was originally intended to be a way to make sense of the literature, and to give a sense of reality to the factors that influence child sex offenders in the community. In addition to this, the triangle was a visual aid for the reader and also something to explain where the researchers position was in the research process. Interestingly, the triangle included themes that were expected to be of importance, however more themes emerged from the literature review below. As a result, as the themes developed, so did the triangle. As the research developed so did the complex, introduced in chapter 7. Therefore, the current chapter will introduce who the child sex offender is, moving to a discussion on two reintegration factors: resettlement and risk management, ending with the theme of desistance from crime and its relation to child sex offenders.

2.1 Introducing the Child Sex Offender

The stereotypical image of the child sex offender as the dirty old man, is born from myth, misinformation and misunderstanding. Reality is somewhat different, for example, 90% of child sexual offences were committed by people who knew the victim (NSPCC, 2018a) primarily in the home, making stranger offences rare (McAlinden, 2007). Child sex offenders are a heterogeneous group because of the diversity shown in their social class, ethnicity, educational attainment, age, profession, sexuality, offence types, motives and risk of further offending (Robertiello and Terry, 2007; Horley, 2008; Philpot, 2011). However, despite this apparent heterogeneity, it is suggested that these offenders share some form of physical, mental or emotional shortcoming, which helps to facilitate the onset of abuse (Philpot, 2011). Brouillette-Alarie et al. (2017) have specified this further and posit how the onset of abuse can be predicted. In their study on risk prediction and recidivism, they conclude how there are three areas of indication/predictability: 1) Sexual criminality and dysregulation; 2) general criminality and anti-social traits; 3) youthful criminality and intent to harm. Each area may not be present for each offender, for example an offender may or may not have a general (non-sex offending) criminal past, therefore the mix of offender types is diverse (ibid). The result is that the child sex offender stereotype and social, media and political preconceptions have been challenged over the last few years. For example, the case of Rolf Harris, a children's entertainer convicted of sex offences against children, has demonstrated how a trusted public figure can have their professional, family, moral and national identity destroyed. Writing for *The Guardian (online)*, Simon Hattenstone (2014) expressed his anguish at his 'fallen hero':

Harris is the most painful case to process. [Jimmy] Savile we always suspected was weird and dark, [Max] Clifford you weren't too surprised by. But Harris? The funny fella with the beard

and paintbrush, the daft instruments and the undulating accent made for trusting little boys and girls? The avuncular Aussie who surprised us with paintings he magicked out of nowhere, who wobbled those crazy DIY musical instruments? (p. np).

Rolf Harris' public persona was clean and wholesome, hiding in plain sight with a double, deviant life and when he was stripped of his Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 2015, Rolf Harris' public humiliation was almost complete. For him to have the propensity to commit sexual offences arguably redefines the dangerous offender.

In 2015/2016 there were 4.7 million crimes recorded by the police, in England and Wales and of these just over '112,021' were classed as sexual offences (Office for National Statistics, 2016: np). This indicates that recorded sexual offences accounted for 2.38% of all crimes, a proportion which has more than trebled since 2001, when sexual offences accounted for just 0.7% (McGuire, 2004). In 2014/2015, sexual offences against children in England and Wales stood at '41,185' (NSPCC, 2016: np). This showed another year-on-year increase, a trend that has been developing over the last decade (NSPCC, 2016). A further, similar trend emerging is the increase in the number of Registered Sexual Offenders (RSO). In 2016/2017, there were '55,236' RSO's in England and Wales (MOJ, 2017: 7), which equates to '108' RSO's per 100,000 of the population (Ibid: 8); a rise of 98 from the previous year. Unfortunately, there are no statistics available to suggest how many RSO's have been convicted of child sexual abuse, in the past or otherwise. Not surprisingly, the prison system has seen a similar rise in the number of sexual offenders. In 2015/2016 the number of sex offenders in prison in England and Wales accounted for approximately 15% of an overall population of around 85,000 (Allen and Watson, 2017). Although it is appreciated that these statistics include all types of sexual offending, most child sexual abuse remains unreported (Davies et al., 2017).

The reasons for the increase in recorded sexual crime are various. Improvements in the police recording of sexual crime, a willingness on the behalf of victims to make a complaint and an improvement in the public understanding of sexual offending all contribute (Office for National Statistics, 2014; 2016; NSPCC, 2018b). Additionally, Operation Yewtree established by the Metropolitan Police in 2012 ‘to investigate allegations of child sexual abuse by the radio and TV presenter Jimmy Savile and others’ (Scott, 2016: 5) increased public awareness of child sexual abuse further. This is a shift in the social climate surrounding the reporting and understanding of the nature of child sexual abuse in particular and it is argued that without the case of Jimmy Savile and the ensuing police investigations, this ‘Yewtree effect’ (Office for National Statistics, 2016) may never have occurred (Barrett, 2013).

Despite child abuse accounting for a small percentage of all reported crime, the offenders remain headline news and continue to be the focus of hatred, disgust and demonisation. The pain, trauma and long-lasting impact that these offences can cause, mean the public will not readily forgive the perpetrators. Indeed, such is the response to these crimes, that the community reintegration of child sex offenders will never be easy and a fine ‘balancing act’ must be made between public protection and the needs of the offender (McCarten, 2012: 39). Branded as ‘animals’, ‘monsters’ (Spencer, 2009: 219) and modern day ‘folk devil[s]’ (Harrison, 2010: xvii) child sex offenders are subject to many criminal justice policies in response to such crimes (Nash, 2012). They are reduced to ‘Homo Sacer’ (Spencer, 2009: 219) which is an outcast of society, seemingly expected to live their lives either in prison or in isolation. Whatever the whim of the current government may be, child sex offenders arguably are subject to a form of ‘criminal apartheid’ (Soothill and Francis, 1998: 286), where the isolation is further exaggerated.

Child sexual abuse, by its very nature, is a very personal and emotive crime. The physical and emotional damage imparted on the victim, the families of victims and offenders and the wider general public is a possible reason why those who commit sex crimes are not viewed favourably (McGuire, 2004). In comparison, people who commit acquisitive crimes to feed a drug habit, may additionally cause harm to victims and the public, but the need to buy drugs is perhaps more understandable than the need to harm a child through a sexual act. Child sex offenders often manipulate opportunities to offend and fulfil their own needs, which can take several weeks, months or even years. Many common offences differ from this, as they may be spontaneous, impulse driven and lack planning or foresight.

The media and especially the tabloid press, play another major role in the often-sensational reporting and subsequent vilification of child abuse. This may be due to ‘the professional self-conception of journalists as vigilant watchdogs driven by a determination to speak truth to power’ (Greer and McLaughlin, 2013: 244), or perhaps it is a good way to sell papers. It is suggested, therefore, that this type of media coverage ‘feeds the national conversation’ (ibid) whilst ‘attack journalism’ (ibid: 245) of this type questions the integrity of journalism. ‘Name and shame’ campaigns conducted by the press have marginalised and alienated child sex offenders further, adversely impacting on the probation services ability to effectively reintegrate them back into society (McAlinden, 2007: 3).

One such name and shame campaign conducted by *The News of the World*, named paedophiles in England and Wales in response to the abduction and murder of eight-year-old Sarah Payne in 2000 (Bell, 2005). The aim was to act as a catalyst for a new public disclosure scheme for England and Wales sex offenders called Sarah’s Law (see below) and was a similar concept to Megan’s Law in the United States of America (USA), where the information of known sex offenders is available on a public database (McAlinden, 2010). The public response to this campaign varied. A group of Mothers on the Paulsgrove estate in Portsmouth for example, organised community vigils and protests at the homes of

locally named paedophiles (Bell, 2005). Across England, two child sex offenders committed suicide and houses were daubed in paint. A paediatrician's workplace was attacked as vigilantes wrongly associated the word with paedophile and a lady's home was attacked because she had the same surname as one of the named offenders (Bell, 2005; McAlinden, 2007). Ill-informed news campaigns such as these, coupled with sensational news coverage, often use over generalised terms, descriptions and stereotypes, especially when reporting on sensitive topics (Thomas, 2005). Silverman (2003) posits the press exploit 'public fear' (p. 50), creating moral panics similar to those on dangerous dogs or joyriding observed in the 1990's (Cree et al., 2014), to sell newspapers. Not only are child sex offenders treated as public enemy number one when they are in prison, 'vulnerable to harassments and other forms of abuse' (Schwabe, 2005: 614), this also continues out of prison where custodial protection is not afforded to them, potentially increasing their vulnerability.

It is suggested therefore, that sex offenders 'require social and physical environments that, at a bare minimum, support the process of re-entry and ultimately reintegration' (Willis et al., 2010: 545). Reintegration work with child sex offenders should be linked seamlessly to interventions, such as OBP's to help them gain back their 'citizenship' (ibid). However, child sex offender reintegration remains difficult, given the many obstacles offenders may face post-conviction. Media representations mainly focus on exceptional cases, giving a highly distorted view of the population of child sex offenders. This misrepresented view serves to 'perpetuate myths about sexual offending...for example that most [are] likely to reoffend' (Malinen et al., 2014: 535). This may make it harder for discriminated offenders to gain employment, suitable housing or build relationships, isolating them further whilst increasing their risk of offending (Fox, 2017). Therefore, even though child sex offenders are not a homogenous group, they are often treated as such, with caution, hatred and fear. Not only does this make their overall reintegration more difficult, it arguably makes their desistance from crime even more difficult, a topic

that will be discussed later in this chapter. First and foremost as discussion on the literature pertaining to child sex offenders and resettlement, as this is often the first element they may face, post-conviction.

2.2 Child Sex Offenders and Resettlement

For the nature of this thesis, resettlement incorporates the social aspects of an offender's reintegration: housing, employment and relationship building (Lambie et al., 2011), with each examined in turn, below.

2.2.1 Housing and the Approved Premises (AP)

The discussion of where to house child sex offenders, post-conviction, has been an ongoing issue for the criminal justice system, as it requires the balancing of the protective needs of the public with the resettlement needs of the offender. Establishing where and with whom a sex offender can live is a matter for multi-agencies such as the NPS, prison and the police to decide and it is also a matter of law. In England and Wales, generally, a person who has committed sexual offences against a person under the age of 18, cannot live with any person under that age. If they do then they can be arrested, returned to prison or given a further prison sentence. Returning to the family home, therefore, may not be possible.

Cowen et al's. (2001) study into the use of social housing with sex offenders in England provided insights into the societal, legal and moral responses of how to house this marginalised group. It was established through interviews with professionals working with sex offenders that social housing provided solutions to the social control (Cohen, 1979) of these offenders. This control occurred through housing management and Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) of which both are prevalent in many social housing estates (Cowen et al., 2001). This meant they could be watched, whilst placing them out of sight in areas of deprivation and poverty; areas that had surplus housing stocks. However, it appears from this study that sex offenders are being further marginalised as the authorities struggle to decide

what to do with them in the community. Indeed, some studies suggest that people in the community would feel uneasy with sex offenders living near to them through fear for their children (Phillips, 1998).

In the US, housing restrictions have led to communities of sex offenders living apart from mainstream society. For example, 'Jessica's law' in the State of Florida has increased restrictions on the housing of sex offenders, prohibiting them from living near places where children play, study or visit (Levenson et al., 2007). The effects of this social exclusion have led to further marginalisation and stigmatization, whilst limiting the opportunities for sexual offenders to reintegrate back into the community (Levenson and Hern, 2007). Levenson and Hern (2007) conclude in their study on sex offender re-entry in the US, that sex offenders show the lowest levels of reoffending of all offender types but are housed in areas that provide housing instability and personal vulnerability.

Vulnerability is a significant issue when determining where to house any type of offender, child sex offenders are no exception to this, indeed they may be more vulnerable. For example, in their study Crawley and Sparks (2006) note how child sex offenders are a rapidly aging group. This could be in-part, due to the increase of historic offences brought to the courts. This means that the housing of such offenders must meet the increasingly often palliative care needs of the offender. While Crawley and Sparks (2006) research was prison based and did not include a follow-up study in the community, they concluded how older men feared release, how they feared attacks in the community due to their status as a sex offender and that they lacked incentives in coping with release. This is an interesting point, i.e. that the older men felt they would often have to start from scratch as they had lost housing, relationships and social status, due to their crimes.

Child sex offenders are often housed in probation hostels or Approved Premises (AP) when they are released, especially those who pose a high risk, as this is viewed as the best way for the NPS to protect the public. AP's are provided for under section 13 of the Offender Management Act 2007 as

accommodation for people who are on bail, or as a halfway house to help prepare them for re-entry into the community. In practice, they are institutions that house people, usually from prison, who quickly adopt to the institutionalising process of the hostel. Staff training in pro-social modelling, group exercises and harm prevention has helped the hostels to move from this institutional label and they are now expected to be more rehabilitative in nature (Williams, 2016). AP's are meant to offer safe and semi-secure environments to higher risk offenders with 104 such hostels operating in England and Wales (Reeves, 2016). Of these, only 14 hostels do not house sex offenders due to the proximity of schools and playgrounds (ibid). However, concerns have been raised, and whilst the hostel is viewed as an effective way to manage sex offenders in the community, it also allows for a certain amount of networking with other like-minded offenders and further institutionalising when rehabilitation should be the key (Reeves, 2013).

Research conducted into the effectiveness of AP's in the UK is scarce. Reeves (2016) conducted one of the few studies within a hostel setting, utilising observations and interviews. Of the 17 offenders interviewed, 15 were sex offenders and 11 of these were child sex offenders. One observation was the power exerted on the people living within, using CCTV and staff monitoring. Reeves (2016) established how the offenders believed this to be 'objectionable' (p. 454) as they did not know when they were being watched. This notion of a panoptic, all-seeing power was indicative of the nature of the hostel (Foucault, 1977), akin to a total institution (Goffman, 1961) and not dissimilar to the prison setting. Reeves (2016) concluded how the 'battleground' (p. 467) of the hostel setting was beset through power struggles between staff and residents, affecting the residents sense of self, an issue Reeves (2016) believes should be addressed by the NPS to help sex offenders reintegrate and desist from crime.

2.2.2 Employment

Sex offenders who have offended against children cannot be employed where they are likely to be in contact with someone under the age of 18. It is the responsibility of the NPS and more precisely the OM, to decide upon job suitability, meaning that child sex offenders often face many barriers to employment. McAlinden, et al. (2016), established that employment and keeping ‘active’ (p. 11) was important to those child sex offenders deemed to be desisting from crime, whether this was before or after their convictions. The literature on the employment of child sex offenders is limited. What does exist, forms part of a larger body of general literature concerning the risks that sex offenders pose and how they are best managed, along with the public’s opinions of allowing sex offenders to work. For example, Brown, Deakin and Spencer’s (2007) report into the barriers and opportunities to employment that sex offenders face in the community concluded how sex offenders are a heavily discriminated against group of offenders. Employers are reluctant to employ them and when they do, the fear or reality of the other workers finding out can put the sex offender’s safety at risk. Furthermore, Lussier and McCuish (2016) recognised how the lack of employment opportunities in their sample did not influence the likelihood of desisting. Indeed, they determined that successful reintegration and desistance from crime occurred whether or not employment was in place. Furthermore, Call’s (2017) study highlighted how employment is a means to gain money, and without money the re-entry experiences of sex offenders would be made ‘unstable’ (p. 9). Finally, Tewksbury and Mustaine (2007) posited how child sex offenders would often be housed in geographical areas of instability, social deprivation and lack of opportunity, where the opportunity was linked to the availability of jobs.

2.2.3 Support

For the child sex offender, the combined factors of isolation, unstable housing and lack of employment make the formation of social ties harder in comparison to their non-sex offending counterparts. In addition to this, child sex offenders are often prevented from forming relationships with people who are under the age of 18 or who have children under 18. Additionally, some children may live in the family home or may indeed be a relation, such as a son or daughter (Vandiver et al., 2008) and this presents as a significant barrier to successful reintegration. For those sex offenders who are married, Lussier and McCuish (2016) suggests that it exerts little effect on the desistance process. Within their sample of sex offenders, they purport how there must be ‘something about the nature of sex offenders’ marriages that limits its ability to act both directly and indirectly as an informal social control that promotes desistance’ (p. 14), leaving the connection somewhat vague. Indeed, the research on the connection of relational support and the effects on child sex offenders is altogether vague, with the relationship between offender and victim being of primary interest (Levenson et al., 2017). This leaves this thesis with an exciting opportunity to establish the effects of positive or negative relationships, especially from the viewpoint of the offenders.

2.2.4 Support – Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA)

COSA is a community based project which runs in many international countries and some counties within England and Wales. The aim is to work with convicted sex offenders, in the community to help them successfully reintegrate and take responsibility for their actions (Hucklesby and Thompson, 2012). Using the principle of restorative justice (Hanvey, Philpot and Wilson, 2011), COSA integrates risk management procedures and resettlement ideals. Wilson (2011: 58) asserts that an underlying principle at the heart of the philosophy of COSA is that a person should be

treated as 'he ought to be and could be', rather than 'as he is.' The groups are composed of volunteers and the core group member themselves (the sex offender), who attend meetings. It has three main principles to help reduce further offending and promote successful reintegration: 'Support, Monitor and Maintain' (Wilson, 2011: 59). These are the cornerstones which help to facilitate the smooth transition from custody to the community and to aid the risk management process, especially in the cases of high risk offenders. There is an inclusive attitude towards the sex offender and evidence suggests it can help them to reintegrate with some success.

There have been several studies that demonstrate evidence of reduced recidivism of sex offenders within the 'circle'. Some communities are learning to understand the nature of sex offending, helping to alleviate fears and the stigma caused (Hucklesby and Thompson, 2012). For example, Bates et al. (2014) reviewed the data from 71 core members over a 55-month assessment period in comparison to data from non-circle members. They established that even though the differences were not significant, the reconviction rates were lower. None of the men were convicted of a new contact sexual offence, with three being convicted of non-contact offences and one of a historic offence. As a result, the sexual offences committed were one quarter of the rate of the comparative group (Bates et al., 2014). Furthermore, Duwe (2012) conducted a comparative study in the US, establishing that those men who were or had been a part of a Circle showed reduced involvement with the criminal justice system across five measures, from arrest to imprisonment, when compared to non-circle members. Indeed, none of the men were reconvicted for a known contact offence, whereas the control group had one conviction. A further analysis conducted by Elliot and Beech (2012) posited reduced recidivism for core members at '61% over an average 3.5-year follow-up period (p. 217). Despite the evidence suggesting a reduction in reoffending for core members, the societal support for COSA and child sex offenders in the

community remains low (Richards and McCartan, 2017). Therefore, the support that COSA provides sex offenders in the community is important in their reintegration journey.

2.3 Child Sex Offenders and Risk Management – an Overview

2.3.1 The Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR)

The criminal justice system in England and Wales has placed all sex offenders together as a single typology through the introduction of a distinct central register, ViSOR, in which all people newly convicted of a sexual offence must be included on. This centralised database is linked to the Police National Computer (PNC), allowing all forces in England and Wales to have access to information regarding sexual offenders, and more importantly, their last known whereabouts (McAlinden, 2007; Thomas, 2016). In England and Wales, The Sex Offender Act 1997 introduced the sex offender register, to restrict and monitor the movements of convicted sex offenders. Cultural, legal and moral shifts in attitudes towards offending and offenders during the early 1990's, categorised offenders into groups based on dangerousness, rather than resettlement or reintegrative need (Feeley and Simon, 1992). The new penology (ibid) of the criminal justice system introduced stricter measures of sex offender control, with the primary purpose being to ensure that police records were up to date and accurate which was deemed to be a significant factor in protecting the public (Thomas, 2010; 2016). The sex offender register was a marked shift away from how sex offenders were previously policed and in effect this created a sub-group of offenders who were deemed dangerous enough to warrant extra monitoring. This meant that all people convicted of a sexual offence had to sign the sex offender register and notify the authorities of their whereabouts, regardless of the nature of the offence or the length of sentence. Thus, turning a heterogeneous group in to an apparently homogenous one, in the eyes of the law, the media

and the public. Thomas (2009) explains the primary use of the register and demonstrates how it was not intended for the purpose of punishment:

People are placed on the sex offender register at the same time as they receive their sentence for a sexual offence. The register is a form of public protection and not part of the punishment. Inclusion on the register is automatic if one of the designated sexual offences that lead to registration has been committed. The severity of the sentence dictates how long a person has to stay on the register and this can be for as short a period as two years and as long as a lifetime... (p. 257).

Wilson (2011) believes that the risk management of sex offenders in the community and the subsequent introduction of the sex offender register, is a 'draconian' (p. 47) response to political rhetoric, designed to please the public and impose laws which may inhibit offender's lives once they are released. However, the main purpose of the sex offender register was to identify suspects, prevent crimes and help deter potential offenders (Thomas, 2016), additionally it would accurately identify the whereabouts of sexual offenders. Furthermore, the register was never intended for the purpose of resettlement or reintegration, it was designed for 'public protection' as offender's identity and whereabouts were verified yearly (Thomas, 2016: 182).

The registration of offenders has specific time limits according to the severity of the sentence imposed, with the most severe cases attracting the most time spent on the register. Figure 2.3 illustrates these time periods:

<i>Sexual Offences Notification Periods</i>	
<i>Sexual Offences Act 2003 – Section 82</i>	
A person who, in respect of the offence, is or has been sentenced to imprisonment for life or for a term of 30 months or more	An indefinite period beginning with the relevant date
A person who, in respect of the offence or finding, is or has been admitted to a hospital subject to a restriction order	An indefinite period beginning with that date
A person who, in respect of the offence, is or has been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of more than 6 months but less than 30 months	10 years beginning with that date
A person who, in respect of the offence, is or has been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of 6 months or less	7 years beginning with that date
A person who, in respect of the offence or finding, is or has been admitted to a hospital without being subject to a restriction order	7 years beginning with that date
A person who is cautioned or given a formal warning by the police	2 years beginning with that date
A person in whose case an order for conditional discharge or, in Scotland, a probation order, is made in respect of the offence	The period of conditional discharge or, in Scotland, the probation period
A person of any other description	5 Years beginning with the relevant date

Figure 2.3 Sexual Offences Notification Periods (Source: Sexual Offences Act 2003 Section 82)

The person convicted of sex offences, must, attend a police station with correct identifying documentation within three days of initial notification, unless they are imprisoned (Sexual Offences Act 2003, S.83(1)). Section 84(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 also requires notification within three days, of any change in personal circumstances. For example, a change in name S.84.1(a) a change in home address lasting longer than seven days S.84.1(b) or release from custody S.84.1(d). Additionally,

the police, in the form of Risk Management Officers (RMO) will conduct an annual verification meeting, where they will visit the offenders home. The punishment for noncompliance to the minimum requirements of the register can be up to 5-years imprisonment (McAlinden, 2007).

The use of ViSOR as a tool to protect the public, has come under considerable criticism and legal challenge. In 2012 there were just over 40,000 people on ViSOR (NSPCC, 2014). Thomas (2008) argues that the register's initial intention to protect has been skewed and that it is in danger of becoming a level of punishment, explaining how measures added to strengthen the register, may have made the whole process of notification too 'onerous' (p. 227). For example, the police can enter the residence of a sex offender at any point, photograph the individual on initial registration, take DNA and note down personal information such as passport or driving licence numbers (Thomas, 2016).

Sex offenders are precluded from some forms of early release from custody⁶, which many general offenders can apply for, because of their sex offender status. Prison Service Order (PSO) 6700 states if a prisoner is subject to registration under the Sex Offenders Act 2003, they are not eligible for consideration of early release, unless the Governor deems there to be exceptional circumstances. This notice falls under 'Risk Assessment' within the PSO and the only other precluded prisoners are those with previous curfew or prison licence breaches and those whose security category is 'A'. Category A prisoners are deemed to be the highest in risk, whose escape from prison must be made almost impossible, as their liberty would put the public at a great risk of harm. It is therefore indicative of the criminal justice systems view that all RSO's are treated the same, alongside the most dangerous criminals in prison, regardless of the nature of the crime, length of sentence or criminal history. This is

⁶ For example, Home Detention Curfew (HDC), more commonly known as tagging. This is where an offender must abide to a curfew order, usually staying at a suitable address between certain hours of the day. This is achieved by the wearing of an electronic monitoring device (tag) worn on the ankle, which relays positional information to a central team.

because of the risks that sex offenders are deemed to pose in the community and also to negate any public furore should such an offender commit a further serious offence when they are on curfew.

The punitive and restrictive nature of ViSOR has been challenged in court, showing a small shift in legal attitude towards the rights of sex offenders. This was evident in the case of *F and Angus Aubrey Thompson v. Secretary of State for Justice* (2008), where subsequently, sex offenders have the right to appeal against the indefinite registry requirement if they are assessed as no longer posing a risk of sexual offending. The offender has to apply for deregistration at their own cost and the process is subjectively complex as Thomas (2012) explains:

In today's risk averse culture, police officers have been put in the front line to make decisions about the 'deregistration' of sex offenders. They would need to avoid being overly cautious and defensive in their decision making and be confident to withstand possible media exposure falling on officers who 'get it wrong' when a former registrant goes on to offend... (p. 283).

Negative implications for the sex offender who is trying to reintegrate successfully are far-reaching. The sex offender label may inhibit reintegration, because employers, housing providers or future partners may be overly cautious about the person with whom they are dealing. Seemingly this view of all sex offenders posing a risk to others, prolongs the journey that the offender has to take towards not only convincing themselves that they can move away from crime, but also convincing others of the same.

The literature surrounding the impact and effect of ViSOR and the sex offender register, has, in the main, been conducted in the US, with few studies being conducted in England and Wales and less being conducted that focus on ViSOR predominantly. Indeed, a study conducted

by O’Sullivan et al. (2016) purports to be the ‘first large-scale study of sex offender registration and notification in the UK’ (p. 89), with a methodology that examined law enforcement perspectives of the usefulness of ViSOR, rather than its effects on the reintegration processes. This study determines how educating communities and policy makers about the risks that people with sex offences pose, is a useful step towards promoting desistance from crime. In other words, the concept is prevention rather than cure. The study highlighted that ViSOR is a useful tool to help the authorities keep track of dangerous offenders, however, awareness of the effectiveness of treatment and management of sex offenders in the community should be increased to help promote positive reintegration (O’Sullivan, 2016).

2.3.2 Child Sex Offender Public Disclosure Scheme

In England and Wales, the public disclosure of information relating to known RSO’s has always been in use on a very limited basis, as the police have the right, in common law (Thompson et al, 2017) to ‘make limited public disclosure of a sex offender’s whereabouts...in exceptional circumstances where there is an immediate danger to the public’ (McAlinden, 2007: 106). Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA⁷) agencies have had the authority to disclose information to the public, especially when dealing with dangerous offenders (Thompson et al, 2017). Furthermore, the Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides further guidance on the necessary disclosure of information to the public based on risk of harm and protection of the public. However, these measures were deemed to be insufficient and after much campaigning, a more in-depth disclosure scheme was piloted in four police forces in 2008. It stemmed from a Home Office publication (2007a) which allows members of the

⁷ Discussed below

public, in respect of a child protection matter, to have information disclosed to them about a named individual if they have child sexual offences and are considered to be a risk. This means that mothers, fathers or any other legal guardians can apply to the police to see whether a person who is in regular unsupervised contact with their child, has any child sexual offences (Home Office, 2010). The initial pilots ran for 12 months and during this period the nature of the access request changed. It was extended from the guardians and carers of children to the inclusion of ‘anyone who had a concern about an individual’ (Home Office, 2010: iii) and this could be made over the phone, not only restricted to a written request.

As previously discussed, this scheme is often referred to as ‘Sarah’s Law’ (Thomas, 2016), linked to the aforementioned name and shame campaigns which called for a similar scheme to ‘Megan’s Law’ in the US in 1997 (Thomas, 2016). However, unlike the US, ‘Sarah’s Law’ is not openly available to the public. Subsequent governments posed the question of its validity and often ruled it out, seemingly on the grounds of human rights and practicality. However, the pilots of 2008 were a major success and breakthrough for the criminal justice system. During the pilot stage, 585 enquiries were made, 315 applications were deemed as relevant and 21 disclosures were made, meaning 3.5% of the applications led to the disclosure of a known sex offender (Lipscombe, 2012). The pilot was further rolled out to 20 more forces in 2010 and is now used in all 43 police forces in the UK (ibid). For the first time the public are given restricted access to previously undisclosed information, upon request.

Little empirical evidence is available to establish the effectiveness of the public disclosure schemes in England and Wales. However, some studies have been conducted in the USA and in Australia. Whitting et al. (2016) conducted 18 interviews with police officers in an Australian State to determine the effect of the (then) newly introduced public disclosure scheme, one similar to that in the UK. The result suggest that the scheme had little impact on the officer’s perceptions of using it as a

method of public protection, or their workload. It also had little impact on the people being investigated, although the potential impact was great, because 6 out of 8 of the cases, the subject was an immediate or close family member. Therefore, had disclosure been appropriated, this could have disrupted the family unit (Whitting et al., 2016). In the USA, Megan's Law has negative effects on the reintegration and lives of registered sex offenders (Levenson et al., 2007). For example, in their study of 239 sex offenders, the participants reported job losses, threats, psychological trauma, fear, shame, effects of their family and physical abuse because of community notification.

McCarten (2013) suggests that the public believe they have the right to know who is a sex offender in their community, they also are unsure about how they would handle such information. For example, the comparative negative community reactions and effects in the USA, show a disclosure scheme freely that is freely available to the public (ibid) with negative effects (Levenson et al., 2007) even though the public may feel safer with this knowledge (Anderson and Sample, 2008). In the UK information is disclosed on a case to case basis, is not widely available on the internet, works for the interest of child protection and should help to limit many of the adverse effects of naming and shaming. Although community disclosure is only an administrative arrangement for the police on the advice and guidance of the Home Office (Thomas, 2016), it demonstrates how UK criminal justice is willing to tighten the restrictions and movement of known sex offenders through the introduction of stricter policies; whilst getting the public involved in the process.

2.3.3 Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements: MAPPA

MAPPA is a form of risk management and assessment which is designed to manage risk, whilst balancing the reintegration needs of the offender to some degree. MAPPA is described by Wood and Kemshall (2010) as:

...a key operational structure charged with the community management of sexual and violent offenders. Through local partnerships underpinned by national statutory guidance and legislation, the arrangements bring together three responsible authorities (police, probation and prisons) and a range of 'duty to cooperate' agencies who are charged with assessing risk and providing responsive risk management plans... (p. 39).

Offenders who fall under the umbrella of MAPPa are a) registered sexual offenders; b) violent and non-registerable sex offenders and c) any other offenders who poses a risk of serious harm to the public (NPS, 2004). The original concept was a development of the close working relationships between police and probation in the 1990's, with it being formally introduced in the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (Wood and Kemshall, 2010). It has three levels of management: Level 1 relates to 'Ordinary Risk Management', for low or medium risk offenders who do not require the involvement of all agencies and where the primary agency involved will usually be the only one dealing with the case. Level 2 relates to 'Local inter-agency risk management' where more than one agency is actively involved with the offender and the development of the risk management plan. Level 3, where the Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPP) is used for the 'critical few' who are deemed to pose the very highest risk of harm to the public. The key partners involved share a joint responsibility in the risk management and assessment of the offenders in the community (Ibid). MAPPa is not a specific authority, as it relies on the cooperation of all the agencies involved and it is they who have the authority in each case (NPS, 2004).

Peck (2011) suggests that MAPPa has been effective in its task to protect the public and to manage offenders. Peck's report states that since MAPPa's introduction in 2001, sexual and violent recidivism amongst its offenders has reduced significantly, especially with offenders who pose the

highest risks. This was similar to the findings expressed in a Home Office report conducted in 2007. This report suggested that those offenders managed at MAPPA levels 2 and 3 reoffended at a rate of 0.44% and that the level of parole and court order breaches had risen. This meant that MAPPA was not only effective in reducing recidivism, but it was also effective in enforcement (Home Office, 2007a). It could, however, show that an increase in parole and court order violations means the risk management plans were not robust enough (Wood and Kemshall, 2010). Additionally, Wood (2012) suggests how those offenders who pose the highest risk of offending will continue to offend regardless of MAPPA being in place. Therefore, MAPPA's influence on the desistance of sex offenders is arguably positive for all but the highest risk offenders, as recidivism is reduced and those who are being supervised have good levels of compliance.

2.3.4 Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPO)

A further measure designed to manage the risk of reoffending that child sex offenders pose in the community is that of the Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO). It is usually used post-sentence, having replaced the Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) in 2015. The SHPO is a civil, rather than a criminal order, and it was introduced along with the Sexual Risk Order (SRO) and is regulated under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.103A. Padfield (2016) further explains the reasons behind the SHPO:

SHPO's can be imposed on someone convicted or cautioned for a relevant offence and who poses a risk of sexual harm to the public in the UK or children or vulnerable adults abroad. It may pose any restriction that the court deems necessary for the purpose of protecting the public from sexual harm...(p. 63).

Furthermore, the use of the SHPO is to tighten the restrictions that some child sex offenders face in the community further in comparison to the SOPO (Padfield, 2016). Its primary concern is to protect the public or particular members of the public from harm (Sexual Offences Act 2003, s.103(2)(b)(i)) and ‘protecting children or vulnerable adults generally, or any particular children or vulnerable adults, from sexual harm from [sex offenders] outside the United Kingdom’ (Sexual Offences Act 2003, s.103(2)(b)(ii)). The order can impose specific public protection measure as a means of public protection for a period of at least five years (s.103C(2)(a)) and may impose a travel ban for no longer than five years (s.103D) although this can be extended in some cases (s.103E). In some respects, this is a form of immobilization in a post-modern era where being mobilised and free is often taken for granted (Pratt, 2015) and where the containment of risky people, where the risk is based on previous behaviour, is encouraged in the name of public safety. However, due to the relatively new introduction of this order, its impact on the reintegration of child sex offenders is unknown, with Padfield (2016) stating:

It is extraordinary that the subject has not had more scrutiny from academic criminologists and lawyers: the extent of post-custodial and post-sentence supervision has not caught the attention of academics as it should have done. Academic criminologists and lawyers have failed to engage policy makers, particularly in underscoring the difficulties faced by sex offenders in their attempts to leave their criminal pasts behind them, especially in the current climate, and in questioning the weight and burdens of disproportionate monitoring. (p. 66).

In addition to the SHPO, some sexual offenders will face other civil orders regulated under the Sexual Offences Act 2003: Foreign Travel Orders (s.104) and Sexual Risk Orders (SRO) (s.122A). These will be applied for on a case by case basis, by the respective police authority.

2.3.5 Surveillance

In addition to civil orders, traditional surveillance methods are used to manage the risks that child sex offenders pose in the community. These include 24hr police surveillance, home visits by designated RMO's who are usually the police, computer and technology checks, ViSOR, the PNC and public disclosure schemes. These tangible, obvious forms of surveillance act as formal control measures and are reminders to the child sex offender of their legal status within the community. Indeed, nearly all people are subjected to some form of surveillance daily in late modernity. CCTV is regarded as a normal part of the modern city, watching the lives of people as a form of public protection. This public surveillance is designed out of the need to watch the few, to protect the many, to ensure social order and control are maintained (Cohen, 1979) and to aid a form of 'policing-at-a-distance' (Coleman and McCahill, 2011: 83). Whilst some people believe that the nature of surveillance is 'impossible to resist' (Marx, 2003: 370) they also accept that it is a legitimate way to govern (ibid). However, individual resistance to the nature of surveillance is building, as technology improves and the understanding of how information is to be used becomes less clear (ibid). Resistance towards surveillance through less tangible means could be expected in any group, especially in a group of child sex offenders.

The management of child sex offenders in the community through surveillance measures is complex and warrants consideration. Leclerc et al. (2011) suggest how prevention, through surveillance is a measure that should be introduced in areas where children congregate. This could be through the employment of managers who understand the nature of child sexual abuse, can look for grooming or risky behaviour, or be a physical presence deterring potential paedophiles. Here prevention is favoured over the risk reintegration and resettlement of child sex offenders, post-offence. Mogavero and Hsu (2017) adopted a situational approach to their study of 114 child sex offenders and established how those offenders who initiated contact where children congregated, were four times more likely to offend

in a secluded spot after a period of grooming. This supports the point of view that Leclerc et al (2011) made above, that preventative methods such as surveillance may help to reduce the opportunity to offend. The surveillance of sex offenders in the community, however, runs further and deeper than tangible elements of CCTV, ViSOR, DNA testing or the aforementioned SHPO. The surveillance of and subsequent social control (Cohen, 1985) of child sex offenders in the community is both panoptic (McAlinden, 2007), where the few watch the many (Foucault, 1977) and synoptic (Mathieson, 1997), 'where the many see the few' (Coleman and McCahill, 2011: 26). For example, the use of ViSOR in England and Wales is panoptic because a few experts monitor the many, however, community notification is synoptic because the many (the community for example) have the potential to watch the few. The nature of formal social controls such as this, means the sex offender knows they are being monitored, but they do not know by whom, when or where (ibid).

2.4 Child Sex Offenders and Stigma

The discussions above assert how criminal justice policy and public perceptions help stigmatise all child sex offenders regardless of the risk they pose. The sex offender label has the potential to change a person's life, including changing their self-image. It is how the offenders internalise this self-image, this stigma, that is of interest to desistance researchers. Society and criminal justice policy has a part to play in the successful reintegration of sex offenders and Braithwaite's (1989) theory of reintegrative and disintegrative shaming, along with McAlinden's (2005; 2006; 2010) link to the shaming of sex offenders is of importance. Braithwaite's theory explains how legal sanctions influence the stigmatisation of the offender, alongside the community, family and peers, which in turn may dissuade or persuade future offending (Braithwaite, 1989). As he explains, the use of shaming is:

...a powerful weapon of social control that can be used for good or ill...communities which maintain bonds of respect throughout the shaming process are those most likely to tolerate [others]... (p. 184).

Disintegrative shaming applies when a person is not able to access the appropriate opportunities to reintegrate in society (Robbers, 2009) and where labels are applied to the offender which acts to name, shame and stigmatise (Silverman, 2003). Rather than labelling the offence as wrong, the label is applied to the offender who may be viewed as in need of treatment or beyond help. Braithwaite (1989) clarifies this point further:

Disintegrative shaming (stigmatization)...divides the community by creating a class of outcasts. Much effort is directed at labelling deviance, while little attention is paid to de-labelling, to signifying forgiveness and reintegration, to ensuring that the deviance label is applied to the behaviour rather than the person... (p. 55).

In relation to child sex offenders, the use of ViSOR or other State led risk management approaches may impede successful reintegration because of stigmatisation (McAlinden, 2010), possibly leading the offender to go underground or committing further offences (McAlinden, 2005). Therefore, the States punitive responses to sex crimes are disintegrative in nature, as they are aimed towards exclusion from society (Spencer and Deakin, 2004). Child sex offenders often need to develop relevant social capital to aid reintegration (Laub and Sampson, 2003) and this may be easier to achieve if legal and social responses to sexual crimes were more reintegrative in nature.

Reintegrative shaming therefore contrasts to disintegration (Braithwaite, 1989), as it acts to include offenders rather than stigmatise and exclude. In other words, it ‘reinforces an offenders membership in civil society’ (McAlinden, 2010: 137). It does not involve shaming the offender, but rather the act. Support networks created through restorative practices help offenders to reintegrate, knowing they have help and assistance, should they need it:

Reintegrative shaming means that expressions of community disapproval, which may range from mild rebuke to degradation ceremonies, are followed by gestures of reacceptance into the community of law-abiding citizens. These gestures of reacceptance will vary from a simple smile expressing forgiveness and love to quite formal ceremonies to decertify the offender as deviant. (Braithwaite, 1989: 55).

This is important, especially for child sex offenders, as many of them believe they must start from scratch, post-sentence or post-release from prison (Crawley and Sparks, 2006). Whether ceremonies aimed at decertifying the offender as a deviant may not be appropriate the idea of a reintegrative and harm preventing practice may be a start towards some form of community tolerance of released sex offenders. For example, the use of COSA as a means of support for sex offenders and the reintegrative nature of the language as they use ‘core member’ instead of ‘offender’ as a means to remove stigma and labelling.

Tewksbury (2012) studied 24 sex offenders who were approaching release from prison in the US to establish whether they felt they would be or were ‘socially stigmatized’ (p. 606). Using an in-depth interview method, his findings suggest that the participants understood the nature of stigmatisation and that they would be the ‘recipients’ (p. 611) of such a label. However, a further finding of his study suggests the participants did not internalise this stigma. Instead, the

participants expressed the difference between others' perceptions of them were different to how they perceived themselves, whilst acknowledging the stigma being placed upon them. In short, they knew they were stigmatised but did not accept the label as who they were. Furthermore, the study established that the participants felt they would have no opportunities to reintegrate fully whilst in the community, with one participant (Jackson) poignantly stating "I'm not a citizen, I'm a sex offender" (Tewksbury, 2012: 612).

In a similar vein to the labelling of sex offenders, Uggen et al. (2004) posit how non-sex offenders often lose the basic rights of citizenship:

...the enduring stigma of a felony conviction imposes restrictions on parental rights, work opportunities, housing choices and a myriad of other social relationships, isolating ex-felons from their communities and fellow citizens. In short, both the *rights* and *capacities* of ex-offenders to attain full citizenship are threatened [italics in original]. (p. 260).

The comparison to Tewksbury (2012) is therefore noted, as seemingly sex offenders and non-sex offenders lose their sense of citizenship, whilst struggling with resettlement and reintegration, although arguably not to the same extent as each another. Vandiver et al's (2008) study of female sex offenders concluded that stigmatisation had a negative effect on their sample, especially in relation to housing and the making of and maintenance of relationships. Willis et al. (2010) further suggest that the public's opinion of sex offenders is low and promotion of desistance within this group is linked to suitable housing, jobs and relationships. Identity management therefore becomes an important aspect of a sex offender's life in the community, as a means to control the stigmatisation experienced. One study conducted by Evans and Cubellis (2015) established that

sex offenders used different techniques to help conceal, manage or protect their identity. The methods ranged from honesty, used for situations where they must disclose their identity: job applications, new relationships, registration etc; to concealment, where the RSO will avoid disclosure of their offending to those who do not need to know; through to denial, where the RSO will not accept the label that ‘society has ascribed to them’ (ibid: 610).

2.5 Child Sex Offenders and Desistance from Crime

In the traditional sense, criminology has primarily focussed on the onset of offending behaviour, rather than its end. The development of desistance theory and the ongoing research, hopes to provide further knowledge regarding the termination of criminal behaviour (Shover and Thompson, 1992). There is some debate over the true definition of desistance (McNeill et al., 2011) but is often defined as a period of offending which has come to an end (Shover and Thompson, 1992; Bottoms et al., 2004; Farrall and Calverley, 2006), where this abstinence should be regarded as long term (McNeill et al., 2012) and where the criminals are regarded as ‘habitual’ rather than ‘one-off’ (Farrall et al., 2010: 547). Desistance is not an ‘observable event’ (Rocque et al., 2017: 184), rather it is the ‘absence of offending’ (ibid), and the maintenance of such behaviour that matters (Maruna, 2001).

Shaw (1930) was arguably one of the first scholars to study this phenomenon in his book *The Jack Roller*. His subject, Stanley, was a delinquent from the Chicago area and Shaw developed a life history documentation to help understand the path that Stanley had travelled. After spending time offending, in prison and on the streets, the themes of support, love, employment, marriage and the removal of peer influences helped contribute to Stanley’s journey away from crime. Further interest in desistance emerged due to some unexpected results from influential, long term

studies. The 1953 Philadelphia Birth Cohort study (Wolfgang et al., 1987) and the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development which commenced in 1961 (Farrington, 1990) were initially concerned with the criminal career⁸. However, they established how most of the people studied almost ceased offending by young adulthood. The studies were expected to follow the behaviour of criminals over the life course, instead the researchers were left explaining why only a small number of men continued with crime. This helped to establish desistance as a subfield of study and warranted further, in-depth exploration and explanation (Maruna, 2001; Farrall and Calverley, 2006; McNeill and Weaver, 2010). To accomplish this, researchers have studied the often-complicated lives of ex-drug users (Schroeder et al., 2007), female street offenders (Sommers et al., 1994), ethnic minorities (Calverley, 2012) and young adult men (Bottoms and Shapland, 2011). Criminal behaviour is varied and diverse and no two cases are alike. Where many criminals begin delinquent⁹ behaviour in childhood and their formative years (Laub and Sampson, 2003), some continue through to their young adulthood and beyond, whilst many do not. Therefore, because of the severe consequences often associated with criminal activity¹⁰, the study of desistance is just as interesting due to this diversity.

Although this variety in desistance research covers many aspects of offending, Farrall and Calverley (2006) surmised how ‘most of the literature on sex offenders details the various intervention programmes run by probation services and prisons and their outcomes,’ (p. 8) paying little attention to their desistance processes, focusing primarily on the onset of sexualised offending (Cowburn, 2010). In 2013, Maruna stated in a personal communication that sex offending was

⁸ This is the onset of crime, how criminals commit crime, effects of punishment and tracking offending across the life course.

⁹ This is usually regarded as criminal or antisocial behaviour.

¹⁰ For example, a criminal record, imprisonment, addiction, bad peer influences, lack of schooling, no employment. These consequences may promote further criminal behaviour, which in turn may make the path away from crime harder to achieve (Maruna, 2001).

therefore the ‘next frontier of desistance research.’ Despite this, research considering the desistance of sex offenders remains largely under-studied with a major proportion of studies excluding these offenders altogether (McAlinden et al., 2016). Indeed, the research conducted into child sex offender desistance is even scarcer. However, there are an emerging pocket of researchers intending to bridge gaps in knowledge and highlight the processes of desistance within this offending group (ibid). Empirical, primary projects remain rare, especially with an England and Wales cohort because child sex abuse is a sensitive topic and the offenders are a hard to find group, making research difficult to design (Davies et al., 2011). The ethical issues involved are often hard to negotiate due, in part, to potential distress on the participants and the interviewer, along with the potential implications of disclosure of unknown offences (Cowburn, 2005; 2010).

One of the first and most influential reports specifically on sex offender desistance was conducted by Kruttschnitt et al. (2000). They further emphasised how little was known about sex offender desistance, with criminal justice policies being developed ‘without the benefit of theoretical insights or sound empirical evaluation’ (Kruttschnitt et al., 2000: 66). This study utilised a retrospective approach to the design, examining the probation records and criminal history of 556 sex offenders between 1992 and 1997 from Minnesota, USA. Most of the offenders were male and 66% of them had offended against a child under the age of 15, with 36% having offended against a family member. This study was significantly important because it highlighted how formal social controls, probation supervision for example and informal social controls, such as employment, effect sex offender recidivism. They concluded how those who were in court ordered sex offender treatment, with stable job histories were less likely to commit further offences in the future. Positing further how marital status ‘exert[ed] virtually no effect’ (ibid: 80). In all, they established how most sex offenders placed on probation were likely to desist from crime and

those who ‘experience the combined effects of both formal and informal social controls are particularly likely to desist’ (ibid: 84).

Booxbaum and Burton (2013) presented results from a pilot study on the cessation of child sexual abuse, self-reported by a cohort of 109 men. The report focussed on methods adopted by the men before they were arrested and it was established that 70% of the men had ‘attempted to stop, decrease, or slow down their sexual offending prior to arrest’ (ibid: 60). In the main, the men adopted avoidance strategies along with attempts to keep busy and make the most of their spare time, without the use of OBP’s or formal social controls. Desistance therefore, is a process which incorporates many different elements, with each path towards crime cessation being very different for each offender. In comparison, McAlinden et al’s (2016) empirical study of 32 child sex offenders established these differences further. The results suggested how their participants desistance journey was supported by relationships, employment and identity change, but this process was different in comparison to non-sex offenders.

It is the combination of a variety of elements that appear to be important when discussing the processes of desistance. Studies have examined the effects of age¹¹ (Moffitt, 1993; Laub and Sampson, 2003), formal and informal social controls¹² (Meisenhelder, 1977; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Forrest and Hay, 2011) and human agency¹³ (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al., 2002; King, 2013a) and it is clear how they interlink with one another at some point in an offender’s life. Below is an examination of the literature discussing these elements and the relation to the desistance of child sex offenders.

¹¹ Referred to as ontogenetic explanations

¹² Referred to as sociogenic explanations

¹³ Referred to as agentic explanations

2.5.1 Aging

In the general sense, most offenders age out of crime in their late teens and early adulthood, with only a small number continuing this behaviour into late adulthood and with even less continuing over the entire life course (Moffitt, 1993). In other words, the older a person gets the less likely they are to engage in criminal behaviour. Age related explanations of desistance can be linked to the works of Quetelet in 1833 (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Maruna, 2001) who argued how criminal propensity diminishes with age because of the aging body and lack of will. Aging is therefore normative and naturally will lead to a reduction in crime, over time (Laub and Sampson, 2003; McNeill and Weaver, 2010). Therefore, the age-crime curve is a well-established phenomenon that is ‘at once the most robust and least understood empirical observation in the field of criminology’ (Moffitt, 1993: 675). Figure 2.1 shows an age crime curve taken from a cross section of offenders for recorded offences in 2000:

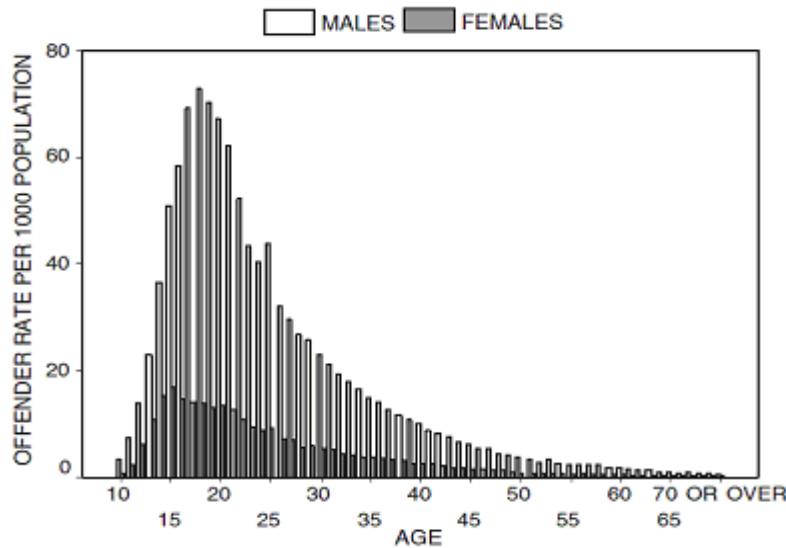


Figure 2.1: Recorded Offender Rates per 1,000 Relevant Population by Age-Year and Sex, England and Wales, 2000.

(Bottoms, et al. 2004: 370).

The significance for desistance is how the age-crime curve demonstrates, with age that most people commit fewer offences. It is well established how the criminal activity of most delinquent's peaks at the age of about 15 – 17 (Hirschi, 1969; Moffitt, 1993) and criminal activity continues to sharply decline thereafter (Bottoms and Shapland, 2011). Although this is not to say that age is the only feature of desistance, it is nevertheless a feature and it is defined as 'the only factor which emerges as significant in the reformation process' (Glueck and Glueck, 1940: 105, cited in Maruna, 2001: 28). It is the one true constant of nearly all groups of criminals, with the exceptions of high rate chronic and late onset offenders (Laub and Sampson, 2003) and those offenders whose offending is far more entrenched than others (Gadd and Farrall, 2004).

Even though desistance and the reasons behind it are unique to each offender, the literature suggests that the age-crime curve seems to be fairly stable, especially over a large-scale data set (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). This macro level approach to the age crime phenomenon does however hide micro level disparities with sub-groups of offenders. Figure 2.2 below shows the age distribution from a USA sample of rapists, extra-familial child molesters¹⁴ and incestual offenders in 2002 (Hanson, 2002):

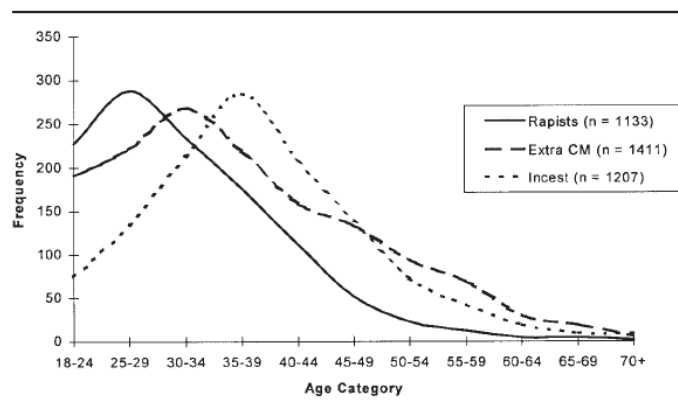


Figure 2.2: Age-Crime Curve of Rapists, Child Molesters and Incestual Offenders from a USA Sample. (Hanson, 2002: 1053).

¹⁴ Those who commit sex offences against children, who are not related to the victim.

It clearly demonstrates how sub types of sex offender's start offending (Lussier et al., 2010) and desisting at different points in their lives, over time. The literature surrounding the desistance of child sex offenders suggests how the public believe that 'nothing works' (Mancini and Budd, 2015: 2) and that policy should be aimed towards a 'get tough' approach (ibid). However, the above figures, when placed in comparison, illustrate how, like all general crime, child sex offenders' recidivate less when they get older. What is notable from this one study is how the onset of sexual offending differs across offending types, with sexual offences against children peaking at a later stage than both general offending and rapists. Hanson (2002) suggests that rapist's peak earlier in this behaviour, because of the anti-social nature usually associated therein, whereas abusers of children may have more opportunity to access children in the family as time passes.

Laws and Ward (2011) agree with the concept that recidivism in child sex offenders lessens, over time, in a similar way 'that has been observed in criminological investigations for decades' (p. 95). If this is so, then specific empirical studies should afford similar conclusions. A study reviewing sexual recidivism of 542 male sex offenders in Canada, aged 50 or over concluded how sexual recidivism reduced with age and this was indicative across all risk management levels (Nicholaichuk et al., 2013). A similar project conducted by Rice and Harris (2014) on 533 USA sex offenders, aged 50 at the time of release from prison suggested age was not as significant as offending onset. Indeed, Nicholaichuk et al. (2013) also established how the younger a person starts sexually offending, the more likely they are to continue, concluding this was because of still-present anti-social behaviours and beliefs developed at early ages. These two studies suggest how age is related to the recidivism rates of sexual offenders in general, either through the onset of offending or the younger a person is released from prison, and do not consider specifically child sex offenders.

One study to break-down data into offence type is Hanson's (2002) evaluation of sex offender recidivism. Using a follow-up sample of 4,673 sex offenders, he concluded that recidivism decreased with age in child sex offenders, but it was not the only factor. Age was linked to opportunity and self-control or sexual drive, and those people who abused children in the home could do so because of the increased opportunity but were unlikely to maintain this behaviour because of natural declines in sex drive. This connection between sexual arousal and sexual offending was also established in Blanchard and Barbaree (2005) examination of 2,028 patients who had shown deviant sexual behaviour. They established that not only did sexual arousal diminish with age in their cohort of paedophiles¹⁵, hebephiles¹⁶ and teleiophiles¹⁷, but testosterone levels did also. Similarly, Maruna (2001) argues that there is a correlation between testosterone and crime because the physical strength of men peaks at around the age of 30. Testosterone levels then fall, but not at the same rate as seen in the age-crime curves. This suggests the aging body argument does not sufficiently explain the causal factor of desistance:

Of course, the age-crime relationship apparent in official records...does not itself prove that offenders mature out of criminal behaviour. For instance, as offenders age, they may simply become more adept at not getting caught by the police, or else they just spend more time incarcerated (and therefore not getting arrested). Alternatively, older offenders may simply slow down their offending to a level at which they are rarely apprehended or move into a less risky type of criminal activity, such as white-collar offending. (ibid: 20).

¹⁵ People who are sexually attracted to pre-pubescent children.

¹⁶ People who are sexually attracted to pubescent children

¹⁷ People who are most sexually attracted to physically mature people (Blanchard and Barbaree, 2005).

He therefore contends how age does ‘explain some portion’ (ibid) of the relationship but not all of it. Although his study was not specific to sex offenders, it serves as a good comparison to the literature that is specific to child sex offenders.

Aging is the analytical element of the age crime curve and it does not refer in detail to the social influences on criminal behaviour. Doran (2006) highlighted this as a factor prevalent in many studies¹⁸ linking age to recidivism. His conclusions suggested that there was no given sex offender typology that can be attributable to age. Simply put, he stated that age alone only determined the ‘probability’ of recidivism (Laws and Ward, 2011: 91) and was not the sole cause, because some older people may sexually offend, and some may not. The ambiguity in these findings highlighted how more research was needed to help establish links between age and recidivism, especially within a child sex offender cohort. However, social explanations for desistance, posited by Trasler (1980)¹⁹ for example, are argued as having no influence in the reduction of crime, with some factors (employment for example) raising the rates of recidivism (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). Therefore, as a person ages, the opportunity to commit crime lessens, but the propensity may not (McNeil et al., 2012) and this propensity remains a stable trait throughout the life course, regardless of any factor (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Criminality, from this perspective, is a person’s predisposition to commit crime regardless of social influences (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990) and desistance is not linked to external influences (McNeill and Weaver, 2010).

¹⁸ Some of which are discussed above

¹⁹ Trasler (1980: 11-12) lists ‘sources of achievement and social satisfaction that lead to a decline [in criminal behaviour] ... a job, a girlfriend, a wife, a home and eventually children.’

Although aging may be a factor in the reformatory process, it is therefore controversial to claim that it is solely responsible. For example, Neugarten et al. (1965) explained how aging is a process endured by all people and at certain ages, milestones are reached and reacted to:

Expectations regarding age-appropriate behaviour form an elaborated and pervasive system of norms governing behaviour and interaction, a network of expectations that is imbedded throughout the cultural fabric of adult life. There exists what might be called a prescriptive timetable for the ordering of major life events: a time in the life span when men and women are expected to marry, a time to raise children, a time to retire. (p. 711).

Life paths are determined by more than just the aging process and because life is complex (Neugarten et al., 1965) the desistance journey is not linear or prescribed (Meisenhelder, 1977). Successful desisters often have various social factors influencing and bonding them to conventional social order (ibid). In Harris' (2014) study of 21 child sex offenders, the participants who were deemed to be desisting rarely attributed this to their age. The three men who did desist naturally due to age were arguably the most complex and had followed the longest offending journey. They stated how they had moved away from drink or drugs, were grandparents or were increasingly 'tired' (Harris, 2014: 13) and being 'too old' to continue was linked with a change in a personal perspective (ibid) over time. This shift in outlook could be a simple relational comparison between the risks of continued offending and the consequential losses associated therein (Shover, 1983). It is true that the desistance of child sex offenders could be natural and associated with age, regardless of any 'formal assistance' (Harris, 2014: 21) or informal assistance (Laub and Sampson, 2003) but this 'almost too-good-to-be-true' view (Laws and Ward, 2011: 39)

is questionably too linear and one-sided to satisfy desistance theorists (McNeill and Weaver, 2010).

2.5.2 Social Factors

The discussion on the aging/desistance relationships above, alludes to how age is not generally accepted as a cause of crime reduction in isolation and so there must be other factors involved. Social explanations of desistance are cited as one of these factors (Maruna, 2001; Laub and Sampson, 2003; McNeill and Weaver, 2010; Walker et al., 2017), reiterating the connections between society, criminal behaviour, crime termination and linking closely to social control theory and social bonds (Farrington, 1992). A person creates societal bonds usually through marriage, employment, education or family and the larger their stake, the more they could lose and the less likely they are to risk this loss through further offending (McNeill and Weaver, 2010). Strong predictors of desistance, can be established in employment history and family formation (Laub and Sampson, 2003) and these elements are linked to maturational reform (Matza, 1964). These are normal social influences occurring over time and can help offenders to conform (Gove, 1985) especially because ‘the stronger the social ties, the tighter the social control’ (Laub, 2006: 242). In comparison, delinquents are believed to initiate criminal activity, in part, because their bonds to society are weaker due to young age (Matza, 1964; Hirschi, 1969) and they have not gained sufficient social-capital to risk losing. Desistance is therefore dependant on how a person interprets their needs and priorities in life (McNeill and Weaver, 2010) and is therefore subjective to that person, as motivations to conform will differ in each case. This section will discuss social factors discussed in the traditional desistance literature and how this relates to what is known about child sex offender desistance.

a) Marriage

One of the major turning points in any person's life is the establishment of a stable relationship, which may ultimately lead towards marriage. Marriage can be viewed as a high point in a person's life with divorce being a low point (McAlinden et al., 2016). Literature shows how marriage has become one of the most consistent aspects in determining or influencing desistance (Farrall and Calverley, 2006). The 'empirical links between marriage and the abandonment of crime are widely known' (Forrest and Hay, 2011: 489), as long as it is assumed that this is a healthy and supportive relationship (Laub et al., 1998). The quality of the marriage helps to inhibit crime over the course of time, especially amongst men (Laub et al., 1998; Warr, 1998; Laub and Sampson, 2003) and it should not be entered into lightly (Laub and Sampson, 2003). It should be nurtured and loved, making the person's bond to the institution strong. This in turn makes it harder for the person to want to lose the good marriage, as this strong bond makes the risks of further criminal behaviour seem like a poor choice. Successful marriage is determined as one where the spouse is under pressure to limit or even 'curtail' his links with delinquent friends from relationships which may have been formed before the marriage (Warr, 1998: 208). If the marriage is stressful, this may put strain on the bond and may have the opposite effect, where the would-be offender continues to mix with people who may put them at risk of further offending (Warr, 1998).

In 1983, Shover studied 36 property offenders. Relationships that had little meaning exerted virtually no effect on their criminal activity. However, if the relationship was 'mutually satisfying' (Shover, 1983: 219), more importance was placed on the marriage and this acted as a greater social control (Farrall and Calverley, 2006). Marriage can be described as having different causal mechanisms in comparison to non-marital relationships, especially as the attachment to the relationship grows stronger. The risk of going to prison, for example, may seem like a less

attractive proposition, especially because of the negative impact it may have on the family unit (Shover and Thompson, 1992). In addition to this, marriage can promote desistance if it holds meaning for the offender and is relevant towards their goal of exiting crime (Meisenhelder, 1977). However, this aspect is inherently subjective and cultural in nature. For example, the hope and expectations of finding a suitable wife in a British Bangladeshi community can help to improve the parent-offender bond, possibly due to a common experience of finding a spouse in a 'shared project' (Calverley, 2013: 99). This links heritage, culture and society together through the vehicle that is marriage and the meaning behind it is held by the offender, the parents and the family.

Marriage and relationship formation for people with paedophilic ideals may, in the view of Farmer et al. (2012) lack the bonds of 'communion...love, friendship, reciprocal dialog or communication, and a sense of unity or togetherness' (p. 933) to make the relationship work.

Communion may be an important concept in terms of sexual offenders' problems, given the problematic nature of relationships that this group has, particularly as it is commonly noted in paedophilic child molesters that they have an inability to form age-appropriate relationships (ibid).

Family relationships and communion, may have been significantly harmed if the offender has offended against a family member or has been deceiving the family about the nature of their offending. Therefore, child sex offenders pose a problem as to how they are to rebuild relationships, ones that are not only appropriate but also within the realms of trust and decency.

In the traditional sense however, marriage denotes a transition to adulthood, and it is the 'getting serious' part of an offender's life (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 43). On the other hand,

Knight et al. (1977) suggested that getting married ‘did not reduce delinquency’ (p. 98) because it only helped remove people from influential, criminal factors such as alcohol, drug use and peers. The marital-crime link has therefore been contested by some and does not always reduce crime, because of the effects of self-control and free will (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Laub and Sampson, 2003). Kruttschnitt et al. (2000) established how marital status had almost no effect on sex offender recidivism. Instead, they determined how ‘spouses who remain in unions with convicted sex offenders, certainly demonstrate marital commitment and informal social control’ (p. 80). The literature suggests how the link can be accurately established between marriage and sexual offenders, because the quality of the relationships are hard to determine (Kruttschnitt et al., 2000). Not only is this a factor, but child sex offenders often offend within the family unit resulting in the loss of marriage, ultimately becoming a negative turning point in the offender’s life (McAlinden et al., 2016). More recently, Walker et al. (2017) determined that the very nature of sexual offending makes the formation of new and meaningful bonds outside of a pre-existing family unit, assuming there is one, difficult. For this reason, they concluded there was no defined link between marriage and desistance from sex offending against children or women, a viewpoint shared by Lussier and McCuish (2016).

b) Parenthood

The link between marriage and desistance is often poignant if the offender has a child to care for (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Some literature suggests how the effects of becoming a parent positively promote the onset and maintenance of crime free behaviour (Trasler, 1979; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Farrall and Calverley, 2006). The view of parenthood is similar to marriage because it is an investment, for example saving up to buy children’s clothes and protecting their

future through legitimate means, and it comes with a change of routine (Laub and Sampson, 2003). As the child goes to school, the offender may mix in different social circles and behave accordingly. MacDonald et al. (2011) explain how ‘usually unplanned’ (p. 143) fatherhood promotes desistance, meaning therefore that it could be a causal effect of marriage and parenthood, leading to a change in the worldview of the offender. However, Mulvey and Aber, (1988) and Rand (1987) (both cited in Farrall and Bowling, 1999) established that parenthood exerted little or no effect on the desistance process. In this literature, parenthood was limited as a topic and similarly within current literature, most links are an apparent addendum to the primary research of marriage (Farrall and Bowling, 1999; Laub and Sampson, 1993; 2003; Farrall and Calverley, 2006; MacDonald et al., 2011). Massoglia and Uggen (2010) expressed how parenthood easily compares to marriage in terms of institutional structure, as the two are significant adult roles, where it is often inappropriate in society for parents to act in ways that are of bad influence on the child. The need to be a good parent is linked to desistance from crime in the view of Craig (2014), who studied the effects of becoming a parent in the context of marriage.

The literature on the effects of parenthood and its links to the desistance of child sex offenders is scarce. For example, one of the few desistance studies to examine this area is by Harris (2014). Her study on child sex offender desistance highlighted how some of her participants were fathers but were not allowed to, or did not want to, have contact with their children due to the nature of their offences. It is here where child protection and parental rights conflict with one another. This juxtaposition is a reality of the imposition of risk management to reduce the risks of further offending, even if the child was never a victim and/or the offender was presumed to be desisting (Harris, 2014). Such policy often offers no consideration to the needs of fathers with child sexual offences nor what the impact on the child will be (Kilmer and Leon, 2017). This is

regardless of whether the child in question was a victim and regardless of the severity of the original conviction. In their study, Kilmer and Leon (2017) gained the views of family members of RSO's on the impact of registration and parenthood. They established that the impact was great and was felt by themselves, the RSO and the children. These effects were stigmatisation, isolation, financial burden, stress, housing and employment problems and weakened familial bonds. Therefore, sex offenders pose a problem as to how they are to rebuild family relationships, ones that are not only appropriate but also within the realms of trust and decency. Exactly how the relationship is changed for sex offenders, post sentence is a key question for this thesis.

c) Employment

For many offenders, the process of moving away from crime comes with many barriers, which are often a direct result of their offending behaviour with finding suitable employment a good example. Employment has the potential to create a strong societal link for the offender, therefore promoting desistance because it gives them a stake towards conformity (Laub and Sampson, 2003). This is a process which has significant similarities to that of marriage. The precise causal links of employment and desistance are yet to be fully determined (Farrall and Calverley, 2006), but it is again another important aspect for those who want to appreciate the mechanisms involved in desistance. Laws and Ward (2011) expressed how difficult it can be for some offenders to find jobs, given the nature of their upbringing, the social climate, drug use, alcohol use and peers. Arguably therefore, work is important because it helps to break these negative, offending promoting ties. Meisenhelder (1977) believed that job acquisition for the ex-offender was part of the exiting process. He explained how the participants in his study placed a great amount of importance on gaining employment:

Success [desistance] was more probable if the individual was able to acquire an occupational position that he defined as subjectively meaningful, economically rewarding, and indicative of some career potential...The realization of a good job provided these men with important economic and social resources. (ibid: 40).

For some of his participants, there was no need to engage in criminal activity, as they had the money to buy what they wanted. Realistically however, the criminal who has been released from prison, may find it hard to gain meaningful employment and may return quickly to crime. For example, Shover and Thompson (1992) indicated that a person who had been offending for many years may find it hard to work a 40-hour week, to live a legitimate life and may have to obtain menial employment to achieve desistance. The expected goals and achievements of an offender reduce, and menial work becomes more of an acceptable option, because of the consequences of their offending. These expectations differ to their goals resulting in how a person's participation in crime continues or refrains depending on the severity of the consequences of their actions. Shover (1983) asserts it was 'too late' (p. 215) for some ex-offenders to find meaningful employment as a way to exit crime, as they deemed themselves to be too old. For others, the workplace becomes more than a job and allows the person to form 'positive interpersonal relationships with conventional others' (Meisenhelder, 1977: 327) and the bonds formed here, help to strengthen social order.

Just as unemployment is linked to crime (Farrington et al., 1986) and crime affects employability (Farrall et al., 2010), the social processes of trying to start again (Meisenhelder, 1977) and become an adult (Farrall et al., 2010) mean lengthy periods of social exclusion and disappointment for those trying to desist (ibid). What this means in terms of desistance is how society can readily exclude offenders, some of whom are making legitimate efforts to try and be

included. However, in an ever-changing employment market that has seen the decline of manual, unskilled labour and an increase in the need for employees to have qualifications, offenders often become marginalised because of gaps in their employability (ibid). If an offender can overcome the stigma attached with their offending (Goffman, 1963) and gain a job, this may not fully explain the reduction in crime over the passage of time.

The above argument points mainly to the effects of offending behaviour and the ability of the offender to gain employment, post-conviction. The literature pertaining to the desistance of child sex offenders is suggestive of slightly different employment/offending mechanisms within this cohort. For example, Harris (2014) proclaimed how some child sex offenders have already had previous employment, losing their jobs due to criminal activity, finding it hard to regain employment due to their criminal records. Of her sample, 71.4% were employed at the point of arrest, however after conviction and at the time of interview 48% of her participants were retired or disabled with the remaining 52% expressing how difficult it was to search for or find a suitable job (Harris, 2014). Kruttschnitt et al's. (2000) study did not provide accurate figures of employment status, before and after conviction, instead they determined how those sex offenders with previous stable job histories were less likely to reoffend, especially if they were taking part in an OBP. Generalised views of offenders are that they are often under skilled, from deprived areas and backgrounds with lengthy criminal histories (Farrall et al., 2010). In contrast to this most of Harris' sample were relatively skilled, well trained and had stable jobs prior to conviction. In further contrast to their previous vocations, only three of the participants were in work, and this was of a part-time nature, referred to as being unskilled (Harris, 2014). Harris' study highlights how employment is difficult for child sex offenders to gain, post-conviction, whilst questioning

the relevance of finding meaningful employment as an aid to desistance (Laub and Sampson, 2003) within this cohort.

Having a career, or a work history appears to be of importance for sex offenders and more importantly, child sex offenders. McAlinden et al's. (2016) study of 32 child sex offenders explained how employment was often at the heart of the participant's narratives:

Many of the desisting sample described gaining some particular stage of employment as a "high point" in their lives, and several defined themselves almost exclusively in terms of their work lives. Typical responses included: "Work ... was a foundation and it's still a foundation to my life, my whole life" [A1] and "I live for work and work lives for me" (A2). (p.10).

Furthermore, the participants who were apparently desisting from crime, expressed how they worked prior to and during their offending behaviour. They lost their jobs because of their behaviour and employment was not deemed to be a factor that had a positive contribution to their apparent desistance (McAlinden, et al., 2016). This reinforces the view that employment may not be linked to desistance in child sex offenders, because the chances of being re-employed are significantly reduced, due to their offending. This is a point that is also supported in the general desistance literature concerning non-sex offenders (Roque, 2014).

2.5.4 The Criminal Justice System: Prison and Probation

A further link towards desistance in crime is the effect of the criminal justice system, with emphasis on the effects of prison and probation. Shover and Thompson (1992) suggest that

‘success at criminal pursuits strengthens commitment to criminal others and criminal lines of action and erodes the perceived formal risk of crime’ (p.90) where the formal risk is imprisonment, or community punishment. It is assumed for most offenders, a life of crime is only met with ‘penury interspersed with modest, quickly depleted criminal gains and repeated imprisonment’ (Shover and Thompson, 1992: 91). The stigma of being a former offender, especially on those who have been in prison, hinders the desistance process because formal social bonds are harder to create, as Maruna (2001) explains:

...once a person finds him or herself on the wrong side of that line, the bogeyman stigma is likely to persist even when deviant behaviours do not. Ambiguous labels such as “criminal” or “thief” connote both what a person is likely to do in the future... (p.5)

For Maruna, it serves as a further hindrance to effective desistance.

Meisenholder (1977) established how the fear of further criminal sanctions would promote desistance, as these sanctions would often be increased as offending continued and the resulting effects would hinder goals of leading a normal life. He concluded how continued effects of imprisonment make it harder to assume a legitimate identity, by not returning to prison they could achieve this. Punishment, such as prison, is therefore thought to be a major factor in the desistance process. It is linked strongly towards stigmatisation and can effectively cut many of the pro social ties, bonding people to society. Indeed, Laws and Ward (2011) conclude that the criminal justice system is a deterrent from further criminal activity and once a person is in the system, desistance from crime is made more difficult.

Prison is reported within desistance literature, as a major life-event, one which can alter a person’s perception of the self as a prisoner/offender (Gobbels et al., 2012), especially if they have

not thought of this before. It was discussed earlier how some child sex offenders do not follow the common criminogenic paths as so-called street offenders²⁰ (Farmer et al., 2012). Their conviction history may be brief, and they may mix with other offenders for the first time. Ultimately, this could a conflict of identity as past failures are reflected upon and a period of self-evaluation and possible identity change (Gobbels et al., 2012). Here, in theory, desistance could be facilitated as the offender adapts to their new identity and position in society, one that they want to reject and avoid in the future. In contrast, Collins and Nee (2009) suggest that the punitive and segregated environment within a prison, mixed with confrontation (Laws and Ward, 2011) and the criminal identity (Gobbels et al., 2012) may have a negative effect on desistance. The overall environment of the prison is therefore deemed to be a significant factor on potential recidivism, especially within a sex offender cohort (Blagden et al., 2017). The literature on prisons, desistance and child sex offenders is primarily linked to the effectiveness of OBP's and not on the impact of prison on the person; a significant gap that would benefit from future research.

Prison is not the only element of punishment inflicted upon would-be desisters, offender supervision also plays a significant role within the criminal justice system. Studies (Farrall, 2002, for example) have shown how probation came out as the least significant in a number of factors, in terms of offender desistance. McNeill and Weaver (2010) suggest how the public protection nature of offender management and the reintegrative principles of the desistance approach, may conflict with one another, especially when dealing with the most serious offenders. Furthermore, McNeill and Weaver (2010) appeal for a dual-purpose approach to probation supervision: suitable punishment and restrictions, followed by a desistance approach which is not counter-productive to the risk management model. In doing this, awareness of the desistance process and how it is linked

²⁰ Burglary, robbery shop-theft for example.

to probation could be achieved. McNeill and Farrall (2013) take this a step further and hypothesize how basic morals and virtues²¹ should be instilled within the practice of the National Probation Service (NPS).

The positive factors of leading a morally strong and virtuous life should be promoted and instilled with the offender, leading them to question the legitimacy of crime and criminal behaviour. Offender Manager's (OM) who do this, whilst helping and supporting offender's needs, often have success with their supervisees. This marks a shift away from the risk management model and it incorporates a holistic approach to managing offenders in the community. Indeed, Hanson et al. (2007) supported this idea and linked it to a dynamic approach to risk management and assessment, taking each offender on a case by case basis rather than one based on heterogeneity. King (2013a) expressed how positive testimony from OM's about those in their supervision can help to cement the early stages of desistance. This is because this can help the offender move away from a negative identity and give them self-belief to succeed. In his study of 20 offenders under the supervision of the probation service, King (2013b) concluded that the development of new non-offending identities was very important in these early stages. The OM's use of motivational supervision, developing a person's confidence to live life responsibly and with autonomy, rather than an over reliance on structural factors to aid desistance, such as employment and relationships, was a key aspect of his findings (ibid). Unfortunately, his study did not focus on sexual offenders, with only 20% of the participants having some form of unspecified sexual offence. Although this study may not be generalised to compare to a sex offending sample, it does illustrate the importance of good probation supervision in at least the early stages of reintegration, desistance and identity change.

²¹ For example, becoming a good citizen.

2.5.5 The Good Lives Model (GLM) and Desistance

OBP's, such as community based SOTP's, have their place in the desistance process for many child sex offenders, especially those who are at a high risk of reoffending or who have been convicted of a serious offence. These courses are delivered to some offenders, whilst consisting of psychologically informed content designed to address deficits in a person's behaviour, thinking skills, emotional drive or cognition. SOTP's are varied and are generally modular, sessional courses, often spanning many months, designed to help the offender understand the nature of their offences, the reasons why they offended and help them to avoid further offending in the future (Brown, 2010; Mews et al., 2017). Child sex offenders are encouraged to participate in OBP's as part of their ongoing risk management plans. The underlying concept where they are designed to help reduce recidivism (Mews et al., 2017), whilst protecting the public. In England and Wales, the use of SOTP in prisons has largely ceased, primarily due to critical research suggesting how they may increase the likelihood of reoffending (Mews et al., 2017). Research conducted over a period of eight years, concludes how the close interactions of groups of sex offenders are counter-productive to the OBP ethos. Within these groups, sexual deviance is normalised, as offenders share stories of sexualised behaviour over the length of the course (ibid). In contrast to these findings, Laws and Ward (2011) originally established how OBP's must be connected to the offender's desire to desist and desire to create meaningful goals if they are to be a successful intervention. Despite the recent criticisms, the GLM remains at the heart of OBP designed for sex offenders and it will be discussed in more detail below.

The GLM 'represents a contemporary approach to offender rehabilitation that differs in emphasis from traditional risk management-based approaches through its central focus on building client strengths rather than solely managing risk or alleviating deficits' (Willis et al., 2012: 2). It is a popular theoretical model underpinning sex offender treatment (Willis et al., 2014) which aims

to equip offenders with the necessary internal and external resources to help them (Laws and Ward, 2011). When applied correctly, the GLM can be effective at promoting desistance and reducing offending rates in sex offenders (Willis et al., 2012; 2014). The basic assumption of the GLM is that every person has perceived needs (goods), for example 'life' and that these needs are attained through instrumental needs (secondary goods), for example 'food' 'water' or 'a physically healthy body' (Laws and Ward, 2011: 185). When a person does not have the ability to achieve a perceived need, the risk of offending increases, as they strive to obtain what is missing. Laws and Ward (2011) explain what is at the core of the GLM:

The core idea at the heart of the GLM is that correctional reintegration and rehabilitation efforts should be based on the concept of *practical reasoning*. Practical reasoning involves judgments concerning the worthiness of an individual's goals and the best way to effectively achieve them through coordinated action. [Emphasis in original]. (p. 176).

This coordinated action occurs via the criminal justice system, OBP facilitators and the offenders themselves, helping them to achieve realistic goals through legitimate means. Human beings experience higher levels of well-being if they can achieve goods through support and hard work (Farmer et al., 2012). There have been 10 goods identified as important in the GLM: Life, Knowledge, Excellence in Play and Work, Autonomy, Inner Peace, Relatedness, Community, Spirituality, Happiness and Creativity, with each area having its own secondary (instrumental) good in order to achieve it (Laws and Ward, 2011).

Although the concept of the GLM is a shift towards a progressive and person-centred rehabilitative approach, its application outside of the professional setting is not fully acknowledged. For example, the use of SOTP's as a means to provide treatment for the child sex offender implies a level

of medical need, akin to treating the ill. Glaser (2003) stated that SOTP's are a form of punishment that inflict harm on the person involved and argues how the use of programmes by clinicians to treat a person, whilst protecting the public is a conflict of interest (Prescott and Levenson, 2010). The treatment value added to SOTP's further separates the child sex offender from their street offending counterparts, affirming the already inherent belief within the social psyche of the danger they pose. This is further exasperated if the offender has not been part of a treatment programme. In England and Wales OBP's are often a pre-requisite for the Parole Board, especially in cases of long term or indeterminate sentences, even though they do not offer a cure in the strict, treatment sense (Home Office, 2002; Laws and Ward, 2011). Therefore, the literature reviewed suggests that there is a fine balancing act between offender need, the risk they pose and public perception, when child sex offenders are reintegrated back into the community (Prescott and Levenson, 2010).

The above social factors connected to the desistance process show how they differ from an age-related concept because they assume external factors influence the journey towards crime cessation. However, these social factors appear to run alongside the ontogenetic factors described earlier. This moves the discussion through to the final prominent theory of desistance from crime, human agency, where the offender's identity is at the core in the change processes associated with desistance.

2.5.6 Human Agency in the Desistance Process

Human agency, or the agentic factor, is the link between desistance and self-identity, self-image, cognitive transformation and internal changes (Maruna, 2001). Maruna's concepts are mostly linked to agentic processes and he postulated how the above links had rarely been explored on an empirical basis. To bridge this gap in knowledge, his aim was to listen to and explore the self-

narratives of ex-offenders. Maruna established how the personal script, or narrative, of desisting offenders differed to those who were persisting and stated that for desistance to be possible ‘ex-offenders need to develop a coherent, pro-social identity for themselves’ (ibid: 7). This led to the development of the Liverpool Desistance Study, the subjects of which were general offenders. Maruna established how the narratives of persisters were linked to condemnation and desisters being linked to redemption, points that will be discussed below.

Condemnation within the narratives of persistent offenders, is related to a lack of opportunity for people who lived in harsh times,²² have poor education and work histories, enduring drug, alcohol and health issues and a criminal record. To condemn one’s self as ‘doomed’ (ibid: 74) proffers a sense of helplessness and lack of power to improve the situation. Largely overlooked in the literature discussing sexual offending and child sexual abuse, the concept of condemnation is emerging as an explanation for increased likelihood of further offending for this group. Exploration in religious identity and desistance (Kewley et al. 2016) has briefly highlighted how high-risk factors, such as alcohol use and sexual deviance often remain, despite attempts to gauge with a new identity. These high-risk factors are similar to those above by Maruna (2001), with the specificities of sexual attraction to children being a further factor within this cohort. This presents a conflict of will, identity and ability to change. It appears therefore that condemnation is also linked with a lack of ownership of the influences that may increase the chances of reoffending. Farmer et al. (2012) associated persistence with an external locus of control, where the blame for offending is on external factors, not associated with the child sex offender’s own behaviour. This shift from personal agency, taking responsibility for their own offending was a significant aspect of the persisters narratives and it was opposite to many of the desisting groups reports.

²² The study was conducted in Liverpool in the 1990’s at a time when social deprivation was high.

Redemption processes of desistance are often most associated with offenders who are presumed to be desisting from crime. Phrases such as ‘I am a new person now’, or ‘I have changed my ways’ (Maruna, 2001: 85) by Maruna’s desisting group, show how they were taking ownership of their own behaviour. The inclusion of ‘I’ is demonstrable of a shift from external blame apparent in some persisting groups (Farmer et al., 2012) to an internal acceptance that they are in control of their own behaviour. For example, one of Farmer et al’s (2012) desisting offenders expressed how ‘I know where I’m going, I know what I want to do’ (p. 941), giving the impression of clear goal setting and personal ownership to do so. In comparison, Maruna’s (2001) desisting offenders had a will to ‘make good’ (p. 9) with their lives because they seemed positive about their future goals. However, Maruna (2001) concluded that the desisting offenders seemed most out of step with the popular views of the prospects of ex-offenders and this could presumably be a more prevalent factor for child sex offenders, which will be discussed further below. Ironically the persisting group had a more realistic view of their lives and prospects.

Research on the link between agency and child sex offender desistance was conducted by Kewley et al. (2016) who established connections between redemption and identity as a form of forgiveness, through religious affiliation. Forgiveness occurs through the offender’s connection with God (ibid) and the ‘opportunity to signal change to others’ (ibid: 15). Identity change in this aspect is important for child sex offenders, as they are hyper-stigmatised and marginalized, impacting on their transition into society and ultimately their desistance (Uggen et al. 2009). Robbers (2009) asserts how sex offenders are punished not only by the courts and when they go to prison, but by the communities they return to and then society. One of the underlying aspects here is how non-sex offenders are viewed as normal people who are capable of change, whilst sex offenders do not share this luxury, often expressing concern that they had been abused and treated

in a negative way due to the sex offender label (ibid). Therefore, change will only be effectively facilitated if the child sex offender has the backing of the community and/or their family. Assuming a religious identity is one such opportunity to outwardly demonstrate this change (Kewley et al. 2016).

Paternoster and Bushway (2009) concluded that agency and personal identity play an important part in the desistance process. King (2012a) follows on from this work by arguing how the general concepts surrounding human agency and desistance are vague, concluding how the notion of would-be desisters working towards a new identity is all good and well, but the offender will mostly return to what they know when faced with structural and institutional uncertainty. Therefore, those who attempt to desist may have the will to do so, however the pro-social networks and relationships may not be of the conventional type, thus making the process of developing a new identity harder (King 2012a). This may ultimately increase recidivism as they find it hard to establish new ties. Finally, King (2012a) highlights how ‘agency is a crucial aspect in the desistance process; it is highly conditioned by structure’ (p.16). This interplay between agency and structure is a finely balanced model and one which is providing a more integrated understanding of the desistance process.

LeBel et al. (2008) posit how the desistance process connects to human agency and structure²³ and that there are three possible models at work within this: The ‘strong-subjective’ model, the ‘social model’ and the ‘subjective-social’ model. First, the strong subjective model suggests that it is the will of the person that determines desistance and if the person believes they are going to desist, they will. This indicates that the social processes of employment, marriage or having children have no effect as they normally occur naturally. However, if the person is not in

²³ Which are social bonds and sociogenic concepts.

the mind-set to achieve these social outcomes or to desist, then they will not. Second, the strong-social model is determined by the social circumstances of the person and it is believed in this model that the person has little control of them occurring, but actions through self-choice. This is an external aspect of desistance, where social factors will determine how successful the person will be. Third, the subjective–social model determines how a person is subject to both internal and external forces which contribute to or inhibit the desistance process. LeBel et al. (2008) believe this is one of the least understood areas of desistance and agency and conclude how subjective changes in a person’s cognition can precede structural changes in their life. By terming it ‘mind over matter’ (ibid: 155) they have started to unravel agency and structure in a hope to integrate them in a useful way to help promote desistance.

It can be summarised from the discussion above that child sex offenders face a host of issues where desistance from crime is considered. From factors relating to age, to social influences such as housing, employment and relationships through to the theme of human agency. Each factor impacts on the child sex offender’s ability to desist from crime at differing levels. What is apparent from the literature on child sex offender desistance however, is how limited it is. While the literature on sex offender desistance as a specific, generalised theme is growing, however there are still significant gaps in knowledge concerning child sex offenders. Therefore, operationalising desistance from crime within a child sex offender cohort is different to common street offenders, as many of the offences being committed are under-reported and many of the offenders entering the criminal justice system are there for the first time due to historic offences. It is hard to establish whether or not a child sex offender is still offending or has indeed moved way from this behaviour. This is something that the literature has acknowledged and is one of the reasons why child sex offenders are under-represented in academic research on desistance.

2.6 Conclusion

The literature concerning the resettlement of child sex offenders, is scarce but emerging, with most studies being conducted on general sex offenders, rather than child sex offenders specifically. Further research into both the desistance and resettlement of child sex offenders is therefore called for, as the two themes interlink and relate to one another. The literature discussing the legal and risk management aspects of child sex offenders in the community lacks empirical research relating to how an England and Wales cohort is impacted upon. Indeed, the majority of all literature concerning child sex offenders is centred in the US, with smaller scale studies being conducted in England and Wales, Australia and New Zealand. The literature on child sex offenders and stigma is broadly spread across many studies that may not specifically focus on stigmatisation. This overarching aspect of the literature is interesting, because arguably this indicates that stigma may have an effect on the everyday lives of child sex offenders. Finally, the literature on the desistance of child sex offenders is a growing element of the wider desistance literature, however there are still significant gaps in knowledge that need to be filled to help create a clearer picture of this phenomena. For example, how do they experience daily life, negotiating their way in the community as a person with child sex offences. Furthermore, to allow a voice to be granted to a marginalised group such as this, will help to move the knowledge of reintegration and desistance within child sex offenders further.

On the basis of this review, therefore, an empirical study, using qualitative methods, that discusses the themes of resettlement, risk management and stigma and how they relate to community reintegration and desistance from crime is useful.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter will introduce the methodological approaches undertaken to complete this study. Considering the gaps in the literature identified in the previous chapter, it will present research questions designed to test a theoretical model of child sex offender reintegration. The research design and research sample will be discussed in more detail. Within this, the considerations made for sample inclusion and exclusion will be reflected upon. Ethical considerations of confidentiality, safety and anonymity are described further with attention being paid to the potential conflict of interest between the researcher and the participants. This last thought is of particular importance, because at the time of interviewing, the researcher was a serving prison officer and some of the participants had served periods of time in custody. The penultimate section concerns the transcribing and analysis of data taken from the interviews. Finally, the participants will be introduced in the form of pen-pictures as a bridge to chapters 4-6, where the men's experiences will be discussed in more detail.

3.1 Research Questions

The interest of this research project is to give 'voice' to a marginalised and often unheard group. The literature review has highlighted how the societal, judicial, political and media response to child sex offenders is often punitive in nature, thus increasing this marginalisation and potentially reducing the likelihood of them coming forward to take part in a project of this nature. This could be through fear, mistrust or misunderstanding of the reasons behind the research. Therefore, the development of a methodology that is easy to follow, use and potentially be replicated is a must. Indeed, the lives of child sex offenders, as discussed in detail in Chapter 2 are complicated. For example, suitable housing and employment may be difficult to achieve, the sex offender label may have different effects on different people and many are subject to different judicial measures. Living as a child sex offender in the

community can therefore be an isolating process, where relationships are fraught with difficulties and are under-developed. As a result, not every experience of the child sex offender is the same, but some of them may be shared. This thesis wants to explore these similarities that have emerged from the literature, enabling a consistent and holistic approach to be taken to the research design, the presentation of results and the analysis of the data.

A further consideration for this thesis, was the inclusion of the voices of 11 professionals who worked with child sex offenders. Although the primary aim has been to give voice to a marginalised group, it was felt that it was important to hear what professionals thought about the reintegration experiences of child sex offenders. The rationale for this inclusion was based on a number of factors. First, the data from the professionals allowed for a rich comparison of the information provided by the participants, to test whether there were any similarities or differences in their points of view. Indeed, the results presented and the subsequent analysis have shown significant themes and areas of interest. Second, the data from the professionals can serve to add to the growing literature and understanding of the nature of those who work with offenders on a daily basis. Third, the knowledge of the professionals served as an important contextual factor to the reasoning and justification and use of risk management models and techniques. In fact, they provided a useful insight into the relationships they share with those under their care and how they interact with people who are often deemed as beyond help. Finally, the data provided in Chapters 4-6 show the professionalism of those people who are dealing with potentially dangerous, difficult and vulnerable people and their voices add more depth to the participants narratives, especially in they were only used in isolation.

Rather than adopting a grounded approach where the themes emerge from the data, as in life-course criminology or methods incorporating unstructured interviews, it is felt that the research questions and subsequent research methods need to be framed and have clear focus. This enabled a consistent

interview schedule to be developed, as all of the participants were able to answer the questions set, increasing reliability of validity of information. Moreover, the researcher wanted to be able to gain as much information from the participants at the time of interview, as time and work pressures only allowed for limited interaction. The research was fully aware of the need to make the most of this opportunity, as the primary research of child sex offenders and professionals in the community is scarce and giving them the best opportunity to speak was of paramount importance. Although the themes of resettlement, stigma and risk management were used to guide the research schedule, new themes and data emerged, presenting some previously unconsidered findings and are discussed in more detail on Chapter 7.

Punch (2005) argues that ‘research is driven by research questions’ (p. 34) designed to answer some form of curiosity a researcher has about a given topic. If these research questions are good, clear and precise, they can be developed further, to fully answer the original specific question or questions (Punch, 2005). Due to the potential for external interest in the research, it can be quite embarrassing if the researcher is unclear in their approach (Silverman, 2005). In response to this, the current project has adopted a qualitative stance to the collection of data, as the principal aim of the study is to gain an understanding of the community reintegration experiences of child sex offenders.

This primary topic has been broken down further into the themes of resettlement, risk management and stigma. This will help to evaluate how the themes interact and influence child sex offender reintegration, and how this links to desistance from crime. Four general research questions have therefore arisen:

1) What are the social processes²⁴ that child sex offenders undergo, to help them resettle into the community?

- a) How much support do they get and from whom?
- b) What, in their opinion, would constitute successful reintegration? Why is this?
- c) What links do they have with the community?
- d) What helps them to reintegrate?

2) What are the effects of risk management procedures on the lives of child sex offenders?

- a) How do they feel about the restrictions that are in place?
- b) What challenges do they face because of these restrictions?
- c) What effects on their daily lives do they experience due to the risk management procedures?
- d) What are the effects of their registration?

3) Does stigma affect the lives of child sex offenders?

- a) Have they encountered stigmatisation in the community due to their past behaviour? If so, how?
- b) What do they do to overcome the possible effects of stigma?
- c) What do they view to be the long-term effects of stigma?
- d) How do the child sex offenders internalise this stigma? How do they view themselves?
How do they believe others view them?

²⁴ Here the term 'processes' implies the dynamic ways in which sex offenders reintegrate. Whether they build networks, fit in or communicate. It is acknowledged that this may be asking too much for some offenders.

4) Does resettlement, risk management or stigma influence the reintegration and potential desistance from crime of child sex offenders?

- a) Which of the three areas has the biggest effect on their lives?
- b) What goals do they have for the future?
- c) Have they made any plans for the future? If so, what?
- d) How do they talk about themselves and their future?

3.1.1 'The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle': A Theoretical Model.

From professional experience and the literature reviewed, it is suggested there are three main factors which influence the reintegration and desistance of child sex offenders in the community: resettlement practices (housing allocation, employability, relationship forming); risk management procedures (probation supervision, ViSOR, MAPPA and SHPO's and treatment programmes); and stigmatisation (media portrayal, public opinion, views of the self, how others view them etc.). The term reintegration assumes that there has previously been some form of integration for people convicted of child sexual offences. It will become clear below, how most of the men included in this study were previously living seemingly normal and ordinary lives, with jobs, houses and a family; they were integrated. After conviction, many of the men lost these integrative factors and therefore had to be reintegrated. Therefore, for ease of explanation, the central concept of this thesis can be visualised below in figure 3.1 as a theoretical model developed for this project entitled 'The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle':

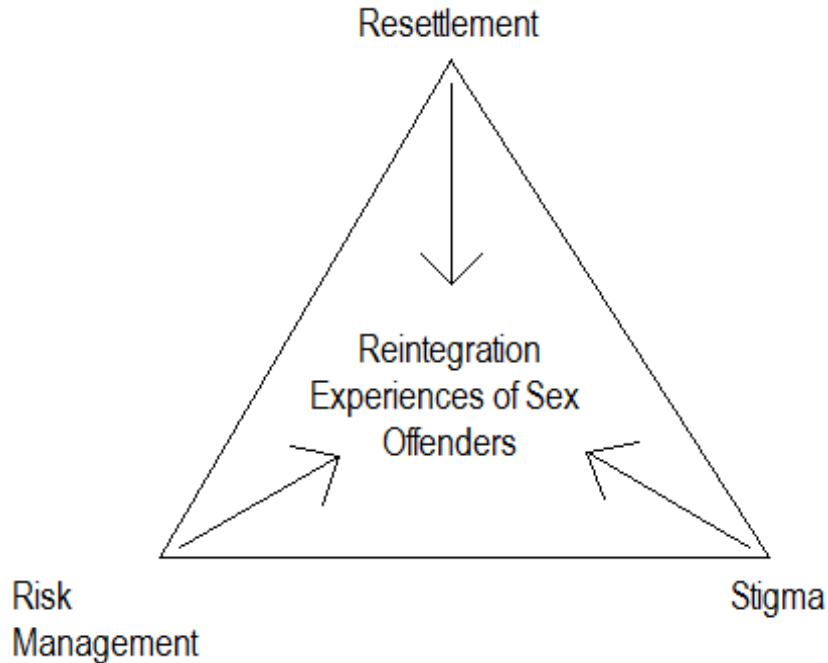


Figure 3.1: The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle

3.1.2 Theoretical Model

The important aspect of this theoretical model is in the way the three areas of resettlement, risk management and stigma interact, not only with themselves but with each other and how this influences the reintegration experiences of child sex offenders. It is posited that if resettlement is positive²⁵, if risk management is both robust enough to protect the public and dynamic enough to balance the needs of the offender and if stigma is not a hindrance, then the reintegration experiences of the men will be increasingly positive. This in turn helps to develop a successful path towards desistance and encourages the offender to embrace a crime free life. Conversely, any negative effects on these areas will be of detriment to the participant's reintegration and subsequently could slow down, hinder or jeopardise any potential for desistance to be fostered. This could ultimately increase the risks of reoffending, further conviction and/or a prison sentence or prison licence recall. Throughout this thesis, this model will be

²⁵ Positive in the form of suitable housing, meaningful activity/employment and supportive relationships for example.

referred to, allowing the reader and the researcher to determine its validity as a developing theory of reintegration and desistance.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for this project has been carefully considered to allow the data to be collected, presented and analysed, helping to formulate the conclusions. As discussed above, the focus of this project is on the sensitive topic of child sex offender reintegration. Sensitive topics need careful planning and consideration in the lead up to data collection and can be fraught with hurdles to overcome and issues that may not have initially been apparent. Davies et al. (2011) state that a ‘sensitive topic is used to describe taboo, or difficult topics, for example victimisation or deviant behaviour. The term may be used where research elicits the views of vulnerable...groups...’ (p. 140). Here, the nature of sensitive social science research leaves the potential for harm to be caused to the interviewee, the community or the researcher and is greater than other, non-sensitive research. Child sex offenders are therefore clearly included in this vulnerable group. In addition to this, child sex offenders are a hard-to-reach group. Hard-to-reach-groups are those that have been under represented in research, are not generally willing to be researched or are hard to locate and they may be disenfranchised or open to exploitation by the public (Devotta et al., 2016). Therefore, undertaking research which gives ‘voice’ to hard to reach groups, requires stringent methodological skills and practices (Davies et al., 2011:142). This makes any research of this nature potentially harder to achieve; determination and a thoroughly well-prepared design is therefore essential.

The current project has taken the form of face to face, qualitative interviews, conducted with two groups of people in the community: child sex offenders and professionals who work with child sex

offenders. These are the main characters, and a qualitative stance to the collection of the data is the only appropriate form. This is because qualitative study is of importance when a project wants to get beyond the existing literature, to hear the views and opinions of those at the centre of the problem (Cresswell, 2007). Below is a descriptive account of the research process, followed by the sample researched and some considerations of excluded samples.

3.2.1 The Research Process

Access to the participants was negotiated through a regional NPS with the permission to undertake it granted by the regional NPS lead, and by the University of Hull's ethics committee. During a meeting with the regional NPS lead, the projects aims, objectives and methods were presented and discussed. This allowed questions of validity, effectiveness, access, relevance and logistics to be asked, whilst also being fully included and aware of the processes and methods being undertaken. The method used was similar to one employed by the researcher as part of a Master's thesis with the University of Portsmouth. The success of that previous project and the ability to gain access to six participants (all of whom had child sexual offences), laid the basis for this larger, more in-depth study.

After approval to undertake the research, a main point of contact for the NPS was negotiated. This person was an existing, experienced, OM, who had the correct knowledge and practical skill to help with the sample recruitment process. This process was simple enough to allow the maximum number of participants to be reached. A project information sheet²⁶ was drafted and sent to the gatekeeper, who disseminated it to all the OM's in the regional area. The

²⁶ See Appendix II

information provided therein, clearly established the aims and objectives of the project and who the intended sample would be. The OM's were asked to talk to potential participants and to forward details of willing volunteers to the gatekeeper. Appointment times were negotiated from this point, with the gatekeeper acting as a go-between. The number of willing participants was therefore a limitation of the study, either on the behalf of the OM's or the participants. It is unclear whether all OM's read or positively responded to the request. It is also unclear how the OM's 'sold' the project to the potential participants, as they may not have been able to answer any question arising. In short, this method was based on the trust that the OM's would help to recruit participants. However, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the inclusion of all OM's was the most effective method. This is because of the access they had to a hard-to-reach group. Additionally, the OM's would be able to quickly identify those men who fit the selection criteria, described below.

In addition to the request for potential participants, the gatekeeper shared a further project information²⁷ sheet that asked for professionals to take part in the research. The distribution of this went beyond the NPS area, to the local police force and a local voluntary agency. Initially, interest from the professionals was slow. Working with child sex offenders in the community is a closed and protective area, which could have been a reason for the slow uptake. However, two professionals from the NPS accepted and their interviews were quickly arranged and undertaken. This was intentional, as word-of-mouth about the project was a useful method to help interest and recruitment. The researcher was subsequently invited to the NPS offices to explain in detail to the professionals the projects aims and objectives. Once more, this proved to be of use, as many of the professionals stated they had not read the project information due to work pressures. The result of this physical engagement with the NPS professionals was a surge in interest and more interviews

²⁷ See Appendix I

being arranged. This method highlighted a limitation of the study, as the police and the voluntary agency were not represented as strongly as the NPS. The researcher did not physically access them in the same way as the NPS and relied on the potential participants reading the invitation and word-of-mouth.

It was discussed briefly above how the recruitment of potential participants was based on trust that the OM's had invited every person who fit within the criteria. Those potential participants who responded were invited to an interview to take place at their local NPS offices. This was to ensure maintenance of interest on the behalf of the participant, along with the acknowledged time constraints of conducting the research. Of the men invited to an interview, all but three of them attended. Two reported having second thoughts about the project to their OM's and one man was returned to prison as part of a life sentence recall, after demonstrating risky behaviour associated with alcohol. It is noted that within a project of this nature, issues like this were to be expected. A limitation of this method was like the one presented earlier with the professionals, i.e. that the researcher was not able to personally explain the nature of the research and relied on the help of the OM's. It was suggested by one OM for the researcher to attend an SOTP group in an evening. However, this may have weighed the sample towards men on the same SOTP course. Therefore, this was rejected to keep the sample on a first-come-first-serve basis, limiting any representational bias. It was however, apparent from the sample gained, that two of the participants knew each other, with the first man attending an interview, then reporting back to an SOTP group about the research, which encouraged the other man to participate.

An initial pilot study of two participants was undertaken to help establish how useful the interview pro-forma was and whether there was any need for change. This is an important aspect of any research project, helping to address issues with design or question suitability. It also helped

the researcher to become more familiar with the probation surroundings, helping ease any anxieties or tensions. As a part of the reflexive process of project creation, the lessons learned from these pilot studies were invaluable. First, it was deemed that the first private office used to interview was not as private as first thought and it doubled as a cut-through from the main interview areas to the reception desk. This issue was quickly alleviated using a 'do not disturb sign' on the front of the door. However, it was requested that this office not be used again in the future. Second, the pilot studies highlighted how the participants were likely to react when they were being interviewed. On the whole the reactions were positive, and the questions worked well, flowing from one section to another. It was therefore not necessary to change the questions as a result. Due to this, the pilot study was included in the findings, because the data was the same. Finally, the pilot studies demonstrated how long the interviews would last for. They were designed to last for no longer than an hour, and the tests showed that this was achievable if the participant was willing to fully engage.

3.2.2 The Research Sample

The project has involved the participation of 21 subjects, with each person agreeing to take part in a digitally recorded, qualitative interview. The interviews ranged between 35 minutes and 1 hour and 5 minutes and were conducted in private rooms at local NPS offices, a police station and at the offices of COSA. Of the 21, 10 were convicted child sex offenders ('participants') living in the community under the supervision of the NPS. Three of the participants were on community orders and seven were on prison licences. All the men apart from one had been in prison at some point in their lives. Furthermore, the remaining 11 were 'professionals' who worked with child sex offenders in the community. Their professions were broken down as nine OM's, one RMO and

one professional member of COSA. The inclusion criterion for the participants are highlighted below:

- Male;
- Aged 21 or above;
- Live in the community;
- Under the supervision of the NPS;
- Have at least 1 current sex offence (the current conviction) alongside a pattern of sex offending over time, which may have resulted in only one (current) conviction; or with at least 1 other previous sex offence;
- Must admit their offences.

The inclusion criterion for the professionals was simple, if they were working with child sex offenders in the community, they could be involved. This was regardless of any other factor.

3.2.3 Female/Young/Juvenile Child Sex Offenders – Exclusions to the Present Study

Both female child sex offenders and young/juvenile child sex offenders present different challenges for the criminal justice system and different measures are often in place. This is especially true in the community, to help reduce the risk of harm that can be present within these groups. Cortoni (2010) explained how female [child] sex offenders are ‘increasingly coming to the attention of the criminal justice system...[and]...the demand for assessments of risk and development of treatment and strategies to manage risk and reduce risk’ (p. 159) are also increasing. Cortoni (2010) makes clear how this sub group of offenders are under-researched and the knowledge base with regards to their offending patterns

and recidivism rates does not have either the depth or history in comparison to male offenders. During discussions with the NPS, it was clear that there would not have been a sufficient sample base within the area to create an effective enough opportunity to research female offenders at this time. Female child sex offenders were therefore excluded, due to the differing nature of their offending and the small number of expected participants. This is a gap in the research literature that may be considered for the future.

Young/juvenile child sex offenders offered a similar position to their female counterparts as they, too, are under researched and not as understood as adult child sex offenders. Schladale (2010) offered the idea that most sexual offences by young people are not brought to the attention of juvenile justice or the criminal justice system. Schladale (2010) also noted that youth offending usually refers to those offenders who commit criminal offences between the ages of 13 and 17; however, the courts and prisons also acknowledge that young adults are aged up to 21. The sentences presented at court, consider their age, meaning that offenders released on a young offender's licence are supervised in the community in a different way to adult offenders. Therefore, to create a continuity of reporting, the sample base is of males aged over 21. This provides a group of men who shared a similar sentencing, risk management and supervision pathway according to their age and gender. On the reverse side, there was no upper limit to the age of the participants.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

In social science, the term ethics means different things, depending on the research being conducted. For example, Homan (1991) argues that it is not appropriate to describe ethics as the 'science of morals' (p. 1), rather he argues how they are a set of standards and guidelines defined by a profession for its members to adhere to. Social research should therefore be 'concerned, in essence, with perspectives on

right and proper conduct' (Davies et al., 2011: 288). As a result, ethical issues are raised in many ways: the effect of bias on the part of the researcher (Silverman, 2005); the effect of disclosures of further offending by the participant (Cowburn, 2010); or the danger the researcher may face from the person(s) being interviewed or studied (Lee-Treweek and Linkogle, 2000). This section will therefore consider the ethics involved in this project. It will cover confidentiality, safety and anonymity, along with reflexivity linked with the potential for conflict of interest.

3.3.1 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is often one of the most important factors within any form of research and with any research group, but especially with research involving child sex offenders. This is because they are marginalised and vulnerable, who may be at danger of abuse, violence or revenge, should their identities be disclosed. The conduct of a report and the right to confidentiality must be brokered before consent is granted to allow the use of the participants. Ultimately the research process is a form of contract and the participant has the right to protect the information given (Homan, 1991). For the current project, all the participants and professionals were asked to sign a consent form, attached to the project information sheet discussed earlier. Therefore, only the researcher knows who participated in the research, and no other party is privy to this information.

To help protect the information, the interview transcripts have remained on a secure, password protected computer hard-drive and all of the information transcribed was anonymised during this process. Confidentiality is an area which can be covered in the analysis and reporting of data, as it is relatively easy for participants to remain anonymous and for their information to be kept safe, if the researcher is prudent and careful enough (Shaw, 2003). However, there is a question of whether confidentiality should relate to all aspects of research and when it is right or just to break this

confidentiality. Indeed, common sense must prevail, and the participant must understand that confidentiality can only go so far. Confidential information given in the context of the investigation should be disclosed to the appropriate authorities only if any actual, previous or future harm by the participant is divulged. The researcher has a duty of care to protect others, themselves or the participant from such harm. Failure to report this information could be construed as the researcher colluding or agreeing with the behaviour of the offender (Cowburn, 2010). This is especially important when researching people with serious offences and potentially dangerous backgrounds and natures. To help with this, the researcher clearly specified on the project information sheets and through the signing of a consent form, about how far confidentiality can go and the consequences of inappropriate disclosure. At no point during or after the interviews did the researcher feel it necessary to report any disclosed information to any specific authority, because all the information related by the participants was relevant to the enquiry and did not present any form of actual or implied harm to others.

3.3.2 Safety and Anonymity

The safety of the participants and the researcher was of significance during the data collection stage of this project. Safety was not overlooked in any way, especially from an ethical point of view (Cowburn, 2010). This is where the use of the project information sheet was important as it allowed the participants to understand the nature of the research and its intentions. This helped them to make an informed decision of any risks and whether to take part. Information was provided about the researcher's profession as a prison officer, negating any feelings of mistrust due to not being informed. The participants could withdraw their consent to participate at any point before, during or after the empirical research was conducted and there would have been no consequences in doing this. As no participant subsequently withdrew their consent during or after the interviews, this point was never considered.

The project information sheet was the first indication from the researcher that safety was a serious issue and the participants were of primary concern. Safety therefore meant the participants should not only be fully informed about the kind of information that was required for the study; they should also understand what was going to happen with that information. Throughout the transcription process the participants identifying features were replaced with a more neutral form. For instance, if the person had previous identifiable employment, it was written as “I do still live close to the [workplace] and most of the [workers] that go there live there” as in the example of participant James. Ages were changed; however they are still within a close enough age bracket to make it relevant to the narrative. For example, if a person was in his 70’s then he may be 72 or 75 for anonymity. Finally, all the names of the participants and any places of residence, such as towns or street names were omitted. This was to ensure that identification of the participants was difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

This project wanted to minimise any possible harm to the participants and this was one of the reasons why it had a forward-looking aspect to the research design. There were times when the participants wanted to discuss their past, but because this was not the primary focus of the research, there was little need to discuss these very delicate issues. Interviewing by its very nature is both private and somewhat intimate and this can evoke emotions, potentially in both interviewer and interviewee. This is especially true when trust and rapport are built and the participant feels open and honest with the researcher. It may be hard for people with child sexual offences to talk about the past and it was a serious concern that if they do, they may experience strong emotions. This could have potentially impacted upon the interview, themselves and possibly increase further negative effects once they had left the interview. This was not an intention of the study and all the participants expressed the experience was a positive one during the interview debrief.

When the interviews ended, the men were asked for their thoughts on the interview and whether they had any concerns. This debrief was completed once the digital recorder had been turned off and none of the information has been used within this thesis. This period of reflection by the participants was viewed as very important to the research process. It allowed them a period to cool off and it also allowed them to freely express their feelings about the experience. Each man was encouraged to talk to their OM about the study as soon as they could. They were encouraged to convey any concerns about the research to the OM, as they may not have felt comfortable to do this directly to the interviewer. To date, no OM has approached the researcher with any concerns.

To further enhance the aspect of safety, an appropriately familiar environment was sought to conduct the interviews with the participants. Permission to use the interview rooms in the local NPS offices was kindly granted and the reception staff were briefed by the researcher about the study and how they could help with the process. The interview rooms were thought to be the best option as they were private, covered by CCTV, had a phone and it was a place where the participants had all been before. Access for the participants was very important and each man was able to travel to the offices either by bike, foot or bus. This proximity was believed to be important, especially in encouraging the men to participate. When the interviews were taking place, safety of both the researcher and the participant was ensured because the reception staff knew the location of the research interview and how long it was due to last.

3.3.3 Conflict of Interest in the Research Process

As a serving prison officer during the interview period, there was potential for some of the participants to know the researcher on a professional level. Consideration was made at the earliest of stages as to the potential of role conflict within this study. The researcher and thesis supervisors spoke about the implications of this potential conflict at length throughout all the stages leading up to and during the

fieldwork. The researcher has since changed professions to an academic position and is no longer employed by the prison service.

Asselin (2003) believed role conflict occurs when the researcher goes beyond the assigned role, placing biases and perceptions on the interpretation of data. Subjectivity can have negative impacts, dependant on interpretive style and evidence presented, potentially skewing any results. This relates well to a prison officer conducting research on people who have been in prison (albeit nine of them). For example, McConnell-Henry et al. (2010) studied the role of nurses as researchers of patients. This outsider-insider research suggested how the primary role of a researcher is to discover knowledge and create data from those being researched. This has the potential to conflict with their professional roles, because nurses are often more therapeutic and empathic in nature. They believed that any person, who is researching the subjects of their care or everyday professional life, would naturally create questions about 'role distinction' and whether they are 'researcher or nurse' (ibid: 3). Additionally, the professional role of the nurse, in a healthcare environment, is not dissimilar to the prison officer. Both work for the government, usually in large institutions, tending to the needs and care of a diverse range of people, whilst working closely with others as part of a large team. These roles also share many other common factors which could include dealing with sensitive information, working with marginalised groups whilst making decisions under pressure.

Nurses and prison officers may share similarities within their professions; however, the difference between them is the exertion of power. Both professions have unique levels of power that they can use during their working day, at the discretion of that individual. Power in the sense of the prison officer is different because it is more authoritarian and disciplinary in nature. The power that prison officers can potentially exert in the prison setting, over the people in their charge is of importance to this study, especially when examining the role of the prison officer as researcher. There is a wealth

of literature available which discusses the power dynamics of the interview process. This could relate to the power dynamics of the location (Elwood and Martin, 2000); the transactional dynamics between interviewer and interviewee (Anyan, 2013); gender dynamics in interviews relating to sexually deviant behaviour (Gailey and Prohaska, 2011) and interviewing in remote locations, especially if the researcher is a young female (Chiswell and Wheeler, 2016). The relationships between the prison officer and those in their care are nuanced and complicated. For instance, the general views expressed by Thomas (1972) illustrate how a prison officer, in the line of duty, has to be around people ‘who hate him’ (p. 7) causing tension for all. Indeed, the power and control of prison officers over those in their charge is well documented²⁸ and this perhaps manifests hate, especially if the prisoner is not in control of their daily life (Goffman, 1961). Therefore, when it comes to adopting a reflexive standpoint during the research process, the researcher must be aware that the role of prison officer could be inter-twined with that of researcher and vice-versa.

Furthermore, to be a prison officer is to live within a closed world that few people get to experience. The public’s perception of the working life of the prison officer has generally been determined by the dramatic portrayals in TV shows such as Prisoner Cell Block H, Porridge and Prison Break. As such, the public understanding of the diverse and often difficult work is somewhat undermined by these characters and the complexities of working in a prison environment are often lost. Crawley and Sparks (2006) explain this in more concise terms:

...prison officers, their lives and working practices in the prison, their feelings about the work they do and their relationships with prisoners and their fellow officers, have been poorly documented and hence poorly appreciated and understood (p. 135).

²⁸ See Hepburn (1985) for a more detailed argument on the use of power in prisons.

Liebling (2011) considered these relationships and determined how they were dynamic, changing in nature depending on the personality of the prison officer. The lack of appreciation of the nature of prison officers, prison work and the relationship between officers and prisoners, has made the ethical considerations of this project more poignant. This is especially true where the power and control aspects of the prison-officer-as-researcher are concerned.

However, the researcher, whilst interviewing, was not conducting the researcher as a prison officer. The people who were being interviewed were not prisoners as they were people under the supervision of the NPS. Reflexivity within this research project was therefore important to improve understanding of the research role and the researchers own position within. It enabled the researcher to look at their own self helping to highlight biases, understand the studied subject and appreciate their own theoretical ideals. Here, reflexivity is concerned with critiquing the self and learning from any mistakes that have been made. The researcher must therefore be able to reflect whilst within the research experience (Reis, 2011), which means a reflexive account should not rely solely on post-research scrutiny.

After each interview, the researcher documented some of the key thoughts and feelings in relation to how the interview went, how the participant reacted and how the researcher felt at the time. Within these reflections, it was interesting for the researcher to note how two of the participants would not have been involved in the project, if it was not for the fact that the researcher was a prison officer and that they had experience of the researcher in this professional role. McConnell-Henry et al. (2009) considered the questions of ethics with regard to interviewing people who are known to the researcher and they established that rapport building is easier, much to the positive development of the interview. The professional role of the researcher therefore encouraged these two men to attend. One of them stated

how when he knew who the researcher was, he “signed up for the project immediately” and the second man stated that he “waited in the probation waiting room”, when he knew an interview was taking place, “to see who the researcher was”. During these two interviews especially, the personal reflections state how rapport and trust between the researcher and the known participants was established quickly and they reported being at ease and comfortable. It is felt therefore, that my role of being a prison officer did not have a detrimental effect on the project and in some ways may have enhanced it.

Being reflexive is not only useful during the process of interviewing; it should be adopted throughout the entire development of the project to the final dissemination and at all points in-between. Personal thoughts on conducting interviews with people convicted of child sexual offences are integral to this developmental process. Not only was the researcher a prison officer at the time of interviewing he is also a member of the public and a family man. Human agency and its involvement is at the heart of this project and it is acknowledged how opinions and feelings are present. These must be put aside to allow the collection and interpretation of the data to be as honest as possible. To disregard any human element to the research process would be wrong and to disregard the researcher’s previous professional capacity would also be unhelpful and could skew the results unfavourably.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was undertaken once the lengthy transcriptions of the interviews had been completed. They were transcribed using *expresscribe* software, which allowed the pausing, slowing down and simultaneous writing up of the data to be completed from one screen. The transcription was checked with the original recording for accuracy. Any contextual notes were added within the text (as a guide) and the reflexive accounts of the interview were also consulted to help contextualise the experience. In doing this, any potential for misinterpretation was reduced, although the researcher is fully aware that data analysis is generally subjective in nature and misinterpretation may occur. The

completed transcription was then transposed to a *Microsoft Word* document to allow for editing, which involved the removal of identifiable information. Names and ages were changed to help anonymise the person further. For example, the participants were assigned a pseudonym and the professionals were assigned a number.

The process of analysis was broken down into three practices to help ensure themes were correctly identified. First, the questions used as part of the semi-structured interviews were included into the text as ‘headings’ that could be specifically identified by the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 7. This allowed for the generation of themes that may not have been so easily identified manually. Like Appleton (2010), the process of discovering themes was made easier due to the pre-defined areas of interest and the fact that the questions were arranged in the themes of ‘Resettlement’, ‘Risk Management’ and ‘Stigma’. However, the introduction of NVivo 7 made it clear how ‘loss’, ‘isolation’, ‘community’ and the ‘self’ were also themes that could be explored. Therefore, the elements of the transcripts relating to these new themes were cut-and-pasted into new word documents and entered into NVivo 7 once more. This process further broke down the vast quantity of information into more usable and succinct pieces. The second step of analysis was the manual inductive process of reading the text and highlighting themes that had been identified in NVivo 7, alongside new themes that the software did not appreciate as important. This approach allowed the researcher to be immersed in the data, linking existing themes to new ones, as the themes emerged. The data collected has allowed for a vivid picture to be created of the lives and experiences of the 10 men who participated, all of whom will be introduced below.

3.5 Pen Pictures

The 10 participants of the study are now considered. Each man will be discussed in the form of a pen picture, to illustrate their lives before being interviewed. This will act as a bridge to the results chapters, where the participant's experiences will be conveyed. To aid further, the table below illustrates the demographic of the cohort in a concise form:

PARTICIPANT	AGE	BRIEF DETAIL OF OFFENCES	AGE AT LAST OFFENCE	SENTENCE LENGTH	TIME IN COMMUNITY
Sean	Early 40's	Previous rape of a child under 13 (numerous over several years). Indecent assault on a child under 12. Current breach of SOPO.	Late 20's – Early 30's	12 Years	1 Year
Nick	Late 20's	Previous USI and violence. Current sexual assault on a child under 13.	Mid 20's	2 ½ Years	10 Months
Andy	Early 70's	Current 20 offences against a child – rape, indecent assault and engaging in sexual activity with a child, spanning several years.	Early 60's	10 years	3 Months
James	Early 20's	Current possession of indecent photos, grooming and breach of trust that spanned many months.	Early 20's	2 year suspended sentence	18 Months
Adam	Mid 40's	Previous USI. Current grooming and arranging to meet a child.	Late 30's	6 ½ Years – 3 years Ext	7 Months
Phil	Mid 40's	Previous USI. Current possession of indecent images.	Early 40's	16 Months	8 Months
Allan	Late 60's	Current rape of a child under 12 X5 (over a 3 year period).	Late 50's	8 Years	10 Months
Dave	Late 50's	Numerous sexual and non-sexual offences over 40+ years , including buggery, indecent assault and possession of indecent images.	Early 50's	6 Years	4 Years
George	Mid 60's	Previous possession of indecent images of children, grooming and breach of SOPO. Current possession of indecent images, grooming and breach of SOPO.	Early 60's	3 Years	8 Months
Stu	Early 70's	Previous buggery, rape, indecent assault of child. Current possession of indecent images of children. Possession of internet device.	Late 60's	Original 12 years. Current 3 year community order	18 Months since release from prison – But offended again in the community.

Sean

Sean was a man in his 40's sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for multiple rapes against his step-daughter. He also sexually abused two of her friends. The rapes occurred over several years, starting when she was eight years old. He was not close to his family, leaving home as soon as he could to join the Armed Forces. Sean stated he liked this job because it suited his personality and it was a legitimate way for him to be able to inflict pain on others. When he left, the need to hurt other people continued, and he quickly associated with local gangs, being unofficially employed as an enforcer. This role included the collection of debts, whilst threatening and inflicting violence upon those who did not pay. Although he was never convicted of any violent offences and he would not specify any details in relation to this, violent behaviour became normal for him. The violence led to an unhappy life, where he was divorced twice and became increasingly isolated as a result.

Initially, when he was sentenced to prison, he denied his offences. It took many years to acknowledge the harm inflicted on his victims. He explained how, over these unspecified years, he sought help for his behaviour, initially through lengthy conversations with a prison officer. The rapport Sean felt with this officer helped him to open up and express feelings in ways he had never experienced before. The officer encouraged an assessment for suitability to take part in OBP's designed to address his offending and to challenge his values and life goals. He completed Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) and some SOTP's, helping facilitate his release, on parole, to the local approved premises. However, he was soon recalled to prison after associating with another known sex offender in the community. A further, shorter spell in prison ensued and he was finally released for the second time. At the time of the interview he had the support of Circles of Support

and Accountability (COSA), help from a local support agency and he had also made friends with two local people.

Nick

For a man in his 20's, Nick had quite a long, varied criminal career and he had been in and out of prison since his early teens. His index offence was for a series of sexual assaults committed against a 12-year-old girl. For this he received a two-and-a-half-year sentence. When he was growing up, his father was a drug user who would often be serving prison sentences. The family unit was disrupted, and his mother was no longer able to cope with the increasingly poor behaviour displayed by Nick in his formative years. Therefore, he was placed into care in his early teens and shortly after this he started to offend. Initially he started to shoplift, but he soon moved towards minor violence. This escalated further to sexual assault, on two occasions, when he was still in care. He served a couple of prison sentences prior to his 20th birthday, with this escalation in offending continuing thereafter. Offences of grievous bodily harm, affray and domestic violence attracted lengthy prison terms in his early 20's. This diversity in offending behaviour was in contrast to many of the other participants.

Andy

Andy was the oldest man to participate in this study and was in his 70's. He had been living in the local AP after a recent release from a psychological unit, within a prison environment. He was granted parole after being found guilty of over 20 sexual offences against his two granddaughters, which were committed over many years. These offences ranged from indecent assault to rape and they all occurred during his retirement. Prior to his conviction, Andy had worked for most of his

life and stated he had a good, close relationship with his family. He also stated that life was good, as he was married, had children, siblings and a large extended family. However, his offending changed this, and he was quickly divorced from his wife. Disowned by his family, of whom he had not seen for about seven years, the only contact he had was with his sister. Apart from her he was alone in the community.

James

Possession of indecent photographs of children, grooming and abuse of a position of trust were the offences committed by James, a man in his 20's. These were his first offences, but the grooming behaviour and the collecting of photos spanned many months. The indecent images were separate offences to the main offence of grooming and were discovered when the police seized his home computer. He received a suspended prison sentence, meaning he was the only participant to have never been in prison. He had to sign the ViSOR for 10 years and a stipulation of his community sentence was to complete a community SOTP. At the time of the interview, he lived at home with his mother and some of his friends remained supportive. With these friends, James would engage in sporting activities, or socialise on a night out. Interestingly, James was the only participant in this study to be employed in a full-time position. He enjoyed this job, as he had lost his previous one as a direct result of his conviction.

Adam

Adam had offences relating to grooming a child via internet chat rooms and arranging to meet that child. These were more serious in nature when compared to his previous conviction for USI and attracted a lengthy sentence of 6 and a half years, with a 3-year extended licence period. In prison

he completed SOTP and upon release he was gaining the support of COSA. As a father in his 40's Adam was at a point in his life where he was not allowed to have any contact with his son, although he wanted to. He had brief contact with his brother and saw his sister from time to time. Having lost his job, he would search for employment without any luck. Upon his release from prison, he was housed in the local AP, but he managed to move to his own rented flat, which was associated with a local housing provider and this is where he was at the time of interview.

Phil

At the time of the interview, Phil was living in the local AP and was hoping to find permanent, independent accommodation in the future. He was single, had never been married and did not have any children. His offences of possessing indecent photographs of children resulted in a prison sentence and a 10-year ViSOR registration. He had one previous conviction for USI, committed when he was a young man, and this attracted a caution. His upbringing was hard, having been in care from an early age. It is here where he suffered sexual abuse at the hands of one of his carers and this caused him internal injuries, affecting his ability to work. He was undergoing counselling for this trauma, which was an important step for him as this was the first time he had tackled these personal issues of his past. As a result of this abuse, Phil had developed negative issues with trust. However, his willingness to participate in this study was a sign of positive development, as he stated he would not have wanted to engage a few months earlier.

Allan

Allan was in his 60's and prior to his conviction, his life was apparently normal. He was a family man, married with children and was in full time employment. He had no previous convictions and

stated how he was enjoying living in a three-bedroomed house with a garden. However, this changed following his conviction, and he was subsequently divorced. He had offended against his grandchildren over a three-year period and was consequently convicted of several counts of rape. Interestingly, during the court proceedings and subsequent sentencing, the judge ordered no publicity of the case. This was a move designed to spare any embarrassment on the behalf of the family and the victim. He had lived in the community for just over 10 months prior to the interview, after serving an eight-year prison sentence where he also completed the SOTP. When he was released from prison, he was required to reside in the local AP, moving into a ground floor flat six months later. Additionally, Allan was required to sign ViSOR indefinitely and was due to commence the Better Life Skills Booster programme in the community.

Dave

As the man with the most previous sexual offences, spanning over 40-years, Dave's criminogenic story was richer than most of the other participants. His offending behaviour started when he was 11-years old, when he was caught shoplifting. The first sexual offences were committed in the 1970's when he was in his early teens, then again in the late 1970's. This pattern of offending continued sporadically through to his current offences: a breach of his SHPO and community order. During his life he has committed numerous sexual offences including USI, buggery of a child under 13, buggery of a child under 16, possession of and making indecent photographs, further indecent assaults and failing to notify the police of a change of address. Dave had been married and divorced twice, both ending because of his offending. He previously had a large family but was now only in contact with his daughter. Although he was unemployed at the time of

interview, in the past he had held several jobs, one of which was a managerial position. He was living in his own, rented accommodation and had not been to prison since his release in 2012.

George

Now in his 60's, George was a divorcee who had moved geographical areas on the request of his OM, for public protection. This was a stipulation of his community licence, along with his SHPO. He had worked all his life however he was sacked due to his offending and he subsequently retired when he was in prison. He was originally convicted to 30-months in custody for possession of indecent photographs of children and grooming a child online. However, he was released from custody and soon offended again in a similar way. This resulted in the breach of his SHPO and prison licence. Consequently, he was sentenced to a further 3-years. He had been in the community for 8-months. When he was released from prison he was placed in the AP, moving to permanent housing a few months later.

Stu

Having previously worked in the Armed Forces and the public sector, Stu, who was in his 70's was now retired. He had been in prison for many years for offences of rape against his grandchildren. He was released and lived on his own for a few months, before being recalled to prison for possession of indecent photographs of children. He was subsequently given a community order, which he was serving when interviewed, and had been for 18-months. Indeed, Stu expressed how he felt as though it was still "early days" when asked how he was settling after release. For some people, 18-months may have been an adequate length of time to feel comfortable, for Stu, this was not the case. He was living in a one bedroomed flat with a local housing provider,

which was a similar situation to the one he had previously enjoyed. However, before his original convictions, he was living with his family. Due to his offending behaviour, Stu was divorced from his wife and estranged from the rest of his family.

3.6 Conclusion

The development of this study has been guided in three distinct ways and follows on from the gaps in knowledge identified in the literature review. First, the design of the method is specific to match the theoretical model of child sex offender reintegration that will be tested throughout the following chapters. This model is intended to illustrate the influencing factors of resettlement, risk management and stigma on the reintegrative journey of the participants involved herein. Furthermore, the qualitative strategy formulated to answer the research questions, was purposeful. This was because the questions asked were based around the three themes, which will form the basis of the ensuing three results chapters, allowing for continuity of reporting. Indeed, to gain an appreciative stance of the experiences on the participants as they live in the community, the qualitative, semi-structured design was seen to be best-fit. This moves to the second aspect of the study's development, sample selection and recruitment method.

Studies that involve face-to-face interviews with child sex offenders are scarce and this owes, in part, to the hard-to-reach nature of this cohort. People with child sexual offences are one of the most vilified and demonised offenders, persuading any form of participation in a study of this nature is difficult, at best. This resulted in a purposeful, forward looking, aspect to the overall concepts being discussed and evaluated. Rather than asking the participants to talk about the past, they were able to express what life was like for them in the present tense. This design relies on being able to give 'voice' to the participants and to the professionals who also agreed to partake.

The third and final feature of the methodological considerations was the over-arching aspect of ethics. From the conception of the ideas for a project of this type, through to the execution, data analysis, dissemination of the results and the final write-up, ethics have been at the forefront. This chapter has highlighted the logistical issues of interviewing people who are from marginalised groups, are potentially vulnerable and who have committed serious crimes. This means that safety and anonymity, confidentiality and role conflict have been discussed in much detail in relation to this sensitive group. In conclusion, the researcher has the particular skills needed to conduct this research, especially because of, and not in spite of, his professional background.

Chapter 4 - Resettlement

The path towards successful resettlement for child sex offenders is often a long and demanding one. It is both individually different for each offender yet characterised by collectively shared experiences. They often return to the community after punishment, to a life different to the one before because their conviction may have resulted in one or a number of significantly disruptive life events. For example, they may have lost jobs, family ties, housing and other meaningful relationships and importantly are classified as child sex offenders, having to adhere to strict risk management procedures and living with this stigma. Furthermore, people convicted of child sexual offences may be required to re-locate to a new area due to the nature of their offences, the proximity of the victim(s) and/or the media interest in their case. Moral panics and the social construction of paedophilia have added to the stereotype of the child sex offender and this has sometimes had an adverse effect on their ability to resettle (McCarten, 2010). Consequently, given the range of adverse circumstances and restrictions they face, there is good reason to believe that the resettlement process for this group would be specifically challenging and elongated.

This is the first chapter examining the results of the fieldwork explained in the previous methodology chapter. It will discuss the theme of resettlement from the view of the participants and the professionals who took part in the study. The opinions of the participants obtained through interviews, will explore what community resettlement was like post-conviction. In addition, the professionals proffer their thoughts about the resettlement (housing, employment, relationships) of people with child sexual offences, giving case examples to help with this exploration. To achieve this, the interviews were partly based on the theme of resettlement, highlighted in the underlying theoretical model introduced in Chapter 3 and shown below in Figure 4.1. This theory is being tested to help determine whether the successful reintegration and ultimate desistance of

child sex offenders is facilitated if their experiences of resettlement, risk management and stigma are positive.

'Resettlement'

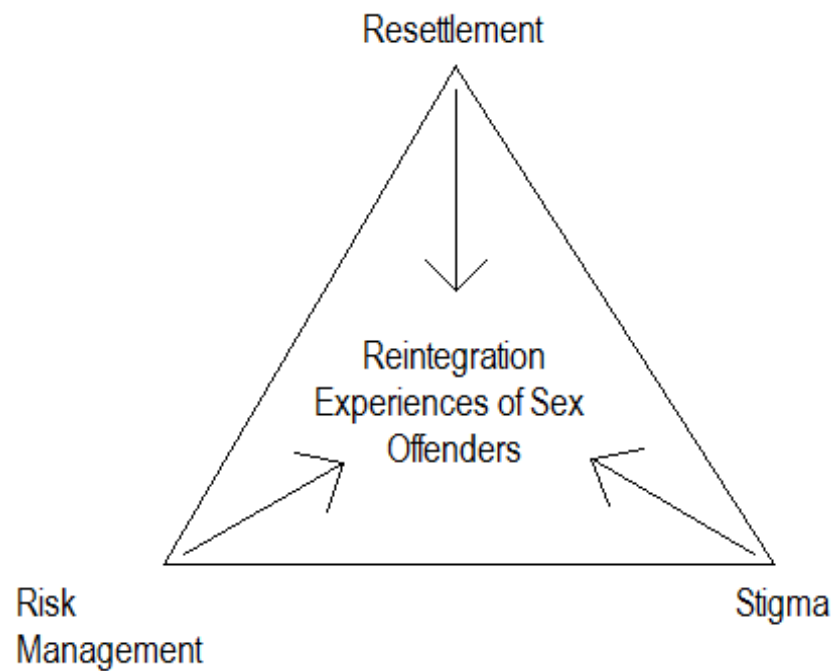


Figure 4.1: The Reintegration of Sex Offenders Triangle: Resettlement.

The design of the interviews aided the researcher to stay focussed on the research questions posed in the previous chapter and allowed the presentation of the results to flow in a structured and coherent manner. This chapter will focus on the area of resettlement and the research question(s) that relate to this:

What are the social processes that child sex offenders undergo, to help them resettle into the community?

- a) How much support do they get and from whom?
- b) What, in their opinion, would constitute successful reintegration? Why is this?
- c) What links do they have with the community?
- d) What helps them to reintegrate?

This chapter will therefore cover areas relating to the participant's resettlement and how it relates to their overall reintegration and possible desistance from crime. Initially it will discuss the effects of being convicted for child sexual offences and then it will introduce the participants thoughts on community resettlement and the problems that remain, followed by in-depth representations of relationships, housing and employment.

4.1 The Effects of Being Convicted for Child Sexual Offences

Child sex offenders are regularly judged harshly by society and are typically given fewer opportunities than non-sex offenders when it comes to resettlement, reintegration, social interaction and forgiveness (Furst and Evan, 2015). To explore this further, the participants were all asked: 'What effect has being convicted of sex offences had on your life?' Their answers ranged from "totally ruined" to little or no influence at all. Through the coding of the data it was established how the effects of a sexual conviction could be grouped into three themes: employment; loss (especially that of family); and acceptance of the self or acceptance from others.

Each participant's reply to the main question will be discussed below and to create a fluid structure to the presentation, their responses will be introduced under the aforementioned themes.

4.1.1 Employment

The primary effect of being convicted of child sexual offences for Nick, can be understood in his pursuit of securing any form of employment:

I tried to get a job a while back...and put my probation worker as a reference and they [the prospective employers] did not get back in touch with me. It had been six months and I did not hear anything from them...I think it was because I had put my probation worker down...[and] I think it's because it's a sex offence. If it were for an assault or something it would not be difficult to get a job...[because] [a]ssault is a bad charge, but a sexual offence is worse.

In the opinion of Nick, his ability to gain employment would have been easier if he had never sexually offended. Employers were turning him down because of this, which was a recurrent theme throughout the narratives of the men. Interestingly, Nick's OM wanted to help, but this reference was also seen as a barrier.

Similarly, Adam felt his sexual convictions also had a "big impact" on his ability to find employment, despite his "best efforts." He thought his exposure as a child sex offender in the local newspaper increased the risk of the public recognising him as such. Despite this he had taken positive steps to secure a flat and was involved with COSA. He was actively seeking employment,

by going to the job centre and reading advertisements in the local newspaper. However, he understood the limitations and restrictions that were placed on him:

...jobs are hard to come by because I can't have any contact with anybody under 18 or unsupervised contact. So that means I can't work in a place where there are under 18's.

His offences of grooming and arranging to meet an underage girl through a social media site limited the types of jobs he could hope to secure. This was especially frustrating because he had always worked and wanted to return to work. His use of the internet to offend therefore limited the ways in which he could look for employment:

I'm looking for work and I can't go on computers, I can't go on the internet [due to his offences], so actually looking for work on the internet is a no-no...

Although he felt as though he was not being given full opportunities to search for jobs, he would go to the local training centre every Friday helping him to overcome the job search issues he was having. This was an opportunity afforded to him by his OM and was an alternative way for him to job-see:

...it's an employment agency that helps you find work. At the minute I can go there once a week...and sit with my advisor and look online for jobs, but that's only happened in the last few weeks.

Adam was experiencing an issue which many offenders face when they leave prison and must disclose their criminal past (Scott and Flynn, 2014). However, for a man with child sexual offences and with the means to seek employment severely restricted, Adam was finding it even more difficult. Perhaps surprisingly therefore, his non-contact offences did not place him in any better position than other contact offenders and his internet restrictions made job hunting harder. This is despite research establishing that the rate of reconviction for internet offenders is very low (Goller et al., 2016).²⁹

The perceptions the participants held of the negative effects their conviction had upon their pursuit of work was influenced by their previous career history. For example, prior to his conviction, Nick did not have a job and therefore did not feel any great sense of loss due to his convictions. Adam on the other hand did have previous employment, but he had lost it. He wanted to return to work and gain some form of normality and pride in his life. Loss was a theme evident in the narratives of the participants and it shall be discussed below in more detail.

4.1.2 Loss of a 'normal life'

Allan stated how “the only thing missing is my family, but that is my fault because my crime is against my granddaughter.” Allan offended for approximately five years and this caused him to lose the people who were closest to him, with previously only his sister willing to talk to him. Unfortunately, she died a year before the interview took place, limiting his social interaction and

²⁹ Goller et al's. (2016) report, studied a cohort of 4612 'illegal pornography' offenders from Switzerland. The cohort was split into two groups: non-contact (internet) offender n=4249; and dual offenders (those who had current internet offences and previous contact offending) n=363. Only 0.2% of previous non-contact (internet) offenders went on to commit further contact child sexual offences during a three-year period and 2.6% of the dual offenders doing likewise. Only 1.6% of internet offenders went on to commit further internet offending. Dual offenders were more likely to reoffend than non-contact only offenders.

compounding this sense of loss further. His only forms of social communication were with his OM, some neighbours and people in the local shops. He was alone in the community and this saddened him.

He was also saddened because he was required to sign ViSOR every year, an aspect that he thought had the second biggest effect on him:

I am not very happy at having to go to a police station every year to sign the register and apparently that's for life. I am unhappy about that and wish there was some way of getting it cut down or something...I just wish it could come to an end instead of carrying on forever. I firmly believe that a man should have a chance to start again. He does wrong and then proves himself by starting again without doing anything else. I know there are people who reoffend and they don't deserve another chance. But I do think that a man deserves one chance. Just a chance to put it behind him.

ViSOR was a powerful reminder of the consequences of his behaviour. He had lost his previous identity as a well-respected man who spent his life working to provide for his family. The loss of his relationships and the impact of ViSOR were therefore inter-linked in Allan's case. His character was forever flawed in his mind and he believed he could not alter this in the short term, especially not while he was signing ViSOR.

After graduating from university, gaining a well-respected job and having plans to move out of his mother's house, James' life had taken a dramatic turn due to his offending when he suffered a striking fall from grace. His offences of grooming and breach of trust were linked to his employment, but his offences of being in possession of indecent images of children were not and

they exposed a darker, more entrenched cycle of offending. When asked ‘what have been the effects of being convicted of sexual offences on your life?’ he felt they had been:

...Massive, absolutely massive...I made a silly error one evening...being drunk at the time was my own fault, it was very stupid of me and a rare lapse in judgement. It’s very rare that I go out for a drink. I don’t drink now over the last year and a bit...I haven’t really drunk and I rarely go out.

This statement suggests how James minimised his offending behaviour, which is an indicator of some level of denial over its seriousness. However, he had decided to remove one factor that he thought was causal, drinking, which was a positive step towards desistance, but negative in terms of social isolation. He had feelings of embarrassment and humiliation which added to his need to stay away from others, especially some family:

It’s still difficult at family events if I go and see family. One of my family was [at the place he worked]...so that side of it is quite awkward sometimes. I just try and avoid it...I hate family events anyway, but it just kind of makes it...you know...the disappointment...you’re the one in the wrong...you’ve done something you shouldn’t have done.

“Disappointment”, “hate”, “difficult” showed how, even for a man who had not been to prison, resettlement was not an easy process. The inclusion of “you”, talking about himself in the third person further indicated how he was not taking full ownership of his behaviour and was detaching

his experiences. He clearly had to face up to his offences and said he was “disappointed with myself, slightly depressed in that I know how disappointed my family [were]” and he added “it’s quite embarrassing.” The overall effects of these negative feelings meant James was more socially isolated than before conviction, because of his sexual offences. He had lost most of his previous relationships and his sense of professional self and pride. Like Allan, his previous character was flawed, and he struggled to accept that.

Isolation and loneliness were also evident in Stu’s account but with an arguably greater and totalising effect, as he had lost all contact with his family and friends since his convictions. Married up until the early 1990’s, the sense of loss was great for him. Being convicted of sexual offences had a “huge, huge effect” on him because of this loss and the difficulties he faced trying to form new acquaintances. He stated “[the] first thing you worry about is if you manage to get a relationship going. You know you’re gonna have to disclose to that partner.” Disclosing his previous and current sexual offences to potential partners or friends meant he must choose carefully, because he was ultimately trusting them with his secrets. Trust is often an important factor when people with child sexual offences are making new relationships. This is because disclosing sensitive information runs the risk of hostile reactions from others and being ‘outed’ in the community. Potentially this could reinforce any negative beliefs they may have about their identity and how the public view them:

So it’s a matter of trust and at the moment I’m still lacking that trust...I have been celibate since I came out [of prison] purely because I don’t think it’s fair to go with someone and not be up front with them, because the police could turn up at any time. They are then put in an awkward position. [Stu]

Stu's sexual offences were very serious and he re-offended soon after being released from prison. To disclose his past, would therefore take a lot trust and this was something he did not feel comfortable doing. Professional 1 felt it was important to understand how past child sexual offences can impact on the offenders' daily life and other professionals should bare this in mind:

...[their past offending is] the thing that when they wake up in the morning it's there, when they go to sleep at night, it's there...what they did in the past and the worry about others finding out. Because whatever life they've been able to carve out for themselves, if their offending gets out, the people [in the community] find out about them, if the people in the paper shop find out, realise that person is a 'paedo'...and they know that they'll have to pack their bags and be off again. Knocking on the door of probation or the police, saying 'I need another home.'

Observations in this study therefore suggest that child sex offenders are detached significantly from their past lives, due to their offending and they may also find it difficult to regain these losses due to issues with disclosure and the fear of being 'outed'.

As the participant with the most previous convictions for separate incidences of sexual and violent offending, Dave's resettlement and subsequent reintegration was fraught with difficulty. Imprisoned many times, his behaviour gave rise to lost relationships, marriage difficulties resulting in two divorces, and frequent loss of housing and employment. He had three children of whom only one kept in contact and his life had been fragmented and chaotic:

Well it's been a big...huge impact for me and everyone around me. I've gone from a huge base of people who I communicated with, now that's down to virtually counting them on one hand. I lead quite a solitary lifestyle now. I have to watch my back. I have to be very very conscious of where I go, where and when not to go. Yeah and I have to live my life accordingly...I don't go out much. I don't do an awful lot of socialising anymore.

Dave's previous offences had drawn some interest with local newspapers, inevitably he was occasionally recognised by others. This added to his need to remain isolated and alone, it was his way self-protection and managing his criminal identity: his own form of risk management. He had been the subject of many kinds of restrictions throughout his criminal career, including previous police surveillance, treatment programmes, and child protection measures. Dave was an example of how easily a person's life can change negatively due to offending behaviour.

Losing what is often taken for granted in life is something that Andy learned the hard way. The upheaval and loss he felt because of his behaviour was severe for him. Life was very different to the one he had before:

Life after prison is absolutely ruined [compared to] what I had before I went to prison... I've lost family, family ties and that...I was living for me and the wife and that's all gone. I've got to look now basically to the future. I have to make the most of the time I have left...I ain't getting any younger. I feel remorse and sometimes I feel sorry for myself and obviously I wish I'd never done it. I can't put the clocks back. I had everything I could want. I was alright for money, I had a loving wife, family...what more does a man

really want in life? I had it all and just basically threw it away through stupidity. I miss my family life and it can be...I know where I am in the hostel at the moment, I've got people to talk to...but it can still be lonely. That's the thing. Fortunately I have my sister...one of my sisters and I see her every week and she's the only one I do see. So she brings a bit of normality back into my life which is a good thing.

This account showed how loss had left Andy bereft. This loss, after a long prison sentence, would be difficult to regain and as a result he demonstrated self-loathing and regret.

In the case of George, starting a new life meant he had to move to an unfamiliar area which was an upheaval and a struggle for him. His past relationships with family and friends were meaningful ones, developed over time, while his current ones were superficial, and it was hard for him to adjust to this:

It's ruined my life, totally ruined it. I have lost all friends that I had. I am trying to make new friends. When I come down town, talk to people who I have never met in my life as I'm sat having fish and chips, people come and sit and just start talking. Have a laugh with people. As regards to the offence, it has ruined my life. I have lost everything and everybody.

Although he stated he can "sit" with people and "have a laugh" with them, the reality was that his relocation impacted deeply on his life. Professional 4 understood the usefulness of relocation as a public protection measure, whilst noting the effects it can have on the offender:

[Relocation is] always a difficult one especially if it's an offence against a child or internet offending against children. We sort of end up having to put them...not too close to a school, not too close to a park, not too close to victims and...it's counterproductive because we are then moving them away from their old community...that happens all the time. Then there is fear of integrating themselves because of neighbour's saying 'where have you come from? What have you been up to? Where did you live before? Why have you come here?' Then the walls go up because they don't want to open up about their offending.

George thought he had lost some of his freedom and stated he "can't do like I used to be able to do...I have not got a...free life...I am restricted." This included the use of the internet on any device, in a similar vein to Adam above. Modern life is increasingly becoming geared towards the use of the internet and George was not allowed access to it. Chen and Schulz (2016) suggest that older people, especially those who are isolated and lonely, rely more than ever before on social media and the internet to interact with others. Denying this usage meant George's level of socialisation was lower than before conviction and he had become increasingly frustrated about this:

[The] thing with regards to having the internet is that I wanted to be in touch with the council as regards paying my council tax online. I can't do it, so I have to traipse down town to go to the office to sort that out. There are other things like I have had to change, send my driving licence off to get the address changed. That could have been done online.

Stuff like that, I've got to either send stuff off, or find my way to the place to do it, which is difficult when you don't know the area.

It seems therefore that the internet offenders in this study faced more restrictions than their contact offending counterparts. Their ability to search online for jobs, maintain relationships and pay for good or services were all lost. Those who had committed contact offences only were able to access the internet. This would suggest that internet offender's resettlement experiences were more negative in comparison.

4.1.3 Acceptance from Others

To be accepted as a valuable member of society can often be one of the most challenging aspects of being human. For people with sexual offences this societal acceptance is more difficult to achieve and if the person is a known child sex offender this may be impossible. With particular relevance to Nick's current child sexual offences he genuinely expected other people's reaction to be worse than they were. During the interview, he gave the impression of surprise that he was still in contact with his family:

I don't know why [my family are still in contact]. I just get on with what I am doing and people that know me know why I have been in jail and don't say anything. They speak to me, it's weird, I don't know why.

Nick's family and friends were still willing to give him a chance. His life had not changed a great deal, which was indicative throughout his account and will be discussed during this and the following chapters.

Adam was often wary of people discovering his offending past and this influenced his ability to feel accepted by others. To help with this, he had been helped by his OM to initiate meetings with COSA. COSA had accepted his application, a positive outcome for him:

...everything is starting to click into place...there's a place called 'Circles' [COSA] and I've got with them...probably next month some time...so everything is clicking into place.

His resettlement had taken time, but he was at a point where he felt like he was finally getting some support to reintegrate into the community with success. This was a mixed, emotional period for him as he felt frustrated, confused, worried but also relieved and increasingly happy about his situation. For everything to be "clicking into place" meant Adam had overcome an initial period of uncertainty, due to living in the local AP upon release from prison, and he was relaxing a little.

Stu thought his life was going well and his convictions had not stopped him from being able to take up opportunities to resettle. He was supported and accepted by a local housing provider and this gave him some stability and hope towards his long-term goals:

I'm retired, luckily...I managed to claim retirement benefit when I came out [of prison] and I have [a work] pension, so I'm reasonably settled...comfortable financially. I'm in a one bed roomed flat which is run by [name of housing provider] who supported me

when I first came out of prison and they are now taking on some more properties which they want me to have a look at over the next couple of weeks, cos they are permanent long term properties, so I've actually got a permanent place to live as opposed to being in a flat.

Stu had experienced relationship breakdowns, a long prison sentence, release from prison, a further community order and a changed housing status. He was trying hard to create a good life for himself and having decent housing in the future would help. The support and acceptance he gained from the housing provider meant his resettlement was quite positive in this area.

Phil's account was less positive as it was evident from his response just how debilitating he felt the label of being a sex offender was:

Quite a dramatic effect because obviously there is a lot of stigma that goes with it...[as well as] having a criminal conviction. Applying for housing is virtually impossible because I have been turned down by numerous housing associations. I have had to find a place privately. There is a lot of stigma that goes with it. OK you have probation [and] other services like the police...but there is no one to help pick up your life. At the moment I am still struggling because it's not like 'OK you've got seven months and it's all finished', you're not...you've got 10 years on licence plus you've got to try and pick up the pieces and move on with your life, with that stigma which doesn't go away, it's there for life...it's pretty hard.

At the time of the interview he was living in the AP, had only been out of prison for five months and was still finding it hard to feel that others had accepted him. Rejection for Phil was hard to accept as this was linked to how he thought others perceived him. Professional 5's view on acceptance bore great similarity to that of Phil's own experiences:

I think from my experience, stigma's a massive thing in terms of what a lot of our guys carry with them...so I think they struggle in that respect of just being accepted back in, as a person, cos they're kinda seen as something else...

Professional 5 continued with a reflection on the issues of being accepted for suitable housing:

I know there's quite a few housing providers round here who won't touch people with sexual convictions because they've not got the staff trained to manage that level of risk, or the properties are in family areas, they're near schools. So I think kind of the whole lifestyle of some of our guys is ripped apart, because there's so many things they can't do, there's barriers to so many things.

Therefore, it is surmised that rejection goes hand-in-hand with stigma, where the stigma is related to being a child sex offender. This co-related factor has an impact on the resettlement process, as evident in Phil's account and Professional 5's reflection.

Dave's accounts below, first describe how he viewed his past, giving some background into his previous behaviour and context to how he viewed his life. His account then moves on

towards the acceptance he experienced from the courts, as he was given a second chance by them after breaching his SHPO:

I've lived a life on the wrong side of the law for the most of it. I've got various offences of a sexual nature as well as for violence and a lot of other petty crime. I suppose I've lived quite a dysfunctional life really. I've not abided by the law for a long time really. I've always tried to get away with things, I've always tried to take the easy option and that's impacted on...where I am in life now really.

Re-housed in 2012, Dave expressed a cessation in offending from that point and was reportedly living a legitimate life. During the period shortly after he had moved in, he was under covert surveillance by the police, because he was deemed to be at a very high risk of reoffending. One day, whilst being surveilled, Dave allowed his daughter into his property. He stated that he did not know that his daughter's partner had also entered the house, with their young child. Being in a residence with a person under the age of 16 was a violation of his SHPO and as a result he was arrested for the breach. This breach was his current conviction. When he was in court, he expected to return to prison. He thought he would lose his house and more importantly for him, his daughter due to further possible restrictions. To his relief this did not happen, the court accepted his case and accepted that the losses he would suffer, outweighed the offence that occurred:

...my [SHPO] was one of those... 'if you breach your [SHPO] it's go to jail, go directly to jail do not pass Go'...I think the judge saw that 'you've done wrong here lad, I think they're being a bit heavy on you, I'm not gonna jail you for this'...They said they didn't

want me jailed. They said that the time I'd get and the upheaval it would cause...it's just not worth it.

This was a rare occasion for Dave, he had been given the benefit of the doubt by the court and been allowed to remain in the community. This gave him a good sense of feeling accepted by the courts and the criminal justice system due to this second chance. The acceptance by the courts was a form of positive reinforcement, as Dave expressed how he was attempting to change his behaviour and move away from his past offending. He attended the SOTP and regular meetings with his OM. Having such a long offending history would have impacted on his ability to trust others and himself, and for others to reciprocate that trust. Therefore, the courts actions helped to not only build up the trust between himself and them, it also affirmed his belief that he was doing well in terms of community reintegration.

Andy lacked trust in others, but more importantly, he felt others lacked trust in him because of his child sexual offences:

...you tend to look over your shoulder when you go out. It took me two or three days or so to get used to going outside. If people leave me alone...and let you get on with what you've got to do, you know. I think the reoffending of sex offenders is one of the lowest. I think it's only about 2%...its statistics...The majority of them don't [reoffend], it's been like 'one offs'. And they've never done it again.

Andy wanted to be trusted, but he felt he was being treated harshly, despite his belief in the relatively low re-offending rates:

I know it's classed as a terrible offence and sometimes you think I'd have been better if I'd have killed them. I'd have gone up for murder...the stigma because you're a sex offender is worse than a murderer.

In his opinion, being a murderer was more acceptable than being a child sex offender. He understood that this was a societal view which permeated through to the professionals supervising him in the community. He thought the negative views of child sex offenders directly influenced the NPS, offering him fewer opportunities to resettle and reintegrate:

...one of the biggest problems that I find...is probation...I know they are there to protect the public...but they are a bit too overboard at times. That's just how I find them...with all this controversy that's been over probation and people...they're too afraid to do anything...

This directly relates to the current theme of acceptance, because in Andy's opinion, the NPS and his OM are not ready to accept him into the community without strict risk management procedures in place. He said this was through fear, but the reality is linked closer to a reluctance to make mistakes and inflame negative public opinion further. To accept a person with child sexual offences into the community is balanced with the needs of the offender and the protection of the public. It is the unknown element of what the offender may do and the harm that they may cause that makes acceptance by others so difficult to achieve. Andy's issues of being accepted in society were not uncommon and Professional 10 expressed how child sex offenders often share experiences such as this in the community:

For a lot of them the issues are the same. The stigma attached to being a sex offender. The belief that everybody knows they are a sex offender, whether they know them or not, there is that fear. Integration, lack of friends, lack of family. A lot of them are removed from that, they have segregated themselves from that. Families don't want anything to do with them. Isolation, all the restrictions that are placed on them, they feel their life is pointless because they can't do anything. It's trying to make them aware that there are things around those restrictions where they can live, who they can associate with, where they can go. Everybody seems to have those issues.

Isolation, stigma, fear, loss, segregation, these elements all combine to hinder the chances of a person who has been convicted of child sexual offences, to be accepted by the public, family and the criminal justice system. Many of the participants of this study faced these issues, but to differing degrees. Below is a further discussion on acceptance, where the primary focus is on how the participants accepted themselves.

4.1.4 Acceptance of the Self

To be accepted by others is one thing, to accept the self is wholly different. Since his conviction, Sean thought he had grown as a person and was beginning to accept himself and his past behaviour. He explained this change when he said, "in the beginning when I was first convicted I was what they call 'in denial'. 'I didn't do it', 'it wasn't me, they were lying'." Being "in denial" meant he initially took no responsibility for his actions and did not outwardly display any remorse for them. Denial acted as a defence mechanism, as it was easier to deny rather than accept his behaviour. However, in prison he started to admit to his actions and this changed his outlook:

It was then I started realising that I had done something wrong. It affected me in a way that I knew I had made problems, not just for me, but for other people and it took me a long time to sort that out.

This shift in personal recognition of his actions was a significant factor towards accepting his identity, not only in prison but also upon release. This change had taken many years, helping him to evaluate his life and his life goals. He explained how he would never want to return to prison, and said “if somebody said ‘come on we are going to do this’ I would say ‘no’, a big ‘no’.” Sean’s account was an indication of his intent to live a socially accepted life. Maruna (2001) terms this the ‘comeback of the I’ (p. 148), where a person starts to take control of their life and the future is in their hands. Sean’s narrative links with this aspect of desistance theory well, especially on reflection of his previous passage above, and it suggests how he was ‘locating the roots of his’ problems whilst not fully explaining his overall resettlement processes (Maruna, 2001: 149). This move away from criminal activity and the acceptance of his previous actions were one of the biggest steps he could have taken in his life. It was one of his first steps towards resettling in the community as a changed person and this was the effect of his convictions and the journey he had taken.

Seemingly, the move from denial to acceptance was a lengthy process for Sean. It was a process of redefinition, of personal acknowledgement, of re-evaluation. Not only was Sean accepting what he did was wrong, he was also accepting the child sex offender label. Professional 5 believed that this self-acceptance was not only a journey, it was an important factor of consideration:

...I can think of one or two people and their kind of sense of self is shattered because everything they had before is no longer available to them and I think that in terms of reintegration it's a massive thing because they're having to start again. Being somebody else that they haven't been before.

Phil's earlier account showed the difficulties of coming to terms with "being somebody else" and adopting the negative sex offender label. His story was similar to that of many of the participants and his feelings were also similar, but he felt alone and isolated. After all, he was living in a community with a label that he was struggling to accept, in a community where he felt others would not accept him. Andy on the other hand spoke about himself and his past in very negative terms:

You never think you're gonna get caught do you? Really in a sense. Once reality hits home you think 'what a bloody dickhead you've been'. You know I have a very low feeling of myself...I despise myself sometimes...what a dick.

When he was asked 'what do you do to try to overcome that?' he replied "I just basically switch off and concentrate on what I've got to do now, which I have to do otherwise it won't be any good for me." This, was Andy's way of coping and dealing with his emotions along with avoiding disappointment should things go wrong.

4.1.5 Summary

This study suggests that employment, loss, acceptance from others and from the self, are all important factors when determining how the participant's lives have been impacted upon. Two of the men spoke about the effects on employability, with the child sex offender conviction and the attached label almost negating any opportunities in this area, whilst stricter licence conditions for internet offenders made job searching harder. Loss came in many guises and was experienced by most of the men. Indeed, loss of relationships and the consequences therein, was a strong theme that resonated throughout many of their accounts. Finally, familial, societal and professional acceptance was highlighted as important along with how the participants accepted themselves. Acceptance by others came in the form of professional help and guidance, being accepted for a housing placement or simply having their family close by. Acceptance of the self, manifested in self-hatred and loathing through to an acceptance that they are a changed person. These themes have helped to highlight many of the issues that will be discussed throughout chapters 4-6, whilst touching upon the very fabric of child sex offender resettlement. They give a glimpse into the difficulties and nuances that the participants faced when resettling into the community, after conviction.

4.2 Resettlement: What has it been like? What Problems Remain?

This section will present the participant responses to following questions:

Q: Do you feel that you have resettled into the community?

Q: What has the experience of resettlement been like?

Q: What problems remain?

The answers presented here have been split into three identified themes: Fear of being ‘outed’ and consequent loss; isolation and loneliness; and housing.

4.2.1 Fear of being ‘Outed’ and Consequent Loss

It was clear throughout the interviews, data transcription and the results presentation process, that the participants experienced fear because of their child sex offender status in the community. Below is a discussion about the fear they felt of being ‘outed’ by others as a child sex offender and the fear of consequently losing all they had gained since conviction. Each of the men viewed being ‘outed’ in different ways and their collective experiences show the effects of being ‘outed’ (Sean) through to how the fear altered their resettlement process (Phil).

Sean experienced first-hand what it was like to have his identity ‘outed’ by someone else. When he was working with a voluntary agency helping offenders to resettle, he was confronted by someone from his past:

I know all the people [at the voluntary agencies] and there was never no problems. There was somebody who was [from prison], he recognised me because he was a debt head³⁰ from B Wing [a non-sex offender wing] he had been sent across [to the Vulnerable

³⁰ The term ‘debt head’ is usually used as prison slang for a prisoner who owes money, drugs or tobacco to other prisoners. ‘Debt heads’ are often vulnerable in prison due to the amount they owe, and they may live in fear of violence if they fail to repay. As a result of this, they may be segregated from non-sex offender (mains) prisoners and be placed on a vulnerable prisoner unit (VPU) under Prison Rule 43. This is often referred to as being on the ‘numbers’ and is a label that is also associated with sex offenders, because they are automatically placed on the ‘numbers’ due to their offence, unless they choose not to be.

Prisoners (VP) wings] because people were ballistic and going to kill him because he was in that much debt and he recognised me and he said I was a sex offender...

Sean responded by saying that he “did not know what [he] was talking about” and this was positive for him. He had previously created an image of being a non-sex offender to most of the people at the project, in fact he told them he was a robber and he wanted to maintain that. Indeed, managing this image was important to him for many reasons:

The problem is people finding out...like I say I got two people who do know. They are a married couple, they know, they know everything about me...it's just when I meet new people. I have to switch on the 'I need to be careful' mode, just in case...I don't invite anybody back to my house... because I'm afraid, you know, like, it's just having people in your house and then they find out that you're what you are and then they cause an awful lot of problems for you.

Sean had developed a once bitten twice shy attitude towards life due to a licence recall to prison after being arrested for being in contact with a known sex offender. He stated he was helping the man move to a new house, but his RMO did not see it that way. It was clear that he did not want to return to prison again and said:

I am being very careful because I don't want to go back to prison. I really don't want to go back to prison. I am too old now and I couldn't cope with going back there...because I am losing what I have got now. I lose my flat like I did last time, I lose the freedom.

I've gone out when I want to go out, I lock my own door, I'm not being locked in. I can basically do what I want to do...and that's one of the main reasons that I don't want to go back to prison.

Sean had a flat and support from voluntary agencies and was able to make choices about his life, which was a different experience compared to prison. His life was better than it was before his conviction and his recall. If he was 'outed' then he could potentially have lost all he had gained. Professional 2 stated it was important to the desistance process for a person to understand what they could lose:

It's about people being...able to fulfil themselves in a more positive way than their previous lifestyle. So what you're hoping is...thinking about their life prior to offending and then thinking about their life now, that it's not on the same level...it's that bit better. I've got a lifer who murdered his child and raped his wife...who's done an extremely positive job of reintegration ... and one of the main motivators for him is...he's married and there are a lot of very positive things [going on in his life].

Therefore, fear of being outed, fear of losing what he had and returning to prison were all motivating factors in Sean's life and he was careful in his dealings with others.

Adam shared this fear of being 'outed' and said "I go places and as I say...nobody's found out. That's my only worry, you're always wondering." This anxiety of being 'outed' meant he would often stay in his new flat for the "the peace and quiet." This limited his social interaction

with others and increased his isolation further. He no longer wanted to be isolated because of his fear, therefore he adopted strategies to help overcome this:

I go shopping; I go for walks once a day for an hour. That was my probation officer's instruction, because I was just sat in the hostel and I wasn't doing anything and she said 'look I want you to go out'...I wasn't sleeping...[b]ut now I'm in my own place, I'm finding it easier to sleep...

When he was asked what else may have prevented him from sleeping he simply said “worrying about if people will find out” adding how the fear of being ‘outed’ in the hostel increased his anxiety further. However, he still could not move away from this fear and continued to return to it throughout the interview:

...basically the stigma, that's always on my mind...will people find out what I've done? That's one of the reasons why I don't want to get too close to anybody...then they don't know my name...they can't find out about me and if they do find out about me I'm not losing anything by not being close to people. If I get close to somebody and they find out [what I've done] it's going to be hard for them and hard for me.

Dave experienced similar fears and had some concerns about being ‘outed’ and what he stood to lose should this happen, or should he reoffend:

I worry all the time that the bubble's gonna burst from where I'm living now because I speak to a lot of people who live in my area, all my age or just a bit younger...I don't speak to young teens, I don't speak to the younger generation anymore; I've cut myself off from them totally. But yeah that's my biggest fear is that somebody at some point is gonna go 'oh do you know him, bet you don't know about him.' I haven't had that yet, you know, I feel blessed with that.

This bubble illustrated how he and many of the participants felt about their lives in the community. Despite making significant strides towards resettlement, they were in a vulnerable and precarious position. For example, Dave explained how he had carved out a new life, had good housing, still had a relationship with his daughter and had not been in prison for a few years, yet he still experienced anxiety and fear over being 'outed'. This is where his own form of self-risk management was of use:

I used to think everybody I walked past knew who I was, my paranoia wasn't...brilliant. It's been hard work...it's been eight years since I was released from this big sentence that everybody knew about...and it's got better as the years have gone on. Mainly through self-preservation, keeping myself safe...I have a fairly set routine.

He thought his life was "boring" but this was his way of managing his risks and resettling into the community. The only problems he felt he had were with employment and money and he did not want to return to crime to illegally fund his lifestyle. However, he felt he could manage by curtailing some of his activities. Even though this resettlement process was slow and it had taken

eight years for him to feel more settled than he ever had, he stated he was determined and motivated to succeed with his life away from crime.

This was also experienced by Phil, who when asked whether he felt he had resettled into the community answered:

In certain ways yes, but it's just dealing with what has happened and how that affects me for the rest of my life. There is just so much stigma attached...it's very difficult in trying to find ways to move forward... At the moment my way of coping is just to take one day at a time and just move on...It's been quite horrendous. I mean I got to a stage where I just gave up. I couldn't see any way forward at all.

Phil did not feel in control of his life and did not have a lot of direction, he felt downhearted. He believed the drive to succeed could be hampered if he was 'outed' and this fear impacted negatively on his resettlement. Professional 7 explained this was not uncommon and gave an example of a young sex offender:

I supervised someone who came in from YOT [Youth Offending Team] who was convicted of rape and he saw that as him written off now in terms of anything. He was quite good at...[his work]...but he stopped it because he felt that if he got good at it people would research him and know he had been convicted for rape...so he's already adopted a sense of hopelessness.

This story of the consequences of committing serious offences, such as rape, resulted in this young man giving up on his hopes and dreams, before they had ever really started. The consequences of living in fear, not only of being ‘outed’ but also of losing everything they had gained, also resonated strongly in the next discussion on isolation and loneliness.

4.2.2 Isolation and Loneliness

The fear the participants felt in terms of being ‘outed’, had a detrimental effect on their overall resettlement experience. It often stopped them from socially interacting or forming friendships and increased their isolation and loneliness. For example, Allan was the only participant to report no media interest in his case. He appeared to live his life without a fear of being ‘outed’. Despite this he was lonely and isolated even though his identity had not been tainted to the same extent as some of the other participants and no one knew about his child sexual offences:

I go shopping and come into town every week and I am always loaded down with shopping...I talk to people in shops all the time. They are getting to know me, where I live and ask how I am. I live in a ground floor flat, we all speak to each other.

Allan believed this level of social interaction was important to him. However, it seemed to be quite a superficial and fleeting interaction, limited to the times when he was shopping. Contact like this helped him to feel normal, as the people he met did not view him as a child sex offender. An example from Professional 1 illustrates how positive social interactions in the community help people with sexual offences to feel accepted and less isolated:

[Sex offenders] are worried, nervous, terrified particularly, [about] anyone finding out about their offending behaviour. I have a chap who...[has] his little routine, these two or three charity shops that he goes in as part of his daily routine, he doesn't want to ruin that, for them to see him no longer as [his name] but as the sex offender... 'Oh it's the perv coming in...'

This relates to Allan's experiences because the shopkeepers and other customers did not see him as the "perv", his identity was unknown and he could be himself:

I am happy right now and just getting on with my life. After being in prison, cooped up with other people it's nice to have your own space. My flat is lovely, my own bathroom. It's amazing and I appreciate every minute and every day when I can just walk out for a newspaper if I want to. I used to dream of that in prison.

This statement gave the impression that he had re-evaluated his life and had no desire to return to prison. These experiences were encouraging for him, reinforcing his position as a person who belonged in that community and how he was on the right track towards changing his life:

The whole experience has been good, positive, because I just keep plodding along and getting on with my life. I have a bike and go for a bike ride. I am thrifty with my money, I am comfortable...the only problem I have is that I would like to see my daughter.

His only issue was getting in contact with his family and he seemed to be somewhat isolated with only this minimal, social interaction. Despite this he expressed virtually no negative experiences and was thankful for his situation.

In a comparable vein, George had a similar experience to Allan, with social interactions that lacked substance, but some positive meaning to him. He said he was “getting there” when he was asked about community resettlement and that he was experiencing this in a positive fashion:

It’s been sound. It’s been nice. The guy next door, when I went up to view the place...came out and said ‘are you moving in here’. I said ‘yes’...‘Oh good’. We shook hands and that and a couple of days later his wife came out and said ‘hello’ and greeted me...It made me feel good. Two or three I have spoken to up there...it’s going nice yes.

While small-scale and superficial, this social interaction was something of an achievement for George and he was happy with it. Such contact was important to him because this meant he was not totally isolated. Professional 11 believed this was an essential factor to promote when sex offenders are trying to resettle:

People aren’t really supposed to be on their own, it’s not the way that society really should work. People live in communities and if they don’t have that, they are gonna be isolated and they may go back to how they were feeling beforehand; which is kinda isolated, on their own and that no one understands.

Professional 2 concurred with the idea that people want to interact with others:

I don't think a lot of people want to be apart from society...I don't think that's an aim. They may wish that society had different goals that linked better with theirs, but I don't think people want to be ostracised, do they? Generally, people want to be part of the community, we are social beings aren't we?

The “social being” was important in the resettlement and desistance process for these professionals and it was also important to George and to Allan, regardless of the level of social contact. It was not the content of the communication between others that mattered for these men and the professionals, it was simply the fact that they were in contact with others rather than living in isolation. However, the reality is that this could change should someone recognise them as a sex offender, as explained by George:

I have done my time and now I'm trying to get back into community which I am finding difficult at times because I met a person when I was going to the bus station who called me a name [verbal abuse]. I totally ignored him and just kept walking which I thought was the best thing to do instead of letting other people see that he was talking to me. When I got back to the probation hostel I reported it and they in turn said I had done the right thing by ignoring him and letting people think he was talking to someone else. I have got on with that. If he is up against the bus station when I go to catch the bus I go a different way so that I do not have to pass him. That's how I got round that. It isn't a real problem, I just mind what I'm doing. Keep my head down, in some cases keep myself to myself...

This could have changed George's ability to mix with others in the community, but it did not. He dealt with the situation appropriately even if it made him a little more cautious for the future. He adopted a strategy to manage his identity in the community and it worked for him.

James had experienced similar situations like this on a regular basis, albeit without the abuse, due in part to the proximity of his home to his workplace. He was arrested at work and his offending was directly linked to his employment. His isolation in this community had increased as a result of his behavior:

I do still go out...and because I do still live close to the [workplace] and most of the [workers] that go there live there, so there's still...Awkwardness on my behalf. I've seen a couple of the members of the staff that I got on well with. I don't speak to them anymore, I've distanced myself...I don't want to cause any problems for those people. I bump into them I'll be polite and talk to them, no worries, but I won't contact them, won't make that effort and I'll try and cut those ties. You know, I've seen a few of them, spoke to them, I live near to some of them...

This was a very new experience for James and one which he was still coming to terms with. His case was in the local media, his ex-work colleagues knew about his offending and his life had been turned upside down. Life for James had become "difficult" but he was trying to "keep it normal" which was proving hard because he wanted to move on and could not.

4.2.3 Housing

A conviction for child sexual offences can result in large scale changes to an offender's life, especially in terms of increased loss, fear, difficulties in being accepted by others and by themselves, isolation and loneliness. One of the most important aspects of the resettlement process for the participants was their ability to find suitable housing. This is any accommodation that the NPS has deemed suitable for the participants to live in, during their time of supervision. Highlighted in Chapter 2, there are many aspects and considerations to be made when resettling child sex offenders. Although the topic of housing will be covered again later in this chapter, it is mentioned here because some of the men discussed it in terms of their community resettlement. The experiences of Nick, Adam, Stu and Andy are recounted below, showing how suitable, permanent housing can promote positive resettlement.

Nick was initially released from prison to the AP. He was happy with this at the time because he "knew people in there" (residents and staff) and because he "had been there before." This familiarity made his resettlement more straight forward than some of the other participants and helped him to have a positive view of his reintegration overall. However, one thing that did influence him was the negative public perception of the hostel:

Being in there is difficult because it's near a school and parents know what it is, because they have tried to get it closed down. You have people looking at you but nobody has really said anything.

People from the local community knew it was a place that housed people with child sexual offences and this embarrassed Nick, especially if he was walking in and out of it, for fear of being exposed.

Although he was happy to reside there, this embarrassment was the motivation he needed to move out of this environment, to a more permanent base:

I got bidding for the council house and got offered one. I moved in and now I am just trying to decorate it and get it looking good...I just got out and got what I needed to get set up, money wise and stuff like that. [Along with] seeing my Brother and my Dad.

Overall it was positive to hear how Nick was happy with the resettlement process and he seemed to be getting on with life well, especially considering his long history of offending.

The AP was a primary tool for OM's to use when housing people with child sexual offences, because it was convenient and acted as a 'halfway-house' from prison to more permanent accommodation. Its reputation may have been poor in the community, but it played a vital role in helping Adam to resettle:

Well as you know, I'm a sex offender and I've been out of prison for about seven and a half months now. For the first, just under seven months I was in the hostel and that sort of helped me get back on my feet. If it hadn't been for the hostel I don't know what I'd have done. I'd have probably been back inside.

He moved out of the hostel and was living in a rented flat at the time of interview. Later in this report, it will become clear how Adam was relieved to be away from the hostel as he felt it was damaging his ability to resettle. Indeed, when he was asked if he thought he had resettled into the community he answered "Yeah...because I've got my own place."

Leaving the hostel was often a slow process for the participants and the experience was shared by many of the participants, including Stu. At the time of interview, he was living in the hostel and was waiting to get his own place. He was retired and all he wanted was to feel confident with his life and to be able to do some of the normal activities that he enjoyed prior to his original conviction:

I attend a poetry club once a month. If I have any stress during that day, then I've got to admit I don't go. My confidence isn't that strong...the slightest thing can upset me and put me out. I get embarrassed and so I'd rather stop in. I do paint a lot which is my hobby. I read a lot...I walk a lot...I go out every day barring Sunday, Sunday is my day off, where I sit and read, get a couple of papers, make myself a cooked breakfast and sit and 'mong' all day. I'm hoping that once I get a permanent place I will actually get...to have a reduced social network...I'm still anxious about my convictions, how that will be interpreted by the people I meet.

His activities of painting, reading and walking were all individual, private pursuits and it appeared Stu was using them to pass the time while he waited to move out of the hostel. Moving on, or transitioning from the hostel environment to suitable, more permanent housing gave him some hope that he may be able to interact with other people and develop more meaningful relationships.

In a similar vein to Stu, Andy did not like the hostel and only appreciated it as a place to stay whilst he was looking for somewhere else:

I'm in an environment [the hostel] where I'm with other criminals...which is supposed to be a bloody no-no. It's alright. I have a roof over my head and it's a safe environment at the moment. I'm getting fed, it's only costing me £20 per week...I'm fine with that...when I do get a place, I'll be able to furnish it and have some decent stuff rather than having to rely on hand-outs.

Living in the AP was not the main concern for Andy, although it did get in the way of helping him feel like he was part of the community. The real issue was about moving to new, more suitable accommodation and being trusted to not reoffend:

I've put in for three sheltered dwellings and as far as I know the council rang my probation officer and because it had communal areas he recommended that I wasn't suitable for it. His reason was that when they have these communal centres people can have their grandkids visiting...if you knew people was going in there that was a risk to me, you'd stay away...why don't they trust you to do that? I think that's what it is, it's a matter of trust and I think they go a bit overboard.

Andy wanted this trust and not to be viewed as a risk. He thought this would help his resettlement and his reintegration. As long as he did not feel trusted, life would be harder and he would always have to prove himself to others. The resettlement of sex offenders into the community is a fine balancing act and all decisions must be put before the OM. Professional 8 gave an example of how this worked in relation to housing:

When a sex offender is released from prison and they're trying to find housing, housing is informed, they run it past [NPS]. A couple of weeks ago, one of mine, he's been bidding for flats, she runs it passed me...it's opposite the school: 'no it's not suitable'. So therefore he's not penalised for that which is good but there are barriers in as much as it's all part of the risk management of sex offenders, that's why the barriers are in place...

Compare this to Andy's experience and it can be seen how his motivation and determination to resettle with purpose may be negatively affected:

When I see an address and I think I wouldn't mind living there...if it's within a mile or so of a school I don't put in for it. They'll just say 'Oh no it's too near a school' or 'this playground'...so I said to my PO [Probation Officer], 'you don't happen to know a croft in Scotland do you? In the middle of nowhere? As long as it's got a river going through and I can have fishing rights, send me there.' You get like that, you think...'stick me miles away...leave me...let me get on with it...let me go.'

Therefore, trust, risk and resettlement all go hand in hand when considering how to manage child sex offenders in the community. Andy knew this and he appreciated the difficulties the probation service face in the resettlement process:

You find 90% [of sex offenders] would prefer to be moved miles from bleeding anywhere, but that would become a risk factor...Because you become isolated, lonely and you'd be wanting to perv and all this sort of crap.

Andy's thoughts and experiences painted a vivid picture of the complicated nature of housing and how it links to resettlement and he would have preferred to move away to a "croft" in Scotland. However, the NPS cannot be seen to be housing child sex offenders where they want to go, they have to manage risk and protect the public. This will inevitably lead to some frustration on the part of the offender who may feel unjustly treated. However, these are the consequences of their behaviour and the public would be more concerned if the NPS was failing in its duty.

4.2.4 Summary

The resettlement process for many of the participants was a slow one and was one that presented with a lot of fear and anxiety with regards to their future, their safety and their identity in the community. They were often fearful of being 'outed', which in turn created fear about losing all they had gained should they have to move away from their new life. They also showed fear about losing all they had gained, should they reoffend, which, in terms of desistance theory is a positive factor and hints towards motivations to lead normal, offence free lives (see Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). They were, in the main, lonely and isolated in the community with very little in terms of meaningful social interaction with others. This was apparent across all the participants, regardless of their history. Finally, the men spoke about the importance of housing in the resettlement process and how they wanted to move to more permanent accommodation, especially those who were in the AP.

4.3 Views of Resettlement

Participants were asked about their relationships, housing and employment issues and how such factors had changed since conviction. To help with the analysis here, each section will include an

illustrative table at the start. This will present a visual breakdown of how the statuses of the men changed since their conviction. Within each section, some of the experiences and thoughts of the men will be presented alongside their thoughts on their future reintegration and resettlement and the thoughts of the professionals. Some of the men may have discussed these issues above and so to avoid repetition, only new, fresh information will be included.

The underlying theoretical framework that was introduced in Chapter 3 and again in the current chapter (Figure 4.1 page 107), has been designed to include resettlement as a factor influencing the reintegration process of people with child sexual offences in the community. Relationships, housing and employment all relate to this theory because they are succinct areas that link into resettlement. It is hypothesised that if the experiences of the participants are positive, then the reintegration process is more likely to be positive and they are more likely to refrain from further offending. On the other hand, if the experiences are negative, this may result in a more negative effect on their reintegration, thus slowing any desistance process down or increasing the risks of further offending.

4.3.1 Relationships

During the research process, it was quickly established that the theme of relationships was significant throughout the resettlement process for the participants. Figure 4.2 highlights the intimate relationship changes of the men following conviction and up to the time of interview:

PARTICIPANT	RELATIONSHIP STATUS BEFORE	RELATIONSHIP STATUS AFTER
Stu	Divorced and Single	Divorced and Single
Allan	Divorced and Single	Divorced and Single
Dave	Divorced and Single	Divorced and Single
Sean	Divorced and Single	Divorced and Single
George	Divorced and Single	Divorced and Single
Phil	Single	Single
James	Single	Single
Adam	Single	Single
Nick	Girlfriend	Single
Andy	Married	Divorced and Single

Figure 4.2: Participants intimate relationship status before and after conviction

Unlike the changes observed below in housing and employment, there was very little change in the marital and intimate relationship status of the participants. All the men were single with only two of them in a relationship at the time of conviction.

The meaning of relationships to the men in this study ranged from those with their closest family, their victims, their ex-partners, the professionals who supervise them, their friends and ex-work colleagues. This list is not exhaustive. Relationships thus, mean more than close, intimate one. To extrapolate this information the men were asked “How have your relationships been affected?” in order to understand their experiences. Their answers have been placed into three themes: developing trust in others; the effects of losing family; and positive experiences.

a) Developing trust in others

The three men who wanted to develop the ability to trust others were Phil, Sean and Stu. Phil's experiences were slightly more negative than those of Sean and therefore Stu will be discussed first. Phil had had little in terms of support from friends and virtually no support from family. This isolation and loneliness is apparent below:

It's been quite a huge impact. Obviously before I went to prison I had a few friends...they have gone their way, I have gone mine. It's quite an awful experience...I have one friend, but he already knows...At the moment I am still working on that friendship...

The loss of friendships was not easy for Phil to accept, because he explained how it was hard to make new friendships and to build trust with other people:

I have always had a problem building relationships. Basically because of what I have been through...I have a severe trust issue. I have had to work hard to build trust. Regarding other people in the community and in the hostel, again it takes a while before I begin to trust them.

This was an issue for Phil and the question of whether he could trust anyone in the future remained. If he was able to develop trust this may help his resettlement to be more positive. Phil had a long way to go if he was ever going to build up trust in others or build up trust with himself.

Sean's relationship with his family had changed very little since his conviction, imprisonment and release. He stated he was never in a "close knit family" and was not in contact

with them. As a result, they did not know about his offending. He gave a hypothetical example of getting in contact with his sister and how hard it would be for both:

Bringing my baggage to her would mean having to tell her that I'm a sex offender and that having to tell her three kids that I'm a sex offender and being supervised if I'm around her kids and all that, so it's too much baggage to bring anybody to be honest.

This illustrated the point that Sean did not want to get in contact with her or any of his family, because of the logistical problems presented. Therefore, Sean spoke chiefly about the relationships that he could easily form once he had negotiated issues of trust:

...hopefully things will work out that I can make friends and not worry, you know take the worry out from my part...*I have to keep my head where it is and make sure I don't over trust people. I can trust people, but not overly trust them*, where I am going to leave myself in a bad situation. [Emphasis added].

Having this trust was important because it helped him to feel safer in the community. The construction of his relationships was based upon this trust and this suggested that making friends was precarious at the best of times for him. Interestingly, Sean had developed a relationship with his faith, as he proclaimed to be a Buddhist. Although he never went into any detail about this, he stated it helped him to live day-to-day and to enjoy the moment, rather than fix himself on goal setting. Buddhism gave Sean the peace of mind that he longed for and it helped him to feel part of a small community. It was non-judgemental in nature and that drew him to it. None of the other

participants spoke about religion or faith, apart from Stu who also introduced his Buddhist faith at this point in the interview. This showed how important they felt Buddhism was to them in the resettlement process. However, there is little research conducted on the influence of religion on the resettlement processes of people with child sexual offences, especially related to desistance from crime. This could be a potentially important area for future research.

The account of Stu and his experiences of how his relationships had changed since his conviction were similar to that of Sean, because of this shared faith. Buddhism helped him to build his trust with others and had the potential to be very positive:

I've tentatively been to the local Buddhist centre and they're nice. They don't ask nosey questions, they're just there for the meditation. So they are pleased to see you when you come in. So you can develop friendships in that respect.

This gave Stu the opportunity to be the person he wanted to be, and not to only be viewed as a child sex offender. His child sex offender identity was hidden in this case and he could hide it easily. For these reasons he felt he could trust the people at the centre, which was a major factor for him and his resettlement. One of Stu's main issues was developing this trust in others because he had almost nobody he could trust in his social circle and this was proving hard for him:

I have no contact with my family at all. They cut off all contact with me when I went to prison...friendships in the community, I haven't developed that. I speak to people, like people at the poetry club and that, but I don't want to get involved, per se...[it's] getting trust back in people...I think that's gonna be the hardest bit; learning to trust.

This led Stu to be quite negative about his future and his ability to establish meaningful relationships which also linked to his views on stigma, a topic that will be discussed in Chapter 6.

b) The Effects of Losing Family – Negative Experiences

It was clear from the interviews that many of the men valued relationships highly and felt a great sense of personal loss due to the consequences of their offending behaviour. This loss was, in the main, felt at a familial level, rather than a friendship one. The accounts of Adam, Dave, Andy, George and Allan are given below, with each man's experience demonstrating what this loss meant to them and how strained their remaining relationships with family were.

One such example of how strained family life was since conviction was Adam. His sister was his only frequent point of contact and this came with big risks, one's that were bigger for her than him:

A lot of my family don't want anything to do with me. There's a lot of them. My sister comes around...[but] the family have basically turned round to her and said if she sees me, they don't want anything to do with her. So she's got to be very careful coming to see me. *She's taking a big risk actually coming to see me.* [Emphasis added].

Condry (2007) highlighted these risks in the form of 'secondary stigma' (p. 61) where the family members may share the stigma of the offender and some of the consequences that go with it. Secondary stigma was also evident in the account of Dave and he spoke about how his daughter had developed a series of lies to be able to maintain their relationship:

I'm not as close to my family as I was...I can't see my grandkids anymore...they don't know who I am, they haven't got a clue who I am. They think I'm Uncle Steve...my daughter has to be devious in her dealings with me...she says...I'll pop and see my Uncle Steve as well.' As far as a lot of people who know her, they all think I'm lifed off.³¹

This shows the lengths that both Adam, Dave and their family members were willing to take to keep in contact. If they did not have contact, their isolation and loneliness could be further entrenched. The social relationships of the participants were limited and this was plain to see. Desistance studies have expressed how important family values and social links are within the desistance process (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Weaver, 2016) whereas these participants were excluded because of their offences and relationship breakdowns.

In contrast, Andy, who still had contact with his sister, did not have to create stories or run the risk of excommunication to see her. He had gone from having a large family base, prior to his convictions, to only having this contact on a weekly basis. His sense of loss was great:

The family life is actually ruined because of my actions, which is understandable I suppose. I'm the oldest of seven children...we've all been a close-knit family. I have three children, 10 grandchildren and I think I've got two great grandchildren...I don't see any of them at the moment...I've lost everything I worked for basically.

Compared to some of the men, his level of meaningful interaction was good, but he lacked depth in the number of relationships he had. This added to his loneliness and the lack of family contact

³¹ To be "lifed off" is a term used amongst many offenders with reference to getting a life sentence.

left him feeling as though his life was worse than before conviction. Professional 2 stated that desistance can only be promoted if the person in the community views their life as being better than it was before. Using an example of an offender in the community, Professional 2 explained what this meant:

...it was important that his current relationship with his wife doesn't mirror his relationship with his previous wife, even prior to his offending ...so that it's better, it's more fulfilled...I suppose that gives him a lot of investment in staying in the community and staying offence free...you know, because he's never had such a positive life.

It is evident that Adam, Dave and Andy all had some form of relationship with at least one family member, but how they maintained this varied depending on the circumstance. Despite this, all wanted to keep a link with their family.

George's account was an example of how a man with child sexual offences can lose all the people around him and become almost totally isolated. Only a strained relationship with his brother remained:

I have lost everything. All friendships. All relationships. [My brother] told me if I was going back to prison, me and him were finished. He said it looks like you're going that way so I took that as finished and I didn't get in touch with him for ages.

His brother has since been in contact with him, but again there would be serious consequences should the family discover they were back in communication. He illustrated this by saying "he has

said something the other week that if his family knew he was talking to me, or even coming to see me, they would disown him.” This bore similarity to Condry (2006) who discussed the knock-on, negative effects on kin relationships, between family members and people who have been convicted of serious offences.

Allan was alone in the community. He had no family support, no friends and his social interaction was superficial at best. His offences against his granddaughter meant he had lost the love of those people with whom he was closest. Before her death, the only person to talk to him was his sister:

... she supported me all the way through. It was her love that drove her to support me. She told me that she did not approve of what I had done, but she said ‘you are my brother and I love you’. I used to ring her up every week and we used to have a good laugh on the phone...I would give anything to turn back the clock.

To regret one’s actions is usually brought to reality through hindsight. His relationship with his daughter was all but over, but he seemed to not be able to accept it:

My daughter is now [age given] and was born when I was [age given]. Not to have my daughter with me is like losing my right arm. That is a huge thing. If I get back friends again with my daughter, that would be massive. That’s all I want.

He had asked his OM for help with trying to form some point of contact with his daughter, but the process was slow and apart from hearing that she still had his belongings at her house, he had not

heard anything else. To ask for help in this fashion, especially in trying to gain contact with the mother of the victim must have been hard for Allan and probably harder for his daughter. His regret and remorse for his behaviour seemed to be genuine and perhaps this would be the catalyst that he needed to not return to any form of offending behaviour in the future.

The experiences of resettlement were therefore comparable to the negative experiences, because loss was a significant feature in both. However, not all the participants expressed negativity in terms of loss of family. Indeed, Nick and James explained how their families were in contact with them, with James living with his mother.

c) Positive Experiences

Nick reported having virtually no issues with how his family and friends had reacted to his sexual offending. His only perceived relationship issue was with his ex-girlfriend and whether or not she would ever want to get back together with him:

I talk to my ex-girlfriend, but she has told me that she is not ready for a relationship yet, which is understandable. If she does decide to get back with me when she's got her career up and running it won't be too bad because she knows what I have been in for.

Entering into a previous relationship would be easier in this instance because she already knew about his offending and he would not have the complications that disclosure could bring. Professional 5 believed disclosure of offending was one of the main barriers to building relationships for child sex offenders:

...I think there's a sense of remaining an outcast for want of a better term and not reintegrating, because there's no payoff for them because when they try and do...people find out about their offence and they're pushed out again. So I think...potentially...that successful reintegration's about an acceptance from the wider society...

Nick's views echoed those of Professional 5 in a more concise but just as powerful way:

She [his ex-girlfriend] still talks to me. That's OK. But if it was someone else, then I have to tell them...I would be honest with them but it would be difficult because I know that most people don't really like [child sex offenders].

This links to the earlier theme of trust and whether Nick would ever be willing to trust others with the knowledge of his offending behaviour. He already had a supportive family network, but his last goal was developing an intimate relationship with someone he could trust. Trust therefore is a very important theme and it runs hand in hand with loss. The more a participant had lost, the harder it seemed to be able to build trust.

The last participant to be discussed, James, reported the least problems in this area. He wanted to be able to trust others and this was why staying with his original friends and maintaining the support of his family was important:

You can handle people who don't really know you...that's their opinion. If it's family or if it's friends, people that you are close to, obviously it's a lot more...and fair play to my family for being so superb about everything and just trying to keep it as normal as

possible, don't mention anything if I don't need to. Yeah, it's been OK that way. Friends that do know about it...not a problem. They've said 'you've messed up, deal with it, if you need us we're here.'

It could be suggested that James' maintenance of family friends could be in part due to their views on his offending. He was convicted of abuse of trust, grooming and possessing indecent photographs of children. His family may have believed these offences to be less serious in nature than other sex offences and were willing to forgive him. Regardless of the perspective regarding this, James was thankful for the support he had and this helped to shape his overall resettlement and reintegration experiences.

Summary

Many of the men had very limited support networks, while some had almost no contact with others outside of a professional sense and their isolation and loneliness was both striking and tangible as a result. Issues with disclosure, confidence and self-esteem all compounded the difficulties they faced in the community and it took a lot of determination in them to maintain any relationships. The men showed a good understanding of what they had lost and what they stood to lose should they resort to further offending. Some of the relationships ran risks. For example, the daughter who risked excommunication by other family members, simply because she wanted to remain in contact with her dad. It was apparent that these were risks both parties were willing to take.

4.3.2 Housing

This section focuses on housing and accommodation and what effect it has had on the resettlement experiences of the participants. This is important in terms of resettlement and the underlying theoretical model, because housing is often believed to be one of the major elements in the whole reintegration and desistance processes (see Laws and Ward, 2011). Figure 4.3 illustrates the participants housing status before and after conviction:

PARTICIPANT	HOUSING BEFORE	HOUSING AFTER
Phil	Rented Accommodation	AP
Andy	Own House	AP
Allan	Own House	Rented Flat Initially released to the AP
George	Own House	Rented House Initially released to the AP
Adam	Rented Flat	Rented Flat Initially released to the AP
Sean	Rented Flat	Rented Flat Initially released to AP
Nick	Rented Flat Previously lived in the AP	Rented Flat Initially released to AP
Dave	Rented House Previously lived in the AP	Rented House
Stu	Rented Flat	Rented Flat
James	Living at home with mum	Living at home with mum

Figure 4.3: Participants housing status before and after conviction

Seven of the men were initially released to an AP from prison, with two of the men, Phil and Andy still living at the hostel at the time of interview. Both of these men had housing prior to being sent to prison, with Andy owning a house that had to “be sold and split up”, due to being divorced from

his wife and Phil previously living in a rented flat. Allan and George had sold their houses after being convicted, were released to the AP and were subsequently able to move to rented accommodation which meant a large change in circumstances for them. Adam, Sean and Nick had rented flats prior to their convictions. They were released from prison into the AP and then moved into more permanent, rented housing. Therefore, the change for them was not as large over the longer term. The three men who were not initially in the AP after conviction, Dave, Stu and James, were on community orders. Indeed, their housing situations did not change after conviction as they were able to retain their previous accommodation. It would therefore be expected that the men who had experienced the least amount of change and were not living in, or had not lived in the AP, would talk more positively about their experiences of resettlement, especially in this area. This hypothesis is tested below.

To help establish what the men thought about their housing experiences, the following discussion will be broken down into three areas: those participants who were living in the AP at the time of interview; those who had resided in the AP and were now living in either rented flats or a rented house; and those who did not reside in the AP after release and went to their own private accommodation. They were all asked: what effect has being convicted had on your housing situation? Sean was the only man who did not answer this question and he simply said he “had already answered that” and did not want to repeat himself. Prior to this question he talked briefly about how he did not want to lose his housing should he return to prison. He also spoke about how his friends would come to his house and they were the only people that he could trust with the knowledge of his address. This did not give an indication of the levels of change he felt or how he viewed his housing status in relation to his resettlement and overall reintegration, but his response to the question was accepted.

a) Living in the AP.

Chapter 6 highlights some of the negative aspects of the AP³² environment which were shared by many of the men. However, only Phil and Andy were living in the AP when they were interviewed.

Phil was desperately trying to find somewhere permanent to live, to move away from the hostel but he was finding this process hard because of his past offences:

[Previously] I've had virtually no problem getting housing...but obviously now I have a criminal record it's just, to me, absolutely distressing. I apply to some [and they say] 'we can't take you because you are a sex offender'...it's just a stigma that...has been blown out of proportion because the majority of people think everyone is like Jimmy Saville or Gary Glitter.

When he was asked how he would try to stay motivated and achieve his goal of moving out of the AP he answered "to be quite honest I don't know. At the moment, I am just taking it one step at a time." His resettlement was being adversely impacted upon because he could not move on and living in the AP was hard. He claimed to have had many "arguments" with other residents, especially non-sex offenders, both inside and outside of the building. Chapter 6 expands on the toxic nature of the AP environment for sex offenders and how they want to move out of it as soon as possible. This was because the men wanted to feel safe and a part of the community which was something the AP did not seem to offer them.

Earlier in this chapter, Andy gave an account of how he would like to move out of the AP and the difficulties he was having achieving this. His goal was to have a permanent base,

³² Please note that the participants often use the term 'hostel' to describe the AP.

somewhere suitable. He also wanted to have a sense of community and felt he could not achieve this until he moved:

What I see at the moment while I'm still in the hostel is virtually no reintegration because I'm not mixing with anybody else. If I get my own place, you'll have neighbours and this that and the other. Like I say, I like my garden, if I get a garden I'll be happy as Larry...

Although he was happy about having a roof over his head, Andy had not settled well and this had made him determined to find somewhere decent and safe:

At the moment, my aim now is to find somewhere decent where I can live...when I get housed I don't want a shithole, I've been there when I was a kid in friggin slums... 'you can offer as many as you like, if it's a shithole I won't have it'.

Andy required somewhere to live that he could be proud of and the AP did not offer this. He did not want to live with other offenders and he wanted to move away from negative influences and be more independent. Both Andy and Phil therefore seemed negative in their outlook due to living in the AP, being around other offenders, being subject to stigma and not feeling as though they could move on.

b) Moving from the AP into Rented Accommodation.

The five participants who moved out of the AP environment were all able to find rented accommodation. Of the five men, Allan and George had the largest change to their circumstances, because they had their own houses prior to conviction. The remaining three men showed less change as they found rented housing, something they had prior to conviction, with Nick being the only participant of this group to have been in the AP before. This meant that Nick's circumstances had changed the least. As a result, Allan and George's accounts will be discussed first, Adam's will follow, with Nick's brief explanation last. Sean's account of his housing situation is not included, as explained above.

Allan had gone from a big family home, to a small rented flat. However, he seemed fairly upbeat about his new living space, whilst missing his old one:

When I got my place...I did not waste any time in getting it ship shape. It's all decorated and painted, flooring done and everything and it looks nice now. I miss my garden. I had a garden at my old house but had to give it up when I went into prison. It was a three-bed house with a big garden.

Although it seemed that Allan had lost a lot, he had in fact gained a lot as well and he seemed to appreciate what he had. Professional 4 said that this retrospective appreciation could be enough to help prevent a person from offending in the future:

...[what] they need to put in place is stability building blocks. Things in place that they can't afford to lose. A lot of them appreciate what they had before and when they look at things from behind bars it makes them think...

Appreciating the past, links back to the fear of losing, because if Allan should choose to reoffend, he runs the risk of being returned to prison and losing all he had subsequently gained. Therefore, from Professional 4's point of view, giving people with child sexual offences a place to live and a chance to resettle and reintegrate, does help towards the path of desistance. However, Professional 4 also believed it was impossible to tell with any great certainty whether it had worked or not:

...we don't know...how well someone is doing until they fail. That's a weird thing. We can stop managing them after 2, 5, 7, 10 years... but I don't know until a complaint comes in whether I have been successful or not. That's the weird thing about this job.

Allan's offences were committed in the family home, so the opportunity to offend is limited and made less likely as he lived on his own, but Professional 4's opinion sheds light on the difficulties the authorities face when managing the risks that child sex offenders pose.

George had moved to a new community and this seemed to be good for him. Like Allan, he was positive about his new house, but he hinted at the uncertainty he felt being around other people:

It's a bungalow. That is what I wanted because it was affecting me going up and down stairs...I keep myself to myself and that will not cause problems, not for me, whether it

does for anybody else, I don't know. I think I will manage, if I keep doing what I'm doing. Keep myself to myself, keep my nose out of other people's business...

Perhaps his low levels of social interaction may have been a little alarming as it could increase his isolation and may increase risks of further offending. However, as an internet offender, he seemed to understand his risks and said "[I] don't go on chat lines, which I can't anyway because I have only got a bog-standard phone." Whether George was in fact managing his own risk and not using the internet to offend was open to interpretation, as it was only his word that could be taken. However, it appeared that George was positive about his move to a rented bungalow but was anxious about the reaction from the community should they know about his offending.

Earlier Adam expressed how the AP had been a supportive place for him and how he felt that he would have returned to prison without this support. However, he also thought it was a negative place and thus it was a very important part of his resettlement and reintegrative progression to move somewhere private:

...it took me a while to get housing and you don't feel part of the community unless you are living in your own place... you feel like you're part of the prison because you're still being watched. You've still got curfews...

When he got his own place, he was finally able to relax and move on with his life:

A lot of the time I'm keeping myself to myself, I've met one of the neighbours and she seems alright, but I don't have a lot to do with her...I've always been one of these that

likes my own space. Once I'm in my place on a night, I just like to chill out, watch telly or whatever, listen to music.

Adam wanted to be able to participate in the normal activities lost during his time in prison and the hostel. He liked living in the community, even though he preferred his own space which was natural considering the length of time he had spent around others in negative environments. This theme of the importance of being a part of the community in the resettlement process has been apparent in many of the narratives of the participants and was one of the most important aspects of their lives.

Finally, Nick had managed to quickly rent a flat after his stay at the AP and reported having no issues with his housing situation. When he was asked about what the effect of being convicted had on his housing situation, he answered "none, I moved in three months ago. I have some nice neighbour's". This was both to the point and in his opinion, a reflection of his preferred housing status.

Overall, these participants enjoyed a more positive experience because they had moved out of the AP environment and were living in relative peace. There was some anxiety over being 'outed' but the move to a more permanent housing base had helped them to appreciate what they had got. This could have the effect of helping them to resettle more positively, reintegrate smoothly and to ultimately desist from criminal behaviour.

c) Living in Private Accommodation Immediately after Conviction

Dave, Stu and James are the final three participants to be discussed in relation to their housing and resettlement. Both Dave and Stu lived in rented accommodation prior to their community sentences, with James at his mother's house.

Dave was particularly positive about his housing situation at the time of interview:

Oh it's the best house I've had...it's the longest I've been in a property for 15 years. I've managed this through having a better head on and the fact that it's last chance city...plus the fact that they gave me a decent house. The terrace I'm on now, everyone is brilliant, everyone looks after the terrace. I'm content there, I enjoy it, it's my house now, I've put my stamp on it...

Dave took a great deal of pride and ownership in this house and he understood what he would lose, should he offend again. The future was firmly in his hands and he knew this:

As long as I stay out of trouble then I'll be alright...I can't go down that road anymore... I don't want to be spending the next how many years I've got left of my life, looking at four walls. It's not happening...my preservation is priority.

Years of going to prison had, in his opinion, worn him down. To lose everything again would mean to have to start again. Keeping his house was a great motivator for him and he knew how important it was to remain in this good community. It was a safe space, which helped him to move away from his child sex offender identity.

Stu lived in accommodation managed by a local housing provider, which was only a temporary situation until he could find something more permanent:

I considered...buying myself a static caravan when I got released. But then when I look around here and I think 'if I buy something and I croak it, it's just gonna get sold'...and I thought 'what's the point I may as well just take on the rented accommodation'.

Until he gained his own place, Stu was unsure about what his future reintegration would look like and he said “I’m not sure, I’m really not sure. I’m hoping that when I get my own place I can settle down.” It was therefore difficult to determine whether he was feeling positive about his situation, as he seemed to be in a state of limbo. It was clear, however, that he was more positive than those in the AP, but perhaps not as positive as those who had their own place.

When James was asked how his housing had changed since conviction he said “It hasn’t...I only moved out [of the family home] when I went to university. I was planning on moving out at the end of that year [the year he got convicted].” His conviction had stalled his move from the family home and that was the only issue he felt he had. This meant James was the participant who was most pleased and positive about his housing situation because he did not know what it was like to repeatedly lose.

Summary

Gaining suitable, permanent housing was very important for all the participants. The men who were in the AP environment were the most negative about their resettlement journey and prospects. They had anxiety about the stigma attached to the AP and they felt it was very difficult to move

out and resettle. Those who had moved on from the hostel environment gave more positive responses as they seemed relieved to be out of there and in their own place. They presented a satisfactory sense of being a part of the community and this was important because it helped them to feel less of an outcast and more of a valued member of society. It was surprising to discover that the men with the most neutral responses were those who had the least change in terms of housing. Indeed, this flat, neutral attitude displayed by two of them was indicative of the easy experience they had enjoyed, after all they had not been in the AP. If they had, perhaps they would have appreciated what they had more and had a different opinion.

4.3.3 Employment

The theme of employment is the final aspect to be covered in this chapter. It links directly to the underlying theoretical model, introduced throughout this report that employment is often effective in helping people resettle and move away from offending (Kruttschnitt et al., 2000; McAlinden, 2011). Therefore, if the experiences of finding a job and maintaining it are positive, it is assumed the resettlement experiences could also be positive and have a good effect on their overall reintegration. However, the results presented here suggest something different, especially for some of the participants.

PARTICIPANT	EMPLOYMENT BEFORE	EMPLOYMENT AFTER
Phil	Sickness Due to health problems	Sickness Due to health problems. Not looking for employment
Andy	Retired	Retired (70's)
Allan	Full Time Employment	Retired (60's)
George	Full Time Employment	Retired (60's) He was sacked from his job due to his offending
Adam	Full Time Employment	Unemployed
Sean	Casual Employment	Unemployed but volunteers
Nick	Disabled	Disabled Looking for employment
Dave	Casual Employment	Unemployed
Stu	Full Time Employment	Retired (70's)
James	Full Time Employment	Full Time Employment

Figure 4.4: Participants employment status before and after conviction

Figure 4.4 illustrates how most of the men were not working. Three were unemployed (one of whom was volunteering), one was claiming disability whilst looking for employment, one man was on sickness benefit due to health reasons, and four men were retired. The only person in full time employment was James which meant his employment status had not changed since conviction, although he was in a different work sector.

The four men who were retired at the time of the interview will not be discussed as they all stated they did not wish to be employed. However, it is worth noting that of the four retired men, three were working prior to their convictions and retired at 65 in prison. This meant they did not have to work and could claim a small retirement allowance, as well as their own pension payments.

This resulted in a different resettlement experience compared to those participants who faced the challenges of finding any form of employment. Finally, due to health problems which precluded Phil from working, his experiences will also not be discussed. When he was asked whether he was in employment he said “no I’m not...I worked for most of my life when I left school until 2000, but since 2000 my health has deteriorated where now it’s quite impossible to work.”

The employment experiences of Adam, Nick, Sean and Dave will be discussed first. Although Nick was disabled and was not required to work, he has been included here because he stated that he was actively looking for employment. He has therefore been classed as unemployed, or unable to find work. This makes the presentation of the results clearer and it represents the difficulties these four men had in this area of resettlement. The results will present Adam first as he was the most active and motivated job-seeker. Dave will be discussed last as he demonstrated the least motivation to find a job and stated that he was looking forward to being able to claim pension benefits in the future. James’ account will be separate to the previous four as he was the only man who was employed.

a) Job-seeking

Adam was looking for “[manual] work”, which was different to his previous vocation, whilst re-training in a specific skill “so I can get a job easier.” This meant Adam had gone from what he described as a steady, well paid and well-respected job to looking for work that is generally thought of as lower skilled. Up until this point his efforts to find employment had been in vain:

A lot of the employers, as soon as you say you’re a sex offender...that’s it, they don’t want to know...I wrote a couple of letters for jobs when I was in the hostel. But being in

the hostel was a major barrier as well, because it has got a bad reputation in the community because it's known as a sex offender's hostel...

Adam was unable to find employment because of his child sexual offences, and residence in the AP. In Adam's view, the AP was supposed to act as a support mechanism, instead it had the opposite effect. His inability to search on the internet due to his offending behaviour, made job hunting harder and had a significantly negative outcome on his ability to resettle and reintegrate as a useful member of the community. He was still motivated to keep searching, but this motivation was diminishing.

Nick stated he did not have to work, as he was claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA). During the interview, this was the first-time Nick had discussed having a disability and it made it a little clearer to understand why he may have gained housing so easily and readily, as he may have had priority over other applicants. However, Nick did not let his disability deter him from wanting to form a normal life in the community and he certainly wanted to find a job. Despite his choice to look for work his motivation seemed lower than expected and he was quite despondent with his circumstances. His offences against children had limited the type of job he could do and this would have been the case for any of the men looking for work. Nick believed his child sexual offences and his previous address at the AP had created significant barriers when it came to finding a job and said it was "going to be difficult."

The theme of the AP being a major barrier in the effective resettlement of some of the participants in this study is a recurrent one. Couple this with the offence type and it is apparent that child sex offenders, especially internet offenders like Adam above, have a very hard time in gaining suitable employment. Perhaps goals of maintaining relationships and the attainment of

housing should therefore be prioritised over employment as this latter aspect may not be realistically achieved. However, people have different goals and employment is one of them, regardless of how achievable it may be. For example employment in the voluntary sector may be easily realised in comparison to a permanent, steady job, especially if the goal of the person is not to gain money.

Although the issue of finding employment was difficult for Sean to achieve, it was one of the last pieces of the resettlement puzzle for him. He was realistic in his outlook and appreciated that he would struggle to find a job:

Not a lot of people want to take you on at my age and being an ex-offender...I don't mean just sex offenders, I mean ex-offenders. It's very hard for anyone to get a job who is an ex-offender...but you have to keep trying. There is no point in just stopping, you have to keep trying.

Having the motivation to live a normal and productive life was important to Sean and gaining employment was also, equally significant. However, his motivation was hindered with the knowledge that it would be hard to succeed given the nature of his offending.

Dave explained how this motivation to find employment had waned over time and he felt like there was no chance of finding employment:

...you get to the point where you get your CV sent off...and then it comes to criminal convictions...BOOM! [slams hand on table]...never hear from them again. So all these companies who say we're not prejudiced...absolute rubbish. This is the longest I've been

in my life without a job and it's crippling...I'm limited to what I can do and I'm even more limited to what I can apply for and the criteria I fall into, it's quite narrow...

By narrow, Dave explained how "...there seems to always be some block in the way because of my [sexual] offending..." and the restrictions that come with it:

I can't be in the company [of children] and, you know, and I can't get a responsible job because of my criminality for thefts. So yeah I've shot myself in the foot with that. And I'm sort of resigned to the fact that another four years and I'll get working pension credits and my bus pass. I'm sort of looking at it like that now. I just survive.

His motivation to find employment was "dwindling" and added "it's a case of...I go through the routine of job searching just so I get my benefits really, to keep them off my back." In light of this he was asked whether he ever thought he was going to find a job:

No, them days have long gone. It doesn't even enter my psyche...I just think what the hell. It's just the way it is...There are plenty of people who are better qualified and who've got clean slates and they can't get a job. It's a reality. It's fact.

Finding employment had lost its importance and the goals for Dave were more orientated towards keeping his house, keeping in touch with his daughter and staying away from any further offending, especially offending of a sexual nature. In other words, they were realistic and ones that he had a certain degree of control over.

b) Being Employed

Initially, James found it challenging to get a job. His motivation to gain employment was spurred on by his need for money, as he had spent most of his savings and had been living on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). This determination was coupled with the fact that he wanted to feel useful again. After his conviction, James had re-evaluated his goals, assessed his life and this improved his motivation to change. He therefore concentrated on his goal of employment and looked at what he could do, rather than what he could not. He applied for jobs that would not need Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and was subsequently offered one:

I got a phone call for an interview...so I went in...said my piece...I just didn't mention the offence because it wasn't asked, so I didn't...so I got the job five weeks into [a job] placement, I was offered a job that they just created for me.

He had not disclosed his offences, and this was the main reason why he gained employment in this fashion. This is a legitimate way to apply for employment, but James would have had to disclose if he was asked, or if it was on the application form. 'Appropriate disclosure' of offences is a technique discussed in desistance literature (Farrall and Calverley, 2006: 88) and it is often the timing of the disclosure of previous offending that can influence potential employers, colleagues and/or self-perception. Self-perception in this respect links to feelings of dishonesty if the person has not disclosed pertinent information that should have been highlighted at the beginning of the recruitment process (Farrall and Calverley, 2006). James was the exception in this study and Professional 6 stated that the reality for people with child sexual offences was often a lot harsher:

There is...a guy who went to do a day's work experience. The manager of the store said they appreciated the hard work. He came away over the moon having done a voluntary day's work and then head office said he could not work there because there were too many vulnerable people there.

As demotivating as this situation may seem, it must be remembered that protection of the public takes priority over the resettlement of child sex offenders. Finding employment is always going to be harder for these people because of the negative attitude that most of the public have towards them. They are also limited in their employment choices, their ability to search for jobs and often their OM's will have the last say, something that Professional 4 related to:

For good reasons we have to put blocks on people from doing certain activities or hobbies that they may have done before [especially if they link to their offending behaviour]...we have to go digging about...before we can say it's OK...sometimes we have to disclose to organisations, so that's sort of isolating people again.

Although isolation may increase the risks of reoffending, especially for child sex offenders, employment is only a small part of this process and it seems it does not hold as much importance as relationships and housing.

Summary

The participants who were actively seeking employment found it very difficult and demotivating. Their status as child sex offenders and their address in the AP were the greatest barriers, not only

in terms of having job applications rejected by potential employers, but also towards their drive to apply. Men with internet related offences could not search online and this added restriction made the process harder. They were all limited in terms of employment type and they displayed negative 'can't-do' attitudes, rather than adopting a more positive approach of 'can-do.' James adopted the latter and this helped him to succeed. He did not have to disclose his offences and this was the primary reason why he achieved his goals and the others did not. However, the OM has the last say as to whether a job is suitable, because public protection remains paramount and employment is secondary.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how diverse the participant's paths towards resettlement, reintegration and possible desistance from crime were. The men placed the greatest importance on relationships and would often go to great lengths to try and maintain them. Most of the men led isolated and lonely lives and had few non-professional relationships in the community. Their family units were often decimated and many family members did not want any association with them. The participants also spoke about how they wanted to feel part of the community, but this would not be possible until they had found suitable and more permanent housing. The participants who resided in the AP spoke in more negative terms towards their resettlement prospects and this environment effected their reintegration process. The men who were in permanent accommodation were more positive in their outlook and appeared to be settling well.

For the men who were seeking employment, being a child sex offender meant the range of jobs they could apply for was limited and this affected their motivation to continue. It is an important finding that those men who had committed internet offences often had more restrictions

in place in comparison to contact offenders, especially in the form of not being able to access the internet on any device. Using the internet is now an accepted social norm, but for these men it inhibited job searching and the kinds of jobs they could apply for, keeping in contact with others, paying bills and it added to their sense of isolation. This meant that non-contact offenders have more serious consequences on their positive reintegration than contact offenders. Only one participant gained employment and he did so through a can-do approach to his resettlement and reintegration. He succeeded because he did not have to disclose his offending to his potential employer and he did not have to work with children. However, if disclosure had been asked for, it is unclear whether or not he would still be employed. Additionally, it is worth noting that job-seeking had been successful for him, he had not suffered the same setbacks as some of the other participants; he was not 'ground down' by the experience.

Chapter 5 - Risk Management

Offenders often face challenges when they are resettling and reintegrating after their conviction. Those released from prison may face additional challenges, but the difference is child sex offenders, and to some degree violent offenders, are subjected to strict risk management plans making resettlement arguably harder. Risk management means to manage the risk a person poses of further offending behaviour. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways including placing restrictions on accommodation, employment, location, the internet and restricting who they are allowed contact with. Although not exhaustive, this list serves to illustrate the barriers to resettlement a person with child sexual offences may face after conviction. Risk management and resettlement can potentially clash with one another regarding their aims and objectives. On the one hand, professionals working with child sex offenders are encouraged to support their search for employment, housing and appropriate relationships, in the knowledge that success in these areas may lead to a richer and fulfilling life with the potential to reduce reoffending. Whereas, on the other hand, they are encouraged to develop robust sentence plans and licence conditions to risk manage child sex offenders in the community and reduce the opportunity to offend. Social inclusion, resettlement and reintegration are popularised by the UK Government as important factors in the development of community, but they are placed in contradiction with the punitive strategies often employed by the State to manage child sex offenders (Spencer and Deakin, 2004). These strategies have been discussed in the literature review and the use of them in relation to the participants will become apparent throughout the current chapter.

‘Risk Management’

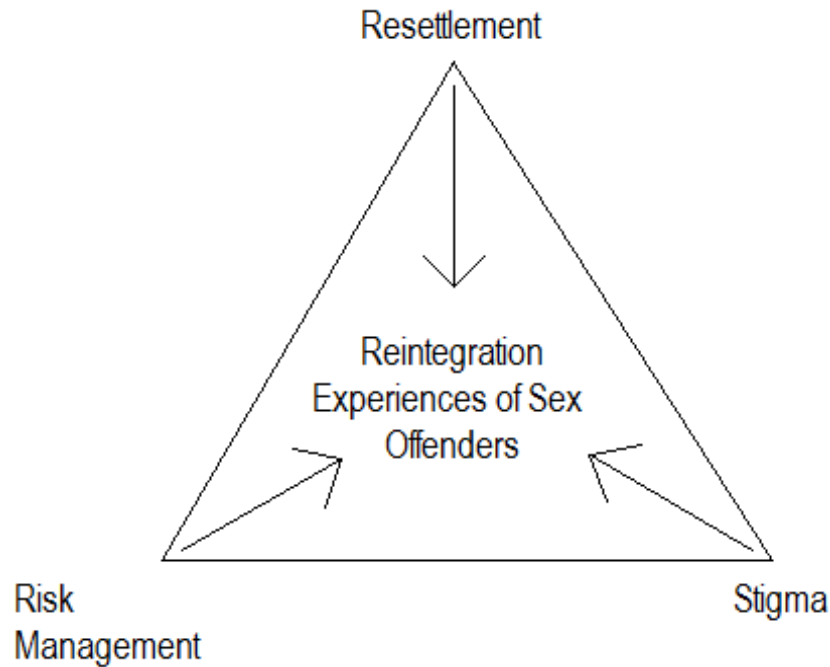


Figure 5.1: The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle: Risk Management

Figure 5.1 illustrates the underlying theory being tested throughout this report. It has been designed to test how the process of risk management fits into the reintegration experiences of people with child sexual offences. It is hypothesised that if risk management plans are robust enough to deal with the risks of child sex offenders, but are also flexible and adaptable, allowing the positive aspects of the offender’s reintegration to be promoted, then the experiences of the offender will be more encouraging. For example, if NPS supervision is engaging (Raynor et al., 2010), and motivational (Farrall, 2004) then the risk management experience can be a positive one and the offender’s overall reintegration may lead to a promotion of desistance from crime (Raynor et al., 2010). If it is too restrictive and child sex offenders see it as a hindrance, this may have a negative effect and may restrict them from being able to live a fulfilling life. For the purpose of this thesis, risk management is defined as the holistic approach adopted by professionals in the community to

help prevent further harm of sexual offending. Therefore, for effective reintegration to be stimulated, a balance must be struck between the goals and effects of risk management in conjunction with the other two elements of the triangle: resettlement and stigma.

The research question below was designed specifically to help test whether positive experiences of risk management can help the overall experience of reintegration, thus helping child sex offenders to move away from offending behaviour:

What are the effects of risk management procedures on the lives of child sex offenders?

Sub-questions included:

- a) How do they feel about the restrictions that are in place?
- b) What challenges do they face because of these restrictions?
- c) What effects on their daily lives do they experience due to the risk management procedures?
- d) What are the effects their registration?

This chapter will explore how the participants viewed the risk management restrictions they faced in the community and also how the professionals perceived the use and effects of risk management strategies in their work. To achieve this, the following questions were asked in the interviews:

- Q1. What are your licence conditions?
- Q2. What are the effects of these conditions on your life?
- Q3. Is your life different now as a result of these conditions?

Q4. What is the impact of the Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) on your life?

Q5. If you have a Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) what effect has it had on your life?

Q6. Have the police ever had to disclose to others about your offending past?

The participants were asked a final question, designed to combine resettlement and risk management:

Q7. What efforts have you made to avoid further offending behaviour?

The inclusion of this question was important for a number of reasons. First, it allowed the men to assess their situation in light of their restriction and licence conditions. Second, it helped to highlight their own perceptions of their efforts, rather than from the point of view of a professional and third, it acted as a bridge to the final section of the interview, stigma, because it included elements of the issues they faced with resettlement, risk management, desistance and how they viewed themselves and others around them.

In answering the questions, the participants spoke about the restrictions they experienced and the specifics in terms of what they could and could not do. They spoke about the ViSOR and for how long they were on it. If they had a SHPO³³, some of the men went into detail about the additional restrictions it had placed on them. This information was complex, therefore to help with the presentation of the results, Figure 5.2 has extracted some of the details and presented them in a simple form. It reports on length of registration, whether or not they had a SHPO and whether

³³ Of which an explanation of its function was given in the literature review.

or not the police had disclosed information to others about their status as a child sex offender. This shows how seven of the men had to sign ViSOR for indefinite periods and three for 10 years. Fifty percent of the men had an SHPO and only one of the men had his offences disclosed to a third party by the police.

PARTICIPANT	VISOR REGISTRATION PERIOD?	SHPO?	POLICE DISCLOSURE?
Phil	10 years	Yes	No
Andy	Indefinite	No	No
Allan	Indefinite	No	No
George	Indefinite	Yes	No
Adam	Indefinite	Yes	No
Sean	Indefinite	No	No
Nick	10 Years	No	No
Dave	Indefinite	Yes	Yes
Stu	Indefinite	Yes	No
James	10 years	No	No

Figure 5.2: ViSOR, SHPO and disclosure information.

This chapter will consider the experiences of the participants in relation to the positive and negative effects of risk management and how two of the men managed to turn negatives into

positives. The impact of ViSOR, SHPO's and police disclosure will also be considered. Finally, the participant's efforts to avoid further offending will be discussed.

5.1 The Effects of Risk Management

The aspects of the different kinds of restrictions a person can face in the community are multi-faceted and are tailored to meet the needs of each person's case. As Figure 5.2 shows, licence conditions, risk management restrictions and registration periods differ with each person. This is a result of the sentence given and the conditions that accompany it. The level of risk a person poses is interpreted by the OM and they use their professional judgement, MAPPA reports and meetings, static and dynamic risk assessment tools and previous behaviour to help determine this. Professionals are often the first and only point of call for people with child sexual offences, therefore supervision meetings are an integral part of the process and journey an offender must go through in the community. If offenders do not adhere to their licence conditions, sign ViSOR, or attend meetings with their OM, they may be recalled to prison or sent to the courts for further sentencing.

Supervision is a very important aspect of the risk management plan for any offender and some of the professional's comments will be included because of this. This provides a picture of what supervision and risk management meant from their professional point of view. The descriptions and definitions given by the professionals relating to risk management is a reflection of how they interpret and define this area of work. When the questions for this section were developed, it was envisaged that the professionals would simply talk about risk management in the form of restrictions used, registry notices or OBP's. In reality, many of the professionals saw supervision of the offenders, including one to one meetings at the local probation offices, as an

integral part of the risk management process. This was because the face to face environment allowed the professionals the opportunity to engage with the offenders, and to challenge their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Simultaneously, it helped the professionals to remain informed of offender's lives and determine levels of risk accurately. Indeed, Rex (1999) established that the relationship between offender's and their supervisors can promote behavioural change and encourage desistance from offending. Included below, therefore, are the aspects of risk management that the professionals thought were important when working with child sex offenders. These were: community restrictions; treatment programmes; dynamic and static risk assessments; surveillance; supervision meetings and home visits.

5.1.1 Professional Views of Risk Management.

The nature of probation supervision is often hard to determine, especially when considering what is most effective between the supervisor and the supervisee (McNeill, 2010). Professional 8 provided information on some of the tools available that may help to manage child sex offenders in the community. These tools were traditional in the sense that they focussed on restricting and monitoring the offender's movements:

Well, we do have lots of things available to us, in conjunction with the police. So you do have SHPO's. We can do voluntary Global Positioning System [GPS] tags...we can do polygraph exams now...then you've got a way to challenge them...I would imagine with very high risk sex offenders, you would use all the tools in your box. But I think it's got to have some sort of [reason], you can't throw everything at everybody.

The tools that Professional 8 described are varied and diverse and Professional 4 added “we have to tailor it very much to the case. It depends where somebody is at with the admission [of guilt] thing and the responsibility taking really.” Having these “tools” available to help manage a person in the community was something which most of the professionals discussed. Many of them expressed how the tools can be of use, but not as useful as creating rapport, building trust and having a conversation. This approach was similar to the findings of Farrall et al. (2014) who said the ‘practical support’ the OM’s offered to offenders was ‘valued’ (p. 131). Similarly, the professionals of the current study saw risk management as a two-way street, something that is to be entered by both parties especially if reintegration and desistance from crime are to be supported. Professional 11 spoke about what supervision and risk management should entail:

Well, supervision’s broken down into ‘Hi how are you doing, what’s been going on in the last week?’ You know that’s one element of it, it’s a bit like small talk really...[but] there’s no point having someone come in every week and ask the same ‘how you doing?’ ‘oh fine’. That’s not going to do any good. It’ll only touch the surface, you have to have a balance of different stuff that you can talk about so they know that every few weeks you are gonna talk about the offence again...

Engaging with a person in a supervision meeting was therefore conducted on a weekly basis in the above case of Professional 11 and the consensus was that “small talk” would not be sufficient in effecting decent conversation and meaningful supervision. The effective OM, who is trained to manage risk, must be able to use “small talk” to help build rapport and trust. More challenging

questions can be asked thus, helping to give the OM an idea of what life is like for the child sex offender at that time:

...also there's offence focussed work and victim awareness work and some awkward questioning like 'how many times do you masturbate a week?' or 'what turns you on?' I think in terms of supervision you have to have a balance of things...mixing all that in with short term goals really. I think that's really important. 'What are you gonna achieve next week?' and setting deadlines... 'when you come in next time, you're gonna have rung your GP or gonna have spoken to the mental health department or gonna have spoken to that person about your offending...

Rather than sticking to "small talk" the professionals used these awkward and challenging questions, alongside goal setting as a way of understanding and instructing the offenders. If rapport was built in an effective manner, this was a very good risk management tool because it was the OM's way of gathering information, determining ongoing risk, guiding the offender, offering help and advice and listening to the offender's point of view. The professionals supplemented any risk management tools designed to restrict or monitor, with their own form of risk assessment, giving them increased evidence when it came to making decisions about the offender's future. Therefore, supervision becomes the first step towards developing an effective risk management plan which includes the aforementioned restrictions. Professional 7 explained some of the processes and agencies that are involved outside of the supervision meetings:

Inter-agency liaison [is] really important...if we are working with social services...children's services...safeguarding, I just think that communication is really important. We have information they might not have...Working with the police as well, the risk management officers [RMO's], they are into monitoring. Disclosure...has to be done under risk management and licence conditions of course.

MAPPA meetings and legal restrictions are part of this inter-agency approach and the primary aim is the protection of the public and this may influence the personal goals of the offender. For example, Professional 3 explained how risk management and positive reintegration could conflict at important times in an offender's relationship with friends:

...the most difficult thing for me to manage is involving social services in a situation. Because often...I've found that a real hurdle to [reintegration]...[the child rapist] was asked to be godfather to his best friend's child and before we could allow that, before he could hold that baby in his arms...we had to have social services involved.

This case involved an adult raping a 17-year-old girl after a night out with her at a pub. He denied the offences, claiming he thought she was over 18 and the sex was consensual. Professional 3 felt that this case was an example of "procedures gone mad" because the offence was conducted in an adult environment and they were not allowed to show any "professional judgement" in determining whether this man was a risk to a baby. Furthermore, this professional felt there was "lack of flexibility" in the risk management rules, making the reporting of MAPPA or social services decisions to the offender "challenging". Therefore, the development of a good working

relationship between the OM and the offender is very important, otherwise trust and rapport could be damaged.

The professionalism and pride in their work was evident throughout the interviews with the professionals. Deering (2010) established that the values of the practitioners he studied were consistent with one another and centred on the traditional, face-to-face approach of supervision, rather than pure risk management. Being ‘professional’, in the opinion of Deering (2010), meant that OM’s would not bring judgement to the people in their charge and would work with them as an ‘individual’ capable of ‘change’ (p. 463). The professionals interviewed, consistently reported how being pro-social with child sex offenders was of the up most importance. For example, presenting a positive image to the offenders, was very important for Professional 10 during supervision meetings. Common courtesy and manners were all part of managing risk here and this was because some of the offenders they worked with had never had the opportunity to give others respect or have it reciprocated:

We always try to enhance pro-social modelling. Basically, to show them the right way of doing things, as opposed to the wrong way and that can be learned just by giving them examples [from] myself...Even just being polite and respectful to somebody.

In this instance, effective risk management was facilitated by using more than the “tools” available to them, it promoted good behaviour from a socially moral perspective. For Professional 3, it was more about a promotion of a positive self-image:

For me, it's obviously about self-esteem, self-worth and a belief that you can have a pro-social life in the community without offending. That's got to be where it starts, because without that they fall at the first hurdle. I do lots...of different kinds of exercises about asking them to think about the good aspects of their personality: 'what do you do well? Are you a kind person? Are you a mean person? Are you an honest person?' And I try to pick out the positives.

Similarly, this was something which Professional 6 felt was important in risk management and supervision when they said "it's about challenging their negative thoughts and beliefs about being able to move forward and being back and involved with society." Thus, restrictions and risk management plans go hand in hand with useful and productive supervision; SHPO's and ViSOR registrations are merely parts of the process. Risk management is not only about determining what a person can or cannot do, it is also about who that person is, what they want, what they do and how they do it. Having this knowledge helped the professionals to remain informed and up to date about the offender's risk, allowing them to develop a meaningful, robust, dynamic and fluid assessment of not only the risk of the child sex offender but also their needs.

However, whilst this aspect of risk management seemed to be important to the professionals, most of the offenders had a different point of view and saw risk management in terms of how it impacted their everyday lives, rather than their supervision meetings with the NPS. Below is a discussion of the experiences the participants had in relation to risk management This has been broken down into three areas: positive experiences; a negative experience and turning negatives into positives.

5.1.2 Positive Experiences of Risk Management

The only offender who did not talk in depth about his restrictions was Allan. He stated he only had one restriction in place banning him from contacting his victim or her family, excluding any other information. This exclusion may have been an indication of the difficulty he had in coming to terms with his actions. The subject of contact with his daughter was an emotive one and to talk about the restrictions in place may have been hard and upsetting for him. This is probably why he avoided the issue and simply stated that this restriction (contact) could “be withdrawn if approved by the probation officer and the social services”.

For some of the others, to consider their risk management plans and procedures in a positive light was to accept them as a tool to help them lead a law-abiding life. Dave spoke about how the restrictions impacted positively upon his daily life and his own behaviour, up to and including his own emotional and mental state:

I feel that I have this...when I'm out, I always think...I have this paranoia that I'm being watched all the time. So even though I'm probably not, I still act as though I am and that keeps me safe doing it that way.

The experience of being under surveillance by the police, which led to the breach of his SHPO, had altered his behaviour in the community. This was different in comparison to his old ways:

So, risk wise I'm managing it reasonably well, I'm doing quite well with it. Don't get me wrong, I've had [licence conditions] in the past and just dismissed it...because I thought I'll get away with it...but now...no no no no.

During our interview Dave explained how his sexual feelings for teenage girls remained, understanding that these feelings would probably be with him for a long time. Before his last conviction, he explained how he would have acted upon these feelings and urges, however he felt he “won’t get away with it” because of the strict restrictions he faced. He added that he would also run the risk of returning to prison should he commit further offences, which was something that he did not want to do. His participation in SOTP helped him to further reflect on his sexual deviancy so he could manage his behaviour:

...the fact that I am sexually attracted to teen girls hasn’t gone away, but I now manage it...by blanking them...[by] not dwelling on things. In the past if I saw some nice-looking teens I’d try and keep the vision in my head and I don’t now...I just think ‘no no no no no...stupid.’ It’s just not healthy for me...It’s working at the minute and I deal with it a damn sight better than I used to.

When people undertake OBP’s such as the SOTP, they are encouraged to use different techniques to try and break thought processes and learned behaviour. These could include using self-talk, not to ruminate, to understand that they want to live a healthy life and to establish defence mechanisms such as walking away from a situation (Laws and Wards, 2011). As evident in the above quotation, Dave knew he was still attracted to teenage girls and he was adopting many of these techniques. Perhaps, therefore, it was a combination of his involvement with the SOTP, his strict restrictions and his experiences of previous breaches of these restrictions that were having a positive impact on his life. Couple this with a desire to not return to prison and to not lose what he had gained in

the community, arguably Dave may have been moving towards positive reintegration and therefore towards desistance.

It had taken time for Stu to get used to having elements of his life restricted in the community and he claimed he initially found these restrictions “annoying.” However, he showed appreciation for their existence and explained how they covered the “basics” of not being able to associate with anyone under the age of 16 and to notify his RMO when he changed address. The use of the term “basics” was a running theme throughout the interviews. For instance, Dave’s restrictions were “the basics...the ones that affect me.” Risk management plans are often “specific to that individual” in the opinion of Professional 7, they have basic restrictions tailored to their needs. Thus, some of the participants viewed their restrictions in general terms. The “basics” for Stu were “virtually the same as the ViSOR”, as they did not give him cause for concern. In addition to the “basics” Stu accessed a simple phone that only made texts and calls. If he wanted a computer, he would have to get permission for this. Rather than going through the stress and pressure of applying for internet access, Stu consequently adapted his life to suit these restrictions:

If I need to go on the internet I use the public access ones in the library. With 12 years of not having a computer and only having the ones that they supplied within the prison, I did get used to not having them.

Stu was recalled to prison for having in his possession 250 indecent images of boys and for owning a computer when he was restricted from doing so. Having one was not important to him and arguably helped to manage his risks of further offending. Nevertheless, he said a computer could help him meet a romantic contact through dating sites, and not having one, in his opinion, meant

he thought his love life was being hindered slightly. Despite the imposition of these restrictions, he did not think his life should be unfulfilling or empty:

People often ask me ‘are you lonely?’ No, I’m not lonely. I have enough things in my life to occupy me...but they say ‘you’ll end up a lonely old man.’ Why should I? Why should I necessarily be lonely?

He added he would be happy “...as long as I’m able to get about and do my paintings and go for my walks and go for my holidays”. Conversely, this was a different life for him since conviction and the combination of restrictions and conditions, restricted his freedom and ability to meet others. The restrictions therefore, reminded him of his sexual offending and the successful and legitimate negotiation of them was needed, if he was going to reintegrate.

For the participants, it was important for them to understand what was expected of them with regards to the restrictions and risk management plans that were in place. For example, George had a specific way of ensuring he knew what these expectations were in the community. During the interview, he presented a copy of his SHPO. It was interesting to see him do this and to wonder why he felt the need to have this in his possession. He explained how he carried it with him always and how it was “hidden” and “secret”:

I know where it is but no one else has seen it and that’s how it will be kept. If somebody finds out, then obviously I am going to have to watch my step.

Keeping this document close, protected the personal information and was his way of feeling safe and secure in the community. At the same time, it helped him to remember the conditions of his SHPO of which he had broken down into three main categories: no association with people under the age of 16; not to use the internet and not to contact his victim. Retaining his SHPO in this way reminded him of his past behaviour, his status in the community as a man with child sexual offences and, like Stu, it was a way to help him negotiate legitimate ways to live his life. As a tool to stay out of trouble and refrain from offending, this SHPO document provided a physical reminder that George needed to remain motivated. He had been in social situations previously which had made him question his own actions and whether he should stay or make his excuses and leave, just in case he was seen by someone in authority. Such an example can be seen below:

I don't go near anybody underage; it's not affecting me really. I'm just getting on with my life...I was talking to a couple [of people] down [the] high street and one of their friends came with a baby in a pram. I thought 'what do I do?' [I said] 'I'm sorry I am going to have to go' and made an excuse and went. When I told probation what I had done, she said 'you've done the right thing.'

He avoided a difficult situation because he did not "want to land myself in trouble." It would seem absurd to many people in society to have to leave a conversation in a busy high street because of a mother with her baby. This was reality for George and it was also a form of self-preservation and self-management in the community. It was his way of negating any possible repercussions from the authorities and his way of avoiding a licence recall or further charges. What was clear in this example was how George had taken his community restrictions and SHPO seriously and wanted

to understand what he could and could not do. This disciplined self-management provided a positive focus for him, which linked to his motivation to remain offence free and not to return to prison for an offence that could easily have been avoided. This suggests that George was on a path towards desistance and that he was able to negotiate his life and his experiences around his restrictions.

5.1.3 Further Positives – Understanding the Limitations

Discussed throughout this chapter, the participants faced a multitude of restrictions and had to live their lives accordingly. For instance, to not mix with known sex offenders is a generally accepted and usual condition for all sex offenders once they are in the community. More specifically, people with child sexual offences face an additional stipulation as they cannot associate, live, or work with people under the age of 16 or 18, a factor that is dependent on the nature of their index offences and is considered on a case by case basis. The men not only had to adhere to their restrictions, they also had to understand what they meant on a practical, day-to-day basis.

Andy's risk management plans had these requirements plus he was prevented from being in any area where children or teenagers congregated or met. He explained what this meant to his daily life:

I can't go where youngsters are obviously...parks...bowling alleys...I have to stay clear of places like that, where you would get a lot of youngsters.

Andy committed offences in the family home against a family member, yet he was required to stay away from any area that was deemed to be more child orientated. This was indicative of the risks

they believed Andy still posed after his release and was used as a public protection measure, despite him never offending against strangers or outside the family home. Andy felt they were “harsh” but he seemed to willingly accept and live with them. He did not want to let them effect his life too much:

I’ve just had to grin and bear [them] basically. I have to get on with it...accept it. It’s no good crying over spilt milk. I have to get on with my life now. I’m 73, who knows how long I’ve got...every day I wake up it’s a bonus.

When he was asked ‘is your life any different due to these restrictions?’ He answered, “No...basically...it’s just general behaviour...just don’t go here and there. You know. I’ve no curfews laid on me...I do have a no-go zone...” The no-go zone was a designated area designed to protect his victims, but he expressed no desire to try and contact them and he understood the implications should he choose to do so. His experiences were positive in nature and were quite similar to those of the other men discussed so far, because he knew what was expected of him and was able to live within the restriction boundaries.

Not all the men had such a good understanding of what was expected of them in the community and those who were unsure sometimes asked for help from a professional. Nick, for example stated he was having “some issues” with the effects of his licence conditions and restrictions on his life. To help with this, Nick wanted to clarify his restrictions, especially before he made any mistakes and was punished for them. He explained this experience in the interview:

I have to tell probation if a relationship is developing with a female. I had a bit of a discussion with probation about that...I had to go to a solicitor and get him to explain what developing relationships mean, because if it's a one night stand, probation can't class it as developing...[The solicitor] said 'how are you expected to get in touch with probation to let them know [I am having a one night stand].

The advice given to Nick gave him confidence that he would be able to meet someone, even if it was for a brief time. He appeared to accept the restrictions and said "apart from [gaining] employment, everything else is alright." Nick had a fatalistic attitude towards the restrictions he faced, as they were an inevitable part of his life, he was powerless to do anything other than accept them. This was probably because he had a long history of offending from a young age and knew there would be licence conditions and restrictions. It was not such an upheaval for him and it was good that he could pick his life up and move on. Overall the experience had been both positive and matter-of-fact.

As a man on a community order, James was subject to fewer conditions than other participants in the sample. He divided his restrictions into three areas: not to contact the victim; to make his internet history available; and not to work with anyone under the age of 18. He said this "isn't a problem for me...I can still do as a normal person would do. I can still go into leisure centres and parks and the conditions are very basic". He was accepting of the restrictions and he reported almost no dramatic effect on his life. Arguably, if he had gone to prison, lost relationships with his family, lived in the AP or had not found employment, things may have been different, but as it stood, there were very few negative effects and he was very positive in his outlook.

5.1.4 A Negative Experience

Phil was the only man who reported predominantly negative effects and experiences of risk management on his community reintegration. He felt the licence conditions he had were “not a problem” for him overall, however, his narrative suggested that he did have some level of frustration with the restrictive nature of his conditions. When he was asked what he thought the effects were on his life he said “I am at the stage now where if youngsters walk towards me I cross the road”; a similar experience to that of George. He explained he did this because he was always on his “guard” and “sometimes it’s hard [but] it’s something I just have to do.” To be on his guard meant that Phil was trying to protect himself from being seen in any kind of position that could be misinterpreted by anyone else, especially a professional who may know him, which was again similar to the thoughts and feelings of George. His life seemed to be quite a lot different to the one he led before he was convicted:

Before, I was leading what I class as an average life, whereas now for the rest of my life I am restricted. Some of them I can’t understand [such as being banned from swimming pools] but they are obviously there for a reason.

Out of all the participants, Phil seemed to be the most confused about his restrictions and this may have been why he was not totally accepting of them and demonstrated a vague understanding of their importance in his life:

It's like if you change phone number or if you stay up every night you have to contact them and I'm thinking I can understand the point [but] the slightest thing and you have to notify...

Phil's answers to these questions were brief and this may have been an indication towards his lack of knowledge about why the restrictions were there. Perhaps he had not fully accepted them and felt negative towards them. It did seem that they were having a negative impact on his freedom. However, Professional 1 said this was not unusual, especially when child sex offenders are trying to balance their lives around the restrictions. This professional felt the risk management plans "...could be quite negative," whilst explaining it was the offenders who had "brought it on themselves" which was akin to a 'Just Deserts' justification to their continuing 'punishment' in the community (Carlsmith et al., 2002):

...yes you've got these [restrictions] it's part of the price for your offending, but there's many things you can do regardless of that. [Professional 1]

In any walk of life, to understand what and why other people want, often helps a person to accept the situation more and makes the relationship between those two parties better.

5.1.5 Turning Negatives into Positives

The following two participants, Adam and Sean, shared similar stories. This related to the negative impact on their lives due to breaching their community restrictions. Similarities also existed in the

way they turned this negative into a positive. Both men gave the impression that they had learned from their mistakes and understood the implications of further risky behaviour.

The first participant, Adam, breached his licence conditions for “stupid little things.” Rather than be returned to prison, he was given a second chance by his OM:

I got caught in the park with a sex offender, smoking a joint [laughs]. I'd been out about four or six weeks...but since then...I've been sticking to it religiously [laughs]...my probation officer said 'I could have recalled you for that, but I'm not. I'm gonna give you another chance' and I can't thank her enough.

This event and the actions of his OM helped him to realise how close licence recall was. When he was first released from prison his attitude demonstrated how he was not taking his licence conditions seriously and that he did not understand the possible consequences of his actions. This was a significantly different attitude to the one he demonstrated during his interview. Adam explained his decision to break down his licence conditions and restrictions into three main areas: not to use the internet, not to enter any parks or sports centres and to not have any interaction with people under the age of 18. Although these were not the only conditions, Adam felt it was easier to separate them, helping him to be “mindful” of what he could do: “[Before conviction] I used to cut through the park and didn't even think about it”, but post-conviction he had to remember about how he was restricted. A simple everyday act such as this was something that Adam, and most other people, would ordinarily take for granted. However, having the knowledge of his restrictions not only limited his movements, it allowed him to appreciate the seriousness of his situation:

That's what I mean when I say I've got to think about what I'm doing and where I'm going. Like I say, just cutting through the park...I can't do that no more...I'm gonna think 'I can't go there.'

It can often be difficult for people to change their habits and way of life and it can be easy for them to forget what is expected. Adam's OM showed a good level of compassion and leniency, whilst balancing the consequences of a recall to prison with the effects it would have had on this man's life. Professional 6 explains further, the balance between resettlement and risk management:

I have two roles really. One is to help reintegrate [them] into the community, the other is to manage the risk and never lose sight of that. It's the main factor for me...[but] I think it gives them the message 'you are what you are, we are frightened or worried about you and therefore we are going to take this and this step'.

In contrary to Adam's experience, Sean was recalled to prison. This was for consorting with a known sex offender, thus breaching his SHPO. Before he spoke about this, he explained what his restrictions were, summing them up into three main areas:

Basically, the main three I have to worry about is not associating with sex offenders...not to be left unsupervised with kids [and] making sure I sign the register every year without fail.

Sean placed the most importance on “not associating with sex offenders” and announced it first in his list. This was probably because this element of his licence conditions and his SHPO had previously had the biggest negative effect on his life. It was therefore clear that the consequences of this restriction were still resonating with him at the time of interview:

...I was on the way home from [the probation offices] and I met a sex offender that I knew...in the hostel...I went and helped him [move some furniture] and I was seen by my RMO and she happened to be his RMO as well. So she came to the house and I was stood there with a chest of drawers in my hand. She said ‘what are you doing?’ and I gave her some smart comment like ‘I’m smoking a cigarette, what do you think I’m doing?’ Not very clever. I was recalled.

No leniency was shown to Sean, he was recalled to prison for a period of eight months. Although he explained how he did not mind being back in prison, because he quickly gained a wing cleaning job and a single occupancy cell, he felt sad and let down by his own actions. The effect of breaching his SHPO meant Sean had re-evaluated his life in the community, claiming he was behaving with increased caution and giving improved thought to his own actions. Overall, the recall had had a positive effect on his motivation to stay within the limitations of his restrictions. He had thus decided to take his restrictions in the community more seriously, which was a similar effect to that of Adam. It did however, influence his relationships with others and this was not always positive because he was now not so ready to accept or help them:

Now if people ask me for help...I'd rather send them on a roundabout route to get help from somewhere else. Before I was convicted I would do basically anything I wanted to do. I could talk to anybody, go to anybody's house, sit and have a drink with people, but now I can't. Now I have to be very careful.

If Sean wanted to enter a friendship he stated it was much more difficult than before his convictions and he tended to ask himself a series of questions before he let things get more serious. He said "if I make a friend, has he got kids? Does he have a missus? Can I go to his house? Is he a sex offender?" Sean's path towards an offence free life, had previously taken a side step when he was returned to prison. This links back to the balance between robust and effective risk management and the resettlement needs of the offender. On the one hand, this experience made Sean increasingly conscious and aware of his actions and it served to help him appreciate the gravity of his situation as a man with child sexual offences. On the other hand, it had a negative impact on his ability to form relationships, as he sacrificed being in social situations through uncertainty and wanting to stay safely within the boundaries of his licence conditions. Sean has turned a negative, being recalled, into a positive, living within the law, however it goes against the concepts of good reintegration.

5.1.6 Summary

The effects of risk management on the participants were interpreted by them from various angles, placing differing levels of importance on them. Some of the participants showed a good level of understanding of how these restrictions impacted their lives, and some did not. To help gauge how the restrictions worked daily, many of the men broke them down into three main areas, which

differed slightly depending on their circumstances. Whether this was a coincidence, or a technique encouraged by the NPS, remains uncertain. What was clear, was how all the men needed to remain vigilant and respectful of their actions and that the restrictions had some form of controlling effect on them, no matter how small. They effected their relationship chances and for some men, restricted where they could go and what they could do. The participant's offences precluded them from associating with children, which also effected their employment prospects. Overall however, the outcome of the restrictions on the daily lives of the men was not as significant as first thought, with many of the men willingly attempting to live life in conjunction with their licence conditions.

5.2 The Impact of ViSOR, SHPO and Disclosure

Figure 5.2 (p.183) illustrates how all the men were subject to ViSOR, five of them were subject to a SHPO and only one man had ever had his offending disclosed to a third party by the police. The balance of risk management and resettlement is therefore set within the statutory requirements for people with sexual offences. The literature review highlighted what these requirements are in relation to ViSOR and it showed how serious the government views sexual offending and how determined they are to keep a track of child sex offenders. ViSOR could therefore be viewed as playing a major role in the lives of child sex offenders in the community. If they fail to sign it, notify the police of a change of address or notify them if they are going abroad on holiday, these people could face further charges and periods of imprisonment, which would disrupt the whole process of reintegration and desistance. Indeed, going on holiday would often be a simple, fun process for most people, yet Professional 8's reflection below demonstrates how difficult it would be for a child sex offender:

...I was just thinking about the restrictions...I've had sex offenders who have been on holiday. So obviously they have to go through all the palaver, depending on how many days they're away. They have to register [if they] were going to Cornwall...so...you know...I'd let the home area know, the risk management officer...in Cornwall! I don't know what that would be like. I don't know how I would feel, having to let people know my movements all the time...it's that feeling of being watched all the time and being accountable...if people think you're not a safe person in the community that must damage people psychologically I would think.

This links to some of the earlier comments made by the participants, especially about being watched and accountable for their actions. It is interesting that Professional 8 believed some people may be damaged “psychologically” and this will link further into Chapter 7. To gauge a better understanding of what effect ViSOR, SHPO's and disclosure had on the participants, they were asked how these particular risk management tools impacted on their lives.

5.2.1 Disclosure Compared to Restrictions

Dave had signed ViSOR for many years, but had previously breached this restriction because he would not sign it, which resulted in a three-month prison sentence. When he was asked what the impact of ViSOR was he replied “Nothing really”, he paused and then reflected in more detail:

I signed it last week for my yearly signing...in the past I've been a bit blasé about it and it's got me into trouble and now it's like ‘when's it due?’ and I'm like ‘ooh due date...yeah yeah.’ It's etched in my head now.

This was a positive demonstration of his change in attitude compared to the past. He had developed a way to ensure he was managing himself and trying to show others how his risk was reducing; something which Professional 11 thought was a good sign of a person moving away from criminal behaviour:

...the best sort of point to reach is when they manage their own risks and you're no longer doing it for them...they don't need to be told anymore...they start to have this built in awareness system really...a warning system.

This was similar to Dave's idea of etching the date in his head and it meant he did not have to rely on others to tell him or remind him. He had developed a level of autonomy, helping him view his past mistakes and past attitude in a different light:

...I go in, sign it and come out and go [flips V sign]...Job done for another year. Whereas in the past I just didn't give a monkeys. I just thought 'I'll blag it.' Really...really pathetic attitude to it really. Once bitten twice shy and all that you know...the reality is there's a reason for it and you've got to do it.

Dave had an SHPO and this did not impact on his life either. He added that there was no massive impact on his life regarding any of the restrictions. The biggest impact felt was when the police disclosed his previous offending to a friend:

...I wasn't impressed. It nearly cost my relationship, but luckily she reasoned it out. [She is] a very good friend who I've known for a number of years now...They [his RMO's] were really sort of arrogant and sarcastic towards her...They told her in front of her brother.

To disclose in this way could have had dramatic effects for Dave and his relationship, but the authorities felt at the time that it was a necessity and essential to maintain a strong level of public safety. She could have ended the friendship, isolating Dave in the community, with the potential to lead to further offending. This did not happen, and Dave's relationship was stronger than he thought:

She sort of had me at arm's length for about a week and a half. Didn't really speak to me and then she turned up out of the blue. She went 'do you know what, I'm not ruining my friendship...I'll stand by you.' And she has. So I've been lucky in that respect.

ViSOR was a necessity in his life and he said his SHPO was being adhered to. Disclosure however, had impacted briefly on his relationship and he held a negative view because of this.

George had almost been the subject of disclosure to a third party by the police and this had left a negative impact on his life. He did not believe ViSOR had any effect on his life and stated how it was his SHPO that was the dominant restrictive measure in place in the community. Discussed earlier, George highlighted how he would carry a copy of his SHPO in his coat pocket for safety and secrecy reasons. He did not specify why he felt the SHPO had more influence, but the fact that he chose to keep it close to him demonstrated the influence the SHPO had.

In comparison to ViSOR and the SHPO, the power of police disclosure in George's case was felt deeply. He explained how he was with a lady and her son in a town centre. George had only disclosed his offending behaviour to a couple of people in the community and this lady happened to be one of them. He knew that if he was in a close friendship/relationship with a person, disclosure was of primary concern to the authorities and it was good that he had chosen to do this himself. Indeed, the authorities have the power to disclose to a member of the public, if they believe serious harm to a child may be likely, especially if such a disclosure is not made (Rainey, 2010). In this instance, the police had seen George with this lady, so they stopped them and "asked the woman if I had said anything about [his offences]...she said 'yes.'" George felt this was the wrong way to disclose because it could have resulted in a lost relationship, however, it did not. In defence of the actions of the police there is a 'presumption that disclosure should be made' by the offender (Rainey, 2010: 281) and according to George the "welfare people knew" about the friendship and "they were not bothered." The police would not have known this at the time and he said the "police were picking on me" by stopping them in the street. This incident highlights how the police will first and foremost think of the welfare of the public, over the resettlement (in this case the friendship) of the offender.

5.2.2 Restrictions Exert Virtually no Effect

When Stu was asked about what impact he thought signing ViSOR had had on his life, his response was clear and precise:

[ViSOR is] restrictive, basically restrictive. But other than that it hasn't had a huge effect.

OK, yes, I have to notify them if I'm going on holiday or if I want to stay away for a

night...but other than that...they [his RMO's] visit me maybe every six weeks to two months. I know what the restrictions are and if I'm stupid enough after being given a slapping [for previously breaching his SHPO] to go and do it again, then I'd deserve everything I got.

In this instance, Stu was mindful of the potential impact of non-compliance with ViSOR and with his SHPO. It was interesting that his views on ViSOR were reasonably neutral and he talked about how he would still try to enjoy life, whilst factoring in the need to adhere to it along with his SHPO. Indeed, he said that the SHPO exerted "virtually the same" impact as ViSOR, which was surprising given the previous breach of this order.

Adam's response typified the reactions of the majority of the participants when discussing the effects of ViSOR:

To be honest, the sex offender register hasn't made any huge impact. Because basically the only time you've got to worry about that...is if you move addresses, you've got to let them know within three days and I did as soon as I moved address. To be honest it's your licence more, that you've got to worry about than the register...so it hasn't had a really big impact on my life, the register.

To have virtually no impact on Adam's life in this way was indicative of his response to the procedural nature of the register. He saw it as a process that had to be followed and he was going to follow it. He had taken ownership of having to "remember certain things" in relation to the legalities of signing the register and notifying the authorities of any change and this ownership was

a positive sign. On the other hand, the SHPO did have an impact on his life as it restricted his access to social networking sites, factors prevalent in his offending behaviour. Nevertheless, he further explained how his licence conditions, had more of an impact on his community reintegration than the SHPO because they added further restrictions:

Basically, my licence conditions are a lot harder than my SHPO. It's a lot stricter than my SHPO. My SHPO says they can't ban me from [all of] the internet...whereas my licence conditions have banned me off all internet use.

This was an interesting aspect of Adam's life in the community, as it was initially thought by the researcher that SHPO's and the ViSOR would exert more of an impact on the lives of the men. However, as Adam revealed, his licence conditions were more restrictive, adding a more generalised layer of public protection than the SHPO, which was specific to social media. Once more, the balance between public protection and offender reintegration is present. Banning Adam from any device capable of accessing the internet makes job searching, as discussed in Chapter 4, difficult, whilst ensuring he has less opportunity to offend in this manner. Professional 5 spoke about the relational conflict of public protection and the needs of the offender further in relation to a previously supervised child sex offender:

...[the offender had] built a good rapport with his neighbour, but [they] had a child...[I said] 'you either end that friendship or we make a disclosure to that person.' For him it was 'right OK, I don't want her to know so I'll cut all ties with her.' So, which is kind of

backwards and it's forwards...we're managing the risk, but in the same time of doing that, he's isolated.

Isolation and boredom were factors which featured in this person's offending pattern, but as Professional 5 explained they were managing this risk for "positive reasons":

I suppose it's kind of 'what's the lesser evil?' I think to say to someone you can have contact with that family, because we feel it allows reintegration, but then he offends...how defensible is that...it's a debate about what's more defensible.

This was exactly the position that Adam had to face in the community, as the courts restricted his internet use, even though to have a computer may have aided his overall resettlement process. His OM had reduced the possibility of further internet offending, Adam's established *modus operandi*, and this meant he would have to live his life in a different way if he was going to reintegrate with purpose and move away from crime.

The impact of ViSOR was "not bad really" as Sean explained, and it was the interaction with his RMO's that was the more physical and tangible aspect of the registration process:

I see them [his RMO's] basically whenever they want to come. They might come in three months, they might come in six months. They might come tomorrow. They usually only come if there is some reason and believe you are doing something wrong.

RMO's are tasked to look after and supervise sex offenders in the community and can visit without warning, although they must meet at least once a year for annual verification. This is a risk-based strategy for the monitoring of sexual offenders (Coleman and McCahill, 2011) and it is not dependent on the actions of the offender. The feeling of being watched in this case, is a powerful tool, drawing similarities to the panoptic ideas described by Foucault (1977) through to post-panopticism posited by Bauman (2013). The RMO plays a significant role in the new penology of risk management over rehabilitation (Feely and Simon, 1992) and they can play a psychological role of surveillance and power over the person being monitored (Foucault, 1977; McCahill and Finn, 2012). However, there are arguments to suggest that panopticism now has a different impact on individuals and this can be noted through Bauman's idea of post-panoptic self (Bauman, 2013). For example, even if Sean was doing no wrong, he may still get an ad-hoc visit, which may make him wonder whether the authorities doubted him. Therefore, it is the bureaucratic aspects of surveillance that are prevalent here, rather than the physical ones. Sean must regulate his actions and self to maintain good behaviour and not risk further offending or licence breaches:

I've got a computer at home and they asked if they could take it away, check it and see what sites I was on. I said yes take it away, I don't go on illegal site anyway so you're all right with that. They didn't take it, they said they wanted to take it...I said there are no problems because I know they have a disc that they can recover even deleted stuff...I was never convicted [for internet related offences].

Sean was defensive when he was visited by the RMO, after all, he had previously been sarcastic to them resulting in a recall to prison and he did not trust their motives for coming to his house.

This was the nature of living in the community for Sean. He had previously been an aggressive and defensive man, afraid to speak out about his feelings and problems. This is what had led to his offending in the first place. Therefore, Sean's attitude toward authority had changed for the better. This was presumably because he wanted to make life as easy as he could, but at least he was allowing some form of relationship to build with his RMO's. Albeit if this was only to allow them into his house. Given his previously discussed issues with trust, this appeared to have been a step in the right direction.

Unlike Sean, Nick had a more accepting view of his relationship with ViSOR and his RMO and this made the reintegration process easier. When he was asked about the effect of ViSOR on his life he responded by saying "Nothing really...I only have to sign every year until I'm 35." Nick did not seem to be affected at all and he added how he did not see his RMO "much...the last time I saw him was over two months ago when he came to my flat to see it."

Andy proclaimed little effect from ViSOR and in a similar vein to Nick above he said "signing on? *Nothing really*. It's only once a year [Emphasis added]". He claimed to have a good relationship with his RMO: "I've seen him once since I've come out and he seems satisfied...he's saying there's no problems at the moment." Andy did not go into detail about ViSOR and the effects, stating his RMO was helping him with a personal problem, showing how they had a good rapport and there was some trust being built. According to Professional 9, the building of trust and rapport was important in the risk management process:

If you are very confrontational...very interview like...then they [offenders] will be short, abrupt and not informative. I want them to tell me things because we can highlight, or we

can find the triggers...and can see them a lot better...you want people to talk to you...You've got to build a rapport.

Rapport and trust building were discussed earlier in this chapter and they appeared to be important skills for many of the professionals when building relationships with child sex offenders. To be "confrontational" would effectively create unhelpful barriers and could potentially make the whole reintegration process harder.

5.2.3 Negative Views of ViSOR

James' experiences of ViSOR seemed to be mixed between positive and negative. He said that when he went to the police station for the first time to sign the register "it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be" and explained how the process was "simple." All he had to remember was to "pop in on time" so he did not breach it. Here the process was easy to follow, and its use and function was understood. It was the experience of "actually signing it [which was] was devastating." James' position in society had shifted and he had started a new chapter as a 'child sex offender'. Signing ViSOR was a powerful tool in James' case because the enormity of his situation was real and more tangible than ever before.

This was similar to the experience of Allan who said "it just makes me feel sad having to go there [the police station] every year" to sign ViSOR:

I just wish there was a time limit on it, like five years. No matter what age I am, I have to go there which worries me. As I say, everyone should be given a second chance.

Year on year Allan would be reminded of his sex offender status through this necessary risk management tool. Allan felt like he had moved away from crime and was living a life that was different to the one when he was offending. He was trying to rebuild a new life on his own but having to sign ViSOR for life³⁴ meant he could not totally move away from his past. He could not draw a line in the sand and feel forgiven by society for what he had done:

I am still getting a chance because I am not going to offend again what-so-ever, but it's like a lack of trust. I would like to be trusted more...[this] would make me happier inside. It would not change my life other than give me a nice feeling inside.

When he was asked whether he felt anyone could put their trust in him again he answered:

Probation lowered my risk level, which made me feel good. It's really important to be trusted, it proves that I am trying to improve myself and stay positive.

The lowering of his risk level and the reduction in the frequency of his meetings with his OM³⁵ had helped Allan to feel as though he was doing the right things and moving away from crime.

This could have a positive effect on his desire to buy-in to his risk management plan and could

³⁴ Changes to the lifelong registration of sex offenders who have served over 30 months' imprisonment have been made through UK law. These can be seen in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) Order 2012. After 15 years of registration an adult offender can apply to the police to have their registration period reviewed. The period is 8 years for a young person. The review is undertaken by the police who will determine levels of risk in relation to information gathered from a number of official bodies that operate under MAPP. If the risk is still deemed to be too high, then the application will be denied. Potentially, sex offenders in the UK could still be on the register for the rest of their lives. For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-notification-requirements-for-registered-sex-offenders-information-for-victims>

³⁵ He was previously on one meeting a week and this had been reduced to every two weeks, which was a good indication of how the NPS and more specifically his OM believed his risk had been lowered.

help him to move towards desistance in the future. His sense of self was changing because he was able to prove to others that he was no longer a risk and he was happy to engage with all of the requirements of his risk management plans. However, he felt as though he should not be labelled a child sex offender for life and this was why he viewed ViSOR negatively.

For Phil, ViSOR was regarded as a stigma and it was something he would not be able to remove. When he was asked what the impact of ViSOR on his life was, he replied:

[I'm] just...taking things one day at a time. As I say, at the moment I can't plan for my future because there is just too much stigma attached to what I was convicted of. I mean it's [ViSOR] there for the rest of my life.

ViSOR reminded him of his offending and this effected his ability to reintegrate because he felt unable to make goals and his motivation to succeed was very low: "OK you have your licence period, you have your register, it's always on file, it never goes away". This meant he was "finding it hard" to accept how long he would have to register for. Although he had started to receive counselling for personal issues and had found somewhere to live, which were encouraging steps towards reintegration, Phil was unable to appreciate what he had gained and looked at only what he could not do and what he had lost.

5.2.4 Summary

Registration for the participants had little or no effect for most of them, however they showed a good level of understanding about the consequences of non-registration. Signing ViSOR meant

they had to take responsibility for their own lives and were accountable to the authorities. Some of the men took ownership of signing the register, some abhorred it. For a few of the men, ViSOR was seen in a positive light, as registration was a way to demonstrate show they could be trusted by adhering to the requirements. Providing an address showed how they had nothing to hide and were willing to accept home visits, confiscations of computers and help from their RMO. On the other hand, some of the participants felt the barriers and stigma associated with ViSOR were difficult to overcome.

Overall, it could be inferred that the effects of ViSOR were not as significant as the effects of SHPO's. This was because the SHPO had a direct effect on the daily lives of the men, whereas ViSOR was akin to a label, a stigma, and only came into force if registration was missed. Furthermore, it was the experiences of police disclosure that had the largest impact on the lives of two of the men. They felt as though their own private lives had been intruded upon by the authorities. This was because the relationships forged between the participants and their friends could have been negatively affected, potentially causing isolation and loneliness in the community. It is apparent from these accounts that the government sees the protection of the public as of paramount importance, and the participants often had to negotiate their way through life and live alongside any restrictions in place.

5.3 Efforts to avoid offending

The final part of this chapter will explore the participant's reactions to the question "What efforts have you made to avoid further offending behaviour." This question was important at this stage of the interview because the previous questions had discussed the external factors that influenced their behaviour in the community. Although it was not possible to determine whether the men were

offending or not, this question allowed the men to demonstrate whether they thought they were moving away from crime. It was hoped they could articulate their efforts to prove crime reduction and that they could manage their own risks, therefore claiming some credit for their actions.

Considering Dave's long offending history, his answer to this question was quite interesting for many reasons:

I've kept myself safe and out of dangerous situations, so things can't be compromised and that's ongoing. That's part of my psyche now, I don't have to force myself to do it, I just know within 10 or 15 seconds 'no, don't need it...need to be out of here' and that's it, I'm gone and that's how I'm dealing with it.

First, this was a shift in his own ability to personally risk assess, as previously he stated that in the past he did not worry about the consequences and did whatever he wanted. This self-risk assessment was the identification of "dangerous situations", for instance his sexual attraction to teenage girls and was a positive step, showing how he wanted to stay away from trouble. Second, Dave believed this reaction was engrained into his "psyche", which was interesting as it links to desistance theory and a person's ability to change the self (Maruna, 2001). Third, he gave another good example of how he used self-talk to help himself out of problems and situations. The significance of this technique was Dave's ability to talk to himself and rationalise his actions, a type of verbal cue to remind him of his past and the consequences of any future behaviour. This would have been learned and developed on prison and community based OBP's and it was obvious from the short passage above that it was particularly useful for him.

To avoid the risk of further offending or breaches of his licence conditions, Stu made sure he would not place himself in “compromising positions”. By adopting a “personal risk assessment” he felt as though he could self-manage; a similar vein to Dave:

I don't do nothing without thinking about it first. Where am I going? Who am I going to see? I won't use public toilets unless the stalls are free...if I do need to use the loo I would rather use the big stalls...you've got less chance of tripping up. I avoid parks, I won't go near them. I use only one. I quite often go sit there with my coffee, newspaper, have a read...but I make sure that I'm in the big open areas as opposed to being in the secluded spots.

It was clear how Stu employed strategies to avoid temptation (toilets, parks) and to stay away from any accusations. Indeed, he said it was about “being aware of, in the moment, of what I'm doing and where I'm going.” Having a complacent attitude towards life was therefore no longer an option and he wanted to ensure his behaviour was correct, within the boundaries of legality and morality. This was a fear that Stu and many of the participants shared because they often believed they could possibly slip into their old ways, do something that could be misinterpreted by others, or simply forget about their status as a child sex offender and breach their licence conditions. This showed how precarious and vulnerable life was for the participants in the community.

There was a distinct similarity in the narratives of the participants regarding avoiding temptation and resorting back to old behaviours which may put them at a risk of re-offending. George's reaction to the question typified this response and it demonstrated how he understood his triggers towards offending and what he did to self-manage:

Not going on chat lines. I don't go into shops like I used to do. If I need something from a shop, I know exactly what it is I am going in for. I go in the shop, get it and go back home.

During the interview it was understandable why George would no longer go on chat lines, as they were a factor in his offending. What was unclear was why he would adjust his shopping habits and whether they had anything to do with his crimes:

Underwear was involved. So [if] it's normally groceries and stuff I go in, them [shops that sell underwear] sort of shops I don't, which was done on the SOTP course.

Again, like Dave, George articulated how some of his learning from the SOTP had transferred into his everyday life. He was adapting his life because his fondness for women's underwear was a major factor in his offending, as it aroused him and led to deep rooted sexual deviancy. This adaptation was a very real factor for George as the temptations were strong. An indication of how he still felt his risks were high came when he asked himself:

'What would I do if I were in a shop that had a stall there that was full of underwear?' I would probably turn around and walk out, or go somewhere else in the shop.

Avoiding underwear was a step in the right direction for George and showed how he wanted to move away from offending. The offences of men like George are often complicated, the triggers can be varied and therefore risk management strategies must be tailored to suit each man. However, they have to again show how they are taking responsibility to manage themselves. George could

have relied on his OM for some things, such as advice and signposting. He had completed the SOTP and clearly wanted to use what he had learned in the community. For the participants, what was important was how they lived their lives daily, as they would only be with the professionals for a short period of time. It was their responsibility to remain offence free and show the authorities, by not offending, that they could be trusted and their risks lowered. Only by doing this, could they achieve any form of success.

To take responsibility and stay away from trouble was also high on the agenda of Adam, especially since his near-miss with probation, which could have led to his recall:

As I said, be on guard all the time. Not put myself in a position where there's a chance I could re-offend. Like...going out when...going out when kids are on their lunch break. When they're leaving school. I try to stay in at them times if at all possible and then I'm not putting myself in that position.

His offences of arranging to meet a child after grooming her online, meant that Adam understood his risks and that he would stay “out of internet cafes, which was a big thing for me.” He said before he went to prison he “was always in internet cafes.” Like George, Adam’s life involved cutting out the tools that made him more likely to offend and “being mindful and [trying] to keep...out of risky positions.” He also had an additional motivation to stay away from further offending, as he wanted to get back in contact with his son. To do this, he had completed the SOTP in prison and had started to engage in a local voluntary project³⁶ aimed at helping offenders to resettle. The SOTP and the project were hard for Adam to initially engage with, as he felt they

³⁶ This was a resettlement project that has been anonymised for the purpose of this thesis. It was different to COSA, of which Adam had only recently been accepted to join.

were quite intrusive and influenced him in a personal and emotional way. Over time, his attitude towards them changed, especially as he focussed on his goals and determined to move away from crime:

I just said to myself 'I'm going places I don't want to go...' but when I finish this...when I finally pass it I can see my lad unsupervised, so I've just said to myself...I'm going places I have to go, to move forward' and that's how I'm looking at it. Because my lad means the world to me and it's killing me not seeing him.

To move forward and accomplish his goal of being able to contact his son was obviously very important to him and it showed how useful it was for a person with child sexual offences to have goals and something to work towards. Often, they have lost a lot through their own behaviour, they are restricted in what they can do and they have to prove to others that they can be trusted. Adam wanted to gain this trust and was willing to demonstrate it. Professional 4 stated that while it was common for offenders to want to get back with their children, risk management often precluded it:

...we might put [restrictions] on somebody which could effect the relationships they have with their family, particularly family who have children or child contact, so that contact could break down...we have a say in every aspect of their life on licence and it's for good reasons...it is hard to achieve a balance between integration and managing risk.

To accept these restrictions and to want to prove to others that he can live a life without offending was important to Adam and it was a way to show how he felt he was able to change.

Sean's life appeared to have changed dramatically from the one he had when he was offending. His journey had many ups and downs and this demonstrated how difficult it was trying to reintegrate into the community, trying to establish a new identity and make new relationships. With the help of his OM, COSA, his friends and his own ability to express his thoughts and feelings, Sean seemed to have made a lot of effort to change his ways:

I think about what I'm doing. I use my brain now instead of suppressing everything and pushing everything down. I let everything out now.

Letting "everything out" was a lesson Sean had to learn for himself, as the suppression of his thoughts and feelings tipped him to a point where he tried to take his own life. His reflection of this incident explained how low he felt and his reasons for not wanting to live. However, it showed a man who was possibly transitioning from offender to non-offender and this incident was a turning point for him:

You know...I took an overdose of tablets, everything just came to a head, I didn't want to be around anymore. I was blaming everything bar me, if you know what I mean. I was blaming my depression, I was blaming a programme that I saw on TV, I was blaming the restrictions, I was blaming that I had no life when I do have life, I was blaming everything, but I wasn't blaming me. Thinking 'how stupid am I being' when I have more going for

me than I realise. And it took taking an overdose to make me realise that I have got more going for me than I actually realised.

This event occurred because of a culmination of things, with the most important being how he viewed himself as alone. Although this was not true, as he had his new friendship, his voluntary job and support through COSA. Perhaps the reasons were far deeper than he was prepared to discuss, or perhaps he was genuinely finding it difficult to adjust to life outside of prison as a child sex offender and all the stresses associated with this identity. Whatever his reasons were, Sean was determined to not make his mistakes again and he thought that talking about his issues was the solution:

I've got people who run the [voluntary project] and they know I'm a sex offender...I can phone them if I'm feeling [low]. I can phone my RMO, which is fine. I can phone [my OM] because I've still got her. I can phone Circles. Circles is a good group for me because there are four individuals and they help me. They just sit and listen and we have a good laugh and a joke.

Additionally, Sean had a new companion, a dog, and he said she helped him to not feel lonely as without her he'd be "lost" and "on my own just sat in the house stewing, watching TV and not doing a great deal." This behaviour would have been detrimental to Sean's ability to reintegrate into society and to desist from crime. However, he did not do this and seemed to be motivated to achieve and make a new life for himself.

The kind of behaviour that Sean felt he could have entered into, if he was not motivated, was the kind of behaviour that Professional 5 believed was not only common, but also unhealthy in terms of resettlement and desistance. Talking about a child sex offender who had been unable to form relationships with others, gain employment or even reintegrate through fear of being outed, Professional 5 explained the often-negative effects of strict risk management plans on a person:

I could see him withdraw. I could see him become more isolated in the respect that [he was] a guy that was going out nearly every day...looking bubbly, having people to talk to, having structure...to actually...you'd do a home visit at 2 o'clock and he'd be still in bed.

This highlighted how people with child sexual offences can quickly enter into behaviour cycles of being unmotivated to achieve, isolation, loneliness and avoidance. This person had no support in the community and because he was a child sex offender, had been forced to give up a friendship and employment due to having to disclose his past. The important, different factor for Sean was how he was supported, and he knew he could talk to people in the community. His offending behaviour and the reasons why he committed them were complex, it had taken some time for him to unravel and to understand his motivations. Whilst doing this he had encountered feelings, thoughts and situations that he did not anticipate, therefore his road away from offending was just as complex as he unraveled and battled against himself, others and society. He showed good determination to succeed in his goals and a strong level of resilience, something which other people may not have been able to bounce back from.

Andy was another participant who stated during his interview how he was determined to change his life and not return to his past behaviour:

I just concentrate on not...I look back at what I've done, what I've lost, my life in prison and that's a lot of it. I know that I definitely don't want to go back...I have it in my mind that I definitely will not offend again. It doesn't interest me one little bit now; I can just get on normally. I offended against my family, it wasn't just people off the street...people on the street don't know me at all.

The articulation from Andy that he was definite in his resolve to no longer offend, only gave an impression of his intentions. Unfortunately, due to this study's research design it was not possible to confirm the veracity of the claim that he was not offending. However, this account demonstrated some levels of change in Andy's perception of his own risk and his belief that he was no longer interested in a criminal life. Andy knew what his goals were, because of understanding his behaviour and the consequences of his actions, he was able to present what his thoughts were about offending in the present:

I don't put myself in that position. Alright there's people walking along, in the shops and that, with kids...but it never enters my head. I'm too busy doing my own thing...or trying to...do a bit of shopping and getting stuff in for supper.

His efforts to avoid further offending were firmly placed in the responsibility of his own life as it was at the time of interview. He did not want to return to prison or re-offend and lose everything he had gained. This was his form of self-risk management and he believed it was working for him, he felt like he had changed and was not that person anymore; something which is key in the study of desistance.

To articulate self-change in an interview setting, in a short period of time must be quite difficult to achieve for any person. Only that person knows whether change is occurring or has occurred. For a person with child sexual offences, to talk about self-change in a convincing manner must be even more challenging. Allan's attempt at this is exemplified here:

Just being myself. At the time of those offences I was not myself. All I do now is just be myself. The person who you are looking at is [me] and that is who I am.

Brief as this answer was, it was loaded with hints of how Allan viewed himself as a changed person. To say how he was a different person when he offended, was Allan's attempt to rationalise his actions and move on from them. If he was a different person than before, then he could not possibly commit the offences again and he could draw a line and start afresh. This 'old me'/'new me' dichotomy is encouraged within some OBP's and is a way of helping offenders move away from who they were, encouraging them to accept it was part of their past and that it does not have to define who they want to become. Allan had separated his new life from his old one and this was how he intended to avoid offending in the future.

An appreciation of their own lives in the present and an understanding of what they had lost was a significant theme throughout the narratives of the men and Phil was no exception to this. His avoidance of offending behaviour was three-fold:

Basically be very aware of what I'm doing. I'm also getting help for what I have been through...and literally just reminding myself everyday what I have been through and how it's effected me. For a stupid...mistake...has, as far as I'm concerned cost me my life.

Again, his answer was brief and to the point. Being aware of his surroundings, what he was doing and where he was going, was an aid to not being complacent and to not breach his conditions. He had an acceptance of his actions and the consequences of his “mistake”, his losses were significant and he did not want to suffer this again. This contrasted with Nick who simply answered “[I’m] concentrating on my flat, keeping up hopes that I can get back with [his ex-girlfriend]” adding “my hope is to get her back.” The focus on his flat helped to keep Nick busy. If he reoffended in the future, arguably his chances of his ex-girlfriend accepting him once more, were lessened.

Finally, James spoke about the practical ways he could demonstrate to others that he was no longer offending, rather than what he was doing, because he felt like the opportunities to offend had been taken away due to his change of job:

I got rid of Twitter for a long time. I had to have it for work again...which I mentioned to probation and the police...other than that I deleted my profile picture off so it’s blank. I just make sure that anyone I don’t know, I don’t add...I don’t have apps on my phone and I make sure I only have the passwords at work. I wrote them down and gave all the passwords to the police and probation. If they ever fancy just looking, it’s fine I don’t mind.

He added that he was currently undertaking the SOTP and he had volunteered to complete it after his community order had finished, which is something that he did not have to do. This showed further motivation to prove to himself and others that he would not offend again. Giving his passwords to others meant he could show that he did not have anything to hide.

5.3.1 Summary

Most of the men demonstrated how they would manage their own risks in a variety of ways. Whether this was through avoidance of situations, self-talk, understanding the triggers of offending, concentrating on projects, being open and honest with authority or the participation in OBP's. This self-risk management was possibly more important to the participants than all the restrictions, ViSOR, SHPO's and disclosures put together, because this was how they lived their lives, outside the spotlight of authority. Indeed, having a meeting with an OM on a weekly basis, signing a register once a year, attending OBP's, being met at home by an RMO on random occasions, were only incidental and would not have that big an impact on their lives. The remaining time these men spent in the community was either by themselves or with family or friends. Therefore, self-risk management was potentially the most important tool available to the participants, as they were the active agent in their reintegration journey. If they were unable to self-risk manage, then the chance of successful reintegration would diminish, the risks of further offending would increase and desistance would never be a possibility.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has asked some important questions about the effects of risk management, the impact of ViSOR, SHPO's and police disclosure and what the participants were doing to avoid further offending. It was interesting to hear how the restrictions were often divided into three main areas by the men, as they considered these to be the basics and the ones that were probably the easiest to break if they ever became complacent in their actions. The restrictions were viewed as both necessary and useful by some of the men, who subsequently showed a good level of understanding of the purpose. Some men said how it was an extra barrier to overcome and viewed it negatively

in respect to their path towards reintegration, while some viewed it positively. The effects of ViSOR were not as detrimental to the reintegration of the men as first thought. The yearly signing was the only tangible reminder of its existence, along with ad-hoc meetings with the RMO. It was the SHPO's and the licence conditions that were more effective in limiting their behaviour and their movements. Furthermore, the men who had experienced police disclosure believed that this was potentially the most damaging risk management tool. The effects on their relationships could have been irreversible, limiting their ability to reintegrate.

All the men expressed the efforts made to avoid further offending and most of them said they had to be aware of their actions and the effects it had on others and themselves. Some men gave examples of what they were doing to achieve their goals of moving towards an offence free life and some of the men could only speak about this in brief terms. However, self-risk management was a significant factor of life and they had to create ways to manage their own issues and problems in the community. Indeed, it can be understood through the results presented that risk management procedures can only reach so far into the lives of the participants, it is not ever-present. Thus, some of the men demonstrated how they were in control of their own lives to a far greater level than expected. The participants were active agents in the reintegration process, rather than passive ones. It is true that the restrictive nature of some of the measures in place, meant the men had to change routines or be increasingly self-aware. However, being active meant they still had goals to achieve, points to prove and trust to rebuild. They achieved this through self-risk management: being aware of their own risks, the restrictions in place and negotiating these issues to try and refrain from offending behaviour or licence recall.

Chapter 6 - Stigma

The previous two chapters have highlighted how the mechanics of reintegration and desistance are shaped by the experiences the participants faced regarding resettlement and risk management. It is clear how these two aspects of the process are fluid and dynamic, changing with the requirements of the person and the demands of law and public protection. The balance of resettlement needs and risk management procedures is precarious at times and can leave the child sex offender in a vulnerable and challenging position in the community. The participants of this study had to adapt their lives accordingly to negate this vulnerability and to live in normality. Therefore, resettlement and risk management are interchangeable and go together in the experiences of these men. It was further clear from the participant's accounts, that stigma had an overarching effect on their lives. This chapter demonstrates further the power that stigma had on the experiences of the men and acknowledges how transposable this influence was in relation to resettlement and risk management. Indeed, the effect of stigma revealed that it was present in every aspect of the experiences of the men. This created a holistic impression when considering how these three themes impacted upon them. The underlying theory of this thesis as illustrated in Figure 6.1 has been designed to establish whether the negative or positive aspects of stigma on the lives of the participants had any effect on their overall reintegration and ultimate desistance.

‘Stigma’

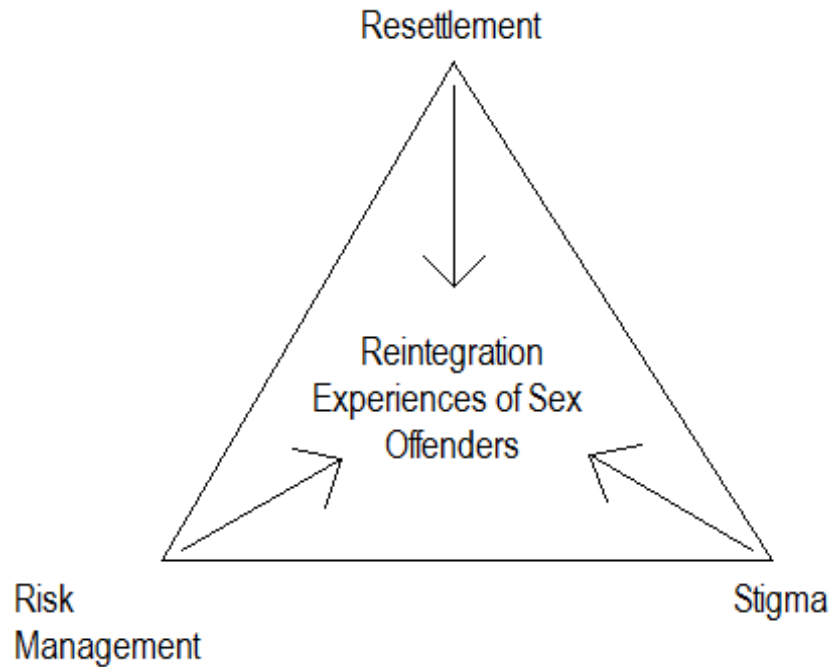


Figure 6.1: The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle: Stigma

The research question that links to this chapter was intended to help answer this:

Does stigma affect the lives of child sex offenders?

Further sub-questions were developed in relation to this:

- a) Have they encountered stigmatisation in the community due to their past behaviour? If so, how?
- b) What do they do to overcome any possible effects of stigma?
- c) What do they view to be the long-term effects of stigma?

- d) How do child sex offenders internalise this stigma? How do they view themselves? How do they believe others view them?

This chapter will be broken down into three areas of discourse. First, ‘self-identity’ of the participants and their management of this in the community will be discussed. Second, ‘social identity’ highlights how the views of others influenced the experiences of the men. Third, a discussion of the ‘aspirations’ of the participants, concludes this chapter by examining the long-term effects of the child sex offender label relating to future goals.

6.1 Self-identity

The label of ‘child sex offender’ is stigmatising. Stigma was defined by Goffman (1963) as a ‘blemished person’ (p. 11) whose stigma is apparent to others, i.e. a disability, or where the stigma is hidden and therefore unknown. Unless a child sex offender is known in the community as such (through media reporting for example), or family members are aware of their crimes, or another member of the public shares prior knowledge of the offender, this stigma is often hidden. It is apparent from the previous two chapters how the fear of being associated with the label and the fear of being ‘outed’ as a child sex offender is powerful, impacting upon their daily lives in an often-detrimental fashion. McAlinden (2007) stated that the successful reintegration of sex offenders is often hard to achieve because of this fear, coupled with the refusal of the community to accept child sex offenders in their own ‘Back Yard’ (p. 92). This rejection has further effects on the self-identity of the child sex offender, along with their personal community experiences and the meanings attributed to this self-labelling (Horley, 2008). Furthermore, the issue of self-identity and self-labelling becomes increasingly apparent, as it fuels the child sex offender’s notion

of the damaging effect of the sex offender label. This cyclical pattern may deepen entrenched beliefs of who the child sex offender truly considers themselves to be and may exaggerate any difficulties already associated with their overall reintegration and desistance from crime.

6.1.1 Accepting the Label – Transition Periods

Accepting the label/stigma associated with child sexual offences was evident in the interviews in many forms and the internal transition from offender to non-offender was one of them. This transition is an ability to move on, whilst being aware of previous wrong-doings. Understanding how stigma was all-encompassing was therefore a major factor in the lives of the men. Self-identity in this respect consequently, encapsulates the ‘who am I?’ in relation to this stigma. Many of the men’s experiences of media attention, prison and family reaction will have shaped their understanding of how others view child sex offenders and as Horley (2008) states:

The labels that we apply to ourselves, often the result of repeated labelling by others, can have very real and lasting effects in terms of our actions, both self-directed and other-directed (p. 24).

This short passage above can be compared to the response that Professional 11 gave on the sex offender label and stigma:

So, sex offenders, they have the stigma from the public and from...themselves, the families...all that has an effect in terms of slowing down the process and trajectory towards desistance. It doesn’t necessarily stop it, but it’s certainly an added weight. Everywhere

they go and everything they do...that is the *crime of all crimes* that they have done...something...especially something involving children, that is just like the bottom of the ladder... I don't think that people leave behind the fact that they've committed a sexual offence in the same way as other offenders [Emphasis added].

The lasting effects explained by Professional 11 are experienced in terms of being at the “bottom of the ladder” and the treatment that child sex offenders may receive from others because of their crimes. Being there, at the bottom, arguably would be a stigma that not only would be hard to remove, externally, but also internally by the offender themselves. It could be further argued that this may have a negative effect on their motivation to reintegrate successfully, because the label applied is so detrimental. However, Professional 9 believed this was not the case with all child sex offenders:

For some, it [the child sex offender label] will stop them, because it will be ‘I don't want to go through that again, don't want to re-live those experiences’. Those ones especially who don't have many convictions beforehand or interaction with the police, that stigma is quite big.

The lived experiences of becoming and being associated as a child sex offender may be very powerful for some people. James' experiences of signing ViSOR in Chapter 5, highlighted how the label of child sex offender was hard to accept, even if the processes were seemingly easy. He associated himself with the label, but did not accept all aspects of it:

It's awful. I don't think it's a nice term. It's an accurate term because legally I have been convicted of a sexual offence, therefore you're a sexual offender, but I don't like the term. It has connotations in my mind of being a creepy old man, who's going around looking for little kids.....does it need to be: that person is *that* [a sex offender] now... that is all that person is labelled as, that is what that person is? [Emphasis added]

He gave an example of the case of the professional footballer, Ched Evans to illustrate this point:

...he's trying to get himself back into society, but everyone seems to be wanting to jump away from him because all he's labelled by the press and the media and the radio: 'Ched Evans...the convicted sex offender'. Whatever...convicted rapist and it's...Ched Evans is a person and he is not that...it is not actually him, that is something he has done. It's that label where sometimes it does not need to be said. [It's the] complete drilling of it from every corner. That story's massive and everyone knows it...as soon as you say 'Ched Evans', everybody goes ahead and says 'rapist...convicted rapist'. Why does everyone else have to say it in the sentence?³⁷

The stigma of “rapist” was attached, in the view of James, firmly to the persona and identity of a man who was a famous footballer. This tainted identity, compounded in the media, represented a fall from grace and ‘brought into sharp focus the issues surrounding the rehabilitation of those convicted of sexual offences’ (Burke, 2015: 3). James could empathise with Ched Evans’ experiences, helping him to understand the comparisons with his own situation. Additionally, it

³⁷ It is noted that since this interview was conducted, Ched Evans has had his conviction quashed at retrial. However, for some people who have had their convictions quashed, the stigma will remain.

allowed him to question the relation of the sex offender label to his own circumstances, stating that the label was “fair”...:

...because that is the case, you can't get away from that, it's your fault, you've done something you shouldn't have done and that's the way it is...[and] I am a sex offender, it's my own fault.

James accepted the child sex offender label. He had questioned his own judgement in the commission of his offences, which led to an element of denial of responsibility, but he felt it should not remove his sense of ‘being’:

I view myself as being very stupid...that's the polite way of putting it, but at the end of the day I'm just a person who's done something wrong, who is at the minute still paying the price for it...which is fair enough.

James' self-identity was not adversely damaged by the stigma of being a child sex offender. He had hope and a belief that the stigma would recede in the future and this was the most significant effect of the label on him:

...when it's done and I have completed the course and done my 10 years on the register and done everything that's asked of me, I feel that I should be a normal person again...and not be labelled as that...I would have liked it to have calmed down and not restrict absolutely everything.

His registration period and the SOTP were all symbolic to James. Their completion meant he could move on and no longer be the same person who committed the offences and more importantly no longer be a child sex offender.

This transition from an offending identity to a non-offending one was evident in Stu's account of himself, when he said he had changed from the "old me" to the "new me". He expressed how his offences were not indicative of his true-self:

[I'm] a misunderstood old fool. That's how I view myself. I knew better...I knew I was wrong at the time, but I still did it. To me that's stupidity, that's foolishness. I'm not gonna let myself get in that position again. So I avoid everything to do with [that].

This was Stu's acceptance of his offending behaviour. "Stupid" and "foolish", were his own labels, his own stigmas, similar to that of James, above, who also called himself "stupid". It appears on the surface however, that Stu's own account of his self-identity does not fully satisfy an argument that he was also accepting of stigma (like James) and that it proffered little effect in his life. On the contrary, this is not an omission from Stu, it is a subtler acknowledgement that he could accept his own identity, despite the child sex offender stigma. This is further evidenced by Professional 3's experiences of working with child sex offenders, who respond to the issues of stigma in a similar way:

Well for me it's very much about whether they are emotionally strong enough to get over it [stigma]...put it in its rightful place, which is a part of what they have to live with, it's a hurdle; it's baggage. It's what they have to carry around with them, but it's about whether

that can be put in a rucksack and whether they can carry on...it's very much an individual thing.

Sometimes a person can deal with and accept stigma in different ways. Stu accepted his offending past and did not feel as though his self-identity was tainted by any form of stigma. Thus, he felt as though it was his responsibility to create a label for himself.

This transition from the old self to a new, non-offending one, was also apparent in the narrative of Nick. His brief response demonstrated how he accepted his offences for what they were, "wrong", and the steps he was taking to move away from this old identity:

I know what I did was wrong, but I spent my time in jail. I got out and now it's about trying to keep out of jail...I would rather stay out of jail. I am 28 and it's time for me to leave that part of my life. I am not smoking legal highs or cannabis which is good and helps my health.

His identity as a child sex offender is not wholly obvious in this above passage and his answer could have been the same if he had never committed child sexual offences. However, the fact that he was a child sex offender and that he was disassociating himself with the trappings of offending (legal highs and cannabis for example) may mean that he wanted to adopt a pro-social identity and move away from offending labels of any kind.

As professional 3 explained the label associated with child sex offenders can be very damaging indeed:

...registered sex offender, nonce, perve, kiddie fiddler. All of those words are words that [society] has used to describe [sex offenders]. Yeah, it's a label and it's a label that they really struggle to shake off...very much. At the end of the day I think our job is to acknowledge that yes, the public perception of sexual offenders is heinous.

This is, in the opinion of Professional 11, why people such as Nick want to move away from labels and want to live in relative normality:

...ultimately people will realise or come to a point where they don't want to be either going to prison, hurting people and they want to be having a better time and think more positively about themselves and other people. What they have done [in the past] is not the way forward...

The examples above show how three of the participants came to accept the label of sex offender and how they wanted to move on with their lives. This transition from an offending identity to a non-offending one, helped to shift any stigma that they may have attached to themselves.

6.1.2 "I'm an ex-sex offender"

The next two participants, Sean and Adam, stated how they were ex-sex offenders during their interviews. This showed a shift in self-identity as well as an acceptance of the stigma associated with their offences. Although both men had a similar stance in their ex-sex offender status, the practical application of this was more difficult than a simple statement.

Sean accepted the validity of the sex offender label and said “well it’s true, I am a sex offender” in the eyes of the law and society. In Sean’s case, there was a clear juxtaposition between his acceptance of the label and the tactics employed to hide his child sex offender identity; tactics discussed below. For example, when Sean talked about the label he said “the sex offender part that’s true” whilst adding how there was “no stigma about that”. Earlier, it was highlighted how a label is a stigma by its very nature, especially the label of child sex offender. Sean was at odds with this label and the connotations associated therein and the logic behind the contradiction became clear when he added how it was “other people’s perceptions of sex offenders” that caused problems and “nobody knows I’m a sex offender, so there’s no stigma”. Stigma for him, concerned the external factors and how they shaped his life. Therefore, his self-identity was of an ex-sex offender and this is why he believed there was no stigma in that sense:

I put myself as an ex-sex offender. That’s the way I view myself. I don’t view myself as a sex offender, because to me that’s a person who wants to carry on. So, I’m an ex-sex offender. I did it, not going to do it again and I want to keep myself on the straight and narrow.

It seemed straight forward to Sean that he wanted to move away from every aspect of the child sex offender label and he did not associate the label with his own self-identity. Sean had the power to do this, he was in control of how he perceived himself. He was not in control, however, of how others perceived child sex offenders, which concerned him. The passage from Sean below describes his own situation at a voluntary place of work. He was with a group of “mains”³⁸

³⁸ ‘Mains’ is a term used in UK prisons to describe prisoners who are not on the vulnerable prisoner units and are generally not sex offenders.

offenders and they were discussing a local newspaper article of a child sex offender who was already in prison and had received five extra years for historic sex offences. Sean knew this person from his period in prison, but the “mains” offenders did not know Sean was a child sex offender and had accepted him as an equal:

When I go to [volunteer] I have to listen to it all the time...I had to listen to the comments that all sex offenders should be shot, castrated, drowned, all the different types of things they were saying about them...sometimes I get angry [about this].

Sean had chosen to work at the volunteer project, in the knowledge that he would be working with non-sex offenders. This was his attempt to further remove himself from the child sex offender label, leaving him in a potentially precarious and vulnerable position. If the “mains” offenders had discovered his true identity, Sean would have undoubtedly been in danger given the above reaction to a newspaper article. It is clear from the previous chapters that living in the community as a child sex offender is difficult and it was evident that Sean was taking a risk in this situation. However, to counteract this risk, to try to keep himself safe, Sean, with the help of his two non-offender friends had adopted an alter-ego. This new identity was designed to hide his true self, so he could blend into society easier and move away from the child sex offender stigma:

If people ask me what I have done when I'm out, [his friends] usually turn round and say 'be careful because he's an armed robber'... 'What did you get', 'oh twelve years' and that explains off an armed robbery charge.

Although this new character was not pro-social in nature, it would have been plausible to others and would have explained why he had been in prison for so long. Armed robbery was an acceptable crime for Sean to portray and for others to accept. This new narrative of Sean's meant he could distance himself from the child sex offender label, helping him to become the 'ex-sex offender' that he wanted to be. If this meant employing this strategy, then as long as it worked for him and kept him safe, he was willing to risk it.

It is apparent that Sean was determined to move away from the child sex offender label and the stigma attached. His view of being a sex offender below, indicates why he was so desperate to find ways of shifting this label and moving on with his life:

I totally believe that once you've done your time, you've paid for your crime, but because you are a sex offender, you never stop paying. You never stop paying, that's just the nature of the beast, you never stop paying.

"You never stop paying" was Sean's way of recognising how he would always have to be careful in his dealings with others. If he was 'outed', he would have to move on. If he did not have the support of his friends, Sean may have found life difficult and may not have reintegrated as well as he had been doing:

...as I have said [I only basically know four people] and they don't see me as a sex offender...they say 'the past is past' and 'get on with life'...and that's the type of help I like.

His friends did not regard him as a child sex offender, even though they knew about his offending. The fellow volunteers at the project similarly did not regard him as a child sex offender, however they were unaware of his offending history and believed he was an armed robber. In turn, this had a positive effect on Sean's ability to move away from the label.

To be regarded as a child sex offender was one of the hardest aspects of Adams life, but it was something he lived with, because it was a consequence of his actions:

It disgusts me, what I did and I can understand why people think of sex offender's in the way they do. Because I used to before I did what I did. I wrote a letter to my sister when I first came out [of prison]... 'I understand why you don't want to see me. If I was you I wouldn't want to see me neither...' So I understand the stigma and I understand why, because what I did was heinous. I should never have done it.

Indeed, Adam expressed how others must view him with "disgust" especially members of his family. This view of his own existence in the community as a child sex offender was an everlasting one, because he said people may be able to forgive him, but "they'll never forget". Living in the community as a child sex offender in Adam's case, meant traversing all the challenges he faced as a consequence of his actions. Although Adam had a previous sexual offence, this was the first conviction where he had to sign ViSOR. He was asked how this made him feel:

It makes me sad because I never thought *I'd end up a sex offender...* I'd had a few run-ins with the police before...but this was the big thing and it makes me sad that I'll always be classed as a sex offender. [Emphasis added].

To be “classed as a sex offender” was different to classing himself as a sex offender. One was an external factor and the other was an internal form of stigmatisation. One was out of his control and in the hands of others, which caused him anxiety and stress and one was in his control which reduced stress. Nevertheless, this was still subject to change at any given moment:

As we said in the SOTP ‘I’m not a sex offender, *I’m an ex-sex offender*’...but that’s an easy way of looking at it. You are always gonna be a sex offender...you’ve always got to be on your guard and people are always gonna find out. [Emphasis added].

Like Sean, Adam knew he could move his self-identity away from the label of child sex offender, but the words lacked meaning because of the fear of being ‘outed’ while living in the community. Therefore, the external factors of stigma and labelling were stronger and had more effect on him than his own internalisations. He added: “I’m still disgusted with myself, but that’s getting easier as time goes on”, showing how he was trying to forgive his actions and move on with his life. Overall, he had adopted a somewhat positive approach to how he viewed himself and how he could live with his actions. However, it was the possible reactions of others that made his reintegration increasingly difficult and uncertain. To help with this he said he would never “get complacent” and assume that everything was going well, just in case things went wrong; something that will be discussed later.

6.1.3 Managing Self-Identity

To manage their own identity often resulted in the participants thinking about their own place in the community as a child sex offender. For some of the men, the label was relatively new, for

others it had been there for many years. Living in the community with this stigma caused a conflict between their self and social identity.

The long sexual offending history of Dave meant he had lived with this label since he was a young man. His example below is a brief indication of how difficult it was to hear the label, how he internalised it and how he had tried to block out the negative effects:

At first it was *gut wrenching*, being called ‘paedo’. ‘nonce’... ‘you dirty wrong-un.’ At first it was like a *dagger to the heart*, but I’ll admit, I’ve got *immune* to it. I’d *laugh at them* now if they said it [although] it’s not been said to me for a long long time by the way. [Emphasis added].

Brushing off the stigma and laughing at verbal taunts, indicated how Dave was able to move on, even though he did not necessarily have to like it. His reactions meant he understood the damaging effects of the label. It had taken time for Dave to live with this stigma, behaving like a “hermit” for years, negating any form of progressive reintegration. His lengthy past offending and his “bloody awful thing for teenage girls” had ensured he had negative internalisations of being a child sex offender. Although he wanted to move away from the label and prove to himself and others that he was an “alright bloke”, he felt he had not achieved this.

Being described as a ‘wrong-un’ or a ‘paedo’, was also personal and damaging in Allan’s case:

I don’t like labels at all. I would sooner be called a person who committed a crime but owned up, went to prison and served his time, came out and is making a go of his life. I think they are belittling, [they] make you feel small by putting a label on you. It reminds

me of war time, when they put labels on Jews. It's the same sort of stigma. For those who are constantly in and out of prison, they deserve it, but not for somebody [like me]. I firmly believe a man should be given another chance, no matter what he has done.

Allan did not have a long offending history and he had never been involved with the police prior to his arrest. Being in the community as a registered child sex offender was quite a shock for him and it was taking him some time to get used to it, if that was at all possible. When he was asked whether he viewed himself as a child sex offender he replied:

No, absolutely not, absolutely not! I have said this to my probation officer. I think the whole idea is that people think when you see children in the street you are lusting after them. I think nothing whatsoever. It's like exactly what you would think, they are kids and that is how I feel about anything like that. I don't have these thoughts and cravings or anything like that.

Allan's view of his own self-identity and how he managed this in relation to the stigma attached with his offences was apparent in this last statement. He was desperate to remove himself from the idea that child sex offenders are all "lusting" after children. The only way he could do this was to maintain his links with his OM and adhere to his restrictions. He had little in the way of community involvement, like Dave, and had to manage his internalized thoughts on stigma and self-identity with little guidance from others. The label was powerful for Allan, this was clear with his comparison to the treatment of the Jewish people, however, Professional 4 thought this label could be managed over time:

I encourage them not to view it as a label. I will tell them ‘you are a registered sex offender and this will follow you around.’ I try to encourage them to accept that...the impact on them will become less and less and less...as long as they are sticking to their side of the bargain [adhering to their restrictions].

This form of guidance and support to people with sex offences was Professional 4’s way of trying to help them move on and look forward in their lives, rather than dwell on their past behaviour. Dave had moved away from the hurt he initially felt about the stigma and it was encouraging to hear that Allan did not relate to the label and wanted to be free of it, even if he knew this would not be possible. Therefore, managing the label meant accepting that its effects would lessen over time, as long as they were not offending. This would help Allan to gain the level of normality that he wanted and he would be able to prove to others that he had moved on with his life.

Proving that he was a “normal person” who was getting “on with my life” was of great importance to George. He believed that life would be easier if people could accept him in the community rather than label him:

It [the label] does not make me feel very good at all. They change it to paedophile, which is what some of the people at [the hostel] were calling me...if somebody does know my past when I [see] them in the street and they start shouting this; it worries me what would happen. I don’t fancy getting beat up.

This relates to the fear that most of the men had about being ‘outed’ and being subjected to violence. This will be discussed in more detail below, however George’s words are of importance

because they demonstrate how he was internalising this fear and therefore the label. He did not view himself as a paedophile and said:

Yes, they call me that [paedophile] but my thoughts of a sex offender is somebody who has been touching. I haven't touched any kids, or anybody in my life, but I still got 'sex offender.' I just want to be a normal person, just get on with my life.

George's concept of his offences conflicted with the legal definitions of the crime. This led to him questioning his own label and why he should be placed in the child sex offender bracket at all. It was apparent therefore, that George's own perception of the child sex offender label was skewed and it was not in line with other's points of view. This in turn meant that he was not able to manage his own identity due to this internal conflict. To be a "normal person" would take time and effort and George proved how difficult that can be when a person does not understand how others view them.

Phil shared a similar position to that of George, saying that the label "hurts because, I mean, you know, you've got some people who do the most horrendous things and some people are just looking to find things out." Dealing with the child sex offender label and the stigma that is often attached to it was hard for Phil because it was clear that he too, did not share the views of others. The notion of 'once a sex offender always a sex offender' and 'sex offenders are simply more dangerous than other criminal offenders' (Sample and Bray, 2003: 60) was at conflict with George's own self-identity. He said "you are given the same label and treated in the same way" but he did not necessarily believe this should be the case with him.

Child sex offenders are often classed as the lowest form of criminal³⁹ and surprisingly Phil classed himself as a “monster”, not because this was his label but because he was “given that label and everything that goes with it. It’s awful.” Phil seemed more resigned than some to accept and adopt the “monster” label, feeling as though there was nothing he could do to move away from it. This seriously impacted on the way he was able to reintegrate into the community and he was quite isolated as a result. He was afraid of being ‘outed’ and afraid of negative community reactions.

Andy lived in an area which was close enough to his victim and the family that it was likely somebody would recognise him in the street. His reaction to the effects of the label were borne out of a personal experience at the hands of some family members who knew about his offences. He introduced this incident below, as well as talking about it later in the interview:

[I feel] uncomfortable. I know what I’ve done and I’ve done half my time I was sentenced to and I just wish people would leave it alone...I know what I’ve done and the problems I’ve caused...I aren’t bloody daft. I don’t need reminding what I’ve done...when these people were shouting ‘paedophile’...I felt as if I could have strangled the twat’s, but I just carried on [walking].

This was an emotional reaction from Andy and it was one which took some “self-control” in order to avoid a confrontational situation. For him it was not the fact that someone had seen him in the street, it was the label that they placed upon him that hurt. Andy was managing his self-identity,

³⁹ See Spencer and Ricciardelli (2016) for a vivid view of how correctional officers view child sex offenders in their care. Available online at <http://tcr.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/05/03/1362480616647590.full.pdf+html?hwshib2=authn%3A1464423627%3A20160527%253A07f64240-88b5-4cae-9cde-975eca933f92%3A0%3A0%3A0%3AWDHA5Etn1gBVxqiSm4nuKA%3D%3D>

he was able to accept his offences and the consequences that came with it. To be reminded of his status as a child sex offender, a 'paedophile' in this way was at odds with how he viewed himself:

I think the worse label is paedophile, it's worse than sex offender. Paedophile, it just sounds...I don't know...it's just in the name...paedophile. To be classed as a paedophile...it's just that label. Sex offender, fine, but paedophile makes you cringe.

It is obvious here that for Andy, the label of paedophile was viewed worse than the label of sex offender, especially because that was not how he viewed himself:

I'm ordinary, I'm just an ordinary guy wanting to get on with my life...I've done wrong, I've been inside, I'm an ex-con...I aren't bloody stupid, but people tend to think you are.

To be "ordinary", to have "served time" and to want to "get on" with life have been recurrent themes and Andy was no different. To achieve this was difficult however and he showed negativity in his attitude towards himself, not only as a result of his offending but also because of this stigma:

Sometimes I look at myself [in the mirror] and I just have to get on with it. Sometimes [I think] 'what an asshole you are.' You know, you have days where you're self-loathing and stuff like that. It's something I have to live by.

He therefore adopted a forward-looking attitude to "concentrate on the...future and don't look back." Andy thought he was "ordinary" but he was reminded, by others, that he was a child sex

offender living in the community. This made him far from ordinary, regardless of how he dealt with the stigma.

6.1.4 Summary

Living in the community as men with child sexual offences meant the participants lived with and managed their own self-identity and stigma. Each man had his own unique way of appreciating who he was and his place in the community. They had differing levels of acceptance of the child sex offender label and adopted different techniques to manage this. Although this section has discussed self-identity, it is apparent from the narratives of the participants that internal identifications are defined by both the person effected and the people whom they associate with, or from society as a whole. For example, Sean was able to accept his own stigma, the label that he attached to identify who he was. However, he had to adopt an alter-ego to blend back into society, in order to fit in. If he had only adopted the external identity of a child sex offender, he may not have been so successful in his reintegration. Therefore, the participants could accept the validity of the label and the stigma attached and in some way they had to, just so they could exist in the community. More importantly the participants struggled to accept that they were only a child sex offender and they wanted to prove to others that they were also people, worthy of living in society, even if this was in somewhat isolation. The next section of this chapter will discuss in more detail how the participants believed others viewed them, with reference to whether they had suffered violence or abuse from others in the community.

6.2 *Social Identity*

Goffman (1963) believed that ‘stigma management is a general feature of society’ and was a ‘process occurring wherever there are identity norms’ (p.155). For people with child sexual offences, this management is beset with challenges that ‘the *normals*’ (ibid: 15, italics in original) of society do not have to contend with. The challenges of creating a self-identity are apparent above and these challenges also run in conjunction with social identity formulation. The discussion below expands on the creation of the self in relation to the participants and explores how they perceived the world around them. It explains their own experiences of being around others, with an interest in the effects of violence and abuse and what this meant for their reintegration journey. This discussion is broken down into two parts, those participants who had not experienced violence or verbal abuse and those who had. The split was 50-50, with five men (James, Allan, Sean, Nick and Phil) not reporting any negative, violent or verbally abusive behaviour towards them. The second group all stated they had faced violence, abuse or negative behaviour whilst in the community.

6.2.1 *No Incidences of Violence or Verbal Abuse from Others*

It was apparent from his account, that James was careful with his identity in the community and this had resulted in no negative behaviour from others towards him. He wanted to be “known as a person”, to help him “have that confidence to get back into society” without the concern of the child sex offender label. The issue of the label was an external one, because he understood that the stigma attached to sex offenders was the same regardless of the nature of their offences:

I would say I'm not on the same level of say, someone who has raped somebody or has gone through with a deed like that. So, I don't want to be labelled as one of them. It's just a very broad label that sees just the worst in everybody...it's not...everyone's different, everyone's got different mind-sets.

The disjuncture between James' self-identity and his social one can be determined through this last passage. He stated that he did not commit rape, He believed his offences were not as serious a "deed" and did not want to be pigeonholed with other, presumably more serious offenders. However, society has a damning view of sex offenders and as such, all will find it hard to reintegrate as a result. This meant from his point of view, people categorised him incorrectly. Rather, he believed that "everyone's an individual" and "trying to group all sex offenders together is an easy thing to do, but there are different types and phases, like diabetes." However, society would have grouped him with other sex offenders and his social identity would have been tainted. His public persona would therefore need to be very different to the one that he held in private, if of course his account was a true reflection of his nature.

Sharing this opinion, Phil also believed society had a negative attitude towards sex offenders and how people therein did not differentiate between offence types:

They see you as one of the worst people on the planet. It's quite hard [and] certainly for me it's very difficult. For me [it's] the stigma...that goes with it because...there are different types of people who commit different types of crime. But to everyone else, in their eyes, [sex offenders] are all the same. At times it's hard to deal with.

This demonstrates how the views of some of the men were not in isolation, their experiences, thoughts and beliefs were shared. Phil had already accepted the external term of “monster”, this reiterated his belief that his position as a child sex offender in society was tenuous at best and it exposed the dangerous situation some of the participants were in, especially if they were ‘outed’. Society’s views of child sex offenders, thus effected Phil’s social identity and increased the risk of failing to reintegrate and also increased the risk of further offending. Excluding people is therefore seen as detrimental in the desistance process as Professional 2 explained:

I mean there's that idea that people can't be reintegrated into society, you know, sort of go underground and you know they are no longer participating properly in society which ostracises people more, which can increase [their offending] risk etc. So there's a danger of people becoming marginalised, but also creating other societies of sex offenders, where they are accepted etc, given their status and values etc. That's the last thing that you want...networking.

Professional 2 continued to explain how a negative social identity can lead to a need to be accepted by others:

...people confirm each other’s offending value bases, which can perpetuate offending. People also join together in terms of grooming. There's a lot of online sex offender...type stuff, sharing files, downloading, which perpetuates the actual abuse that's going on. All of these are negative things. As a society we need to be working against that and try to be more inclusive of people.

It was clear from the results, that the participants did not want to be ostracised and wanted to feel accepted in society. Their self-identities differed greatly from their social ones and often perceived their own risks of reoffending as lower than society's perceptions. This in turn effected their motivation to engage with others in the community and slowed down the reintegrative processes. Believing they were "normal" or "ordinary" was a common thread throughout the participant's accounts and it demonstrated a level of contradiction in comparison to general views of child sex offenders. This can be conceptualised in a them-and-us dichotomy, where the gap towards being accepted is so great that society may never "be more inclusive" of them (Professional 2). Alan for example viewed himself as an "ordinary...nice guy" even though his family did not want to have contact with him due to his offending. He believed his social identity was the same and he was ordinary because he could have conversations with others in the community and if they viewed him as "some sort of a weird creep...they would be cringing". This perception may have been far removed from the actual mechanics of his social interaction, because his contact was fleeting and superficial. He did not present as the "weird creep", in fact his presentation of self was in keeping with his aims to not be known as a child sex offender. This in turn helped to keep him safe in the community, whilst not having to develop long term and meaningful relationships. Therefore, in the absence of prior knowledge from others and a lack of media coverage in his case, Allan was able to maintain a positive social identity that was in keeping with his own sense of self.

Finally, Nick did not express any concerns about his social identity and the effect this had on his reintegration. He said that he "had never asked" his family about how they viewed him and he found it hard to articulate a response about his social position. It was discussed earlier that Nick's family knew about his offending and they had accepted him back on his return from prison, giving him their support. His reintegration had therefore been positive, he had not experienced any

physical or verbal abuse from others, despite his offending. He had distanced himself from the child sex offender label and thus the stigma attached was minimal.

6.2.2 Incidence of Violence or Verbal Abuse from Others: The Community

The following accounts are from the men who claimed they had faced some form of verbal abuse, violence or negative behaviour because of their child sex offender identity. These threats to their own personal safety may have wider implications in terms of reintegration and desistance. Living in the community as a child sex offender means to live with vulnerabilities and risks that are not often shared by other, non-sex offending members of society. Throughout their narratives it has become clear that they lived in fear of being ‘outed’, of losing what they had gained and of being attacked. Their vulnerable position, therefore, is made more tangible when they are subject to violence and abuse. The literature review highlighted the extreme response that society exerted upon sex offenders in Portsmouth in consequences of the *News of the World* name and shame campaign. Behaviour of this kind will only serve to disrupt the reintegration process, may increase the risks of harm to others and may inhibit any potential for desistance.

Stu struggled to articulate how others viewed him since his release from prison and believed that this was because “I’ve not developed [any] friendships.” He was isolated and alone. When he was threatened by a neighbour, his reactions were one of a man who felt vulnerable and wanted to feel safe:

[I’ve had] just the one incident with the lad who lived downstairs. But he was ‘off his tree’ anyway...he was on drugs...when he finally kicked off I had to call the police. He was

shouting ‘filthy old paedophile, living next door to me, you fancy me.’ This type of thing. I wasn’t afraid of him [and] I called the police [because] I don’t have to put up with it.

This incident, although only minor, was dealt with appropriately by the police and had a negative effect on Stu. Thus, he said he needed to be “hyper aware of where I am, what I’m doing and who I talk to” and it impacted on his ability to form relationships. His ability to trust others and mix with people in the community, coupled with a lack of positive reinforcement from peers other than his OM, resulted in a negative reintegration experience. This incident was damaging to Stu’s social identity and he was less willing to interact. Professional 8’s example below serves to illustrate the vulnerable position that child sex offenders are often in when they are in the community and compares to Stu’s situation:

I had a case where it got known [the child sex offender was ‘outed’], the flat was attacked, paint was thrown and words were written on the wall and he had to be moved really really quickly. He was quite a new sex offender...they are in fear of their lives. It's like...you know...I've got 3 people on my caseload serving life for killing people who they thought were sex offenders, there was no proof...that's the way society [is].

Professional 6 similarly gave an example of the effects of violence and abuse towards a child sex offender, which resulted in a change to the man’s life and routines:

I think he knows that what he has done is not liked by other people and he accepts that he is going to get some abuse in the street. [A man has] threatened to kill him, he has followed

him on his motorbike, the [man with sex offences] has had to call the police. He called the police while the guy was following him in his van. He is quite resilient about it. He's frightened and avoids going to certain areas where he lives because he lives in a small town. He avoids going to certain areas, but he almost accepts that's his fate. He's done what he's done.

To accept this as a part of life, would be to accept it reluctantly. The passages above, along with the one below serves to illustrate what reality is like for some sex offenders:

One of the guys that I'm working with now committed a rape...he was from quite a well-known family and she was from quite a well-known family and he did a long sentence. And he was terrified of coming out and had received all kinds of indirect threats from different people coming in and out of the jail and was terrified when he came out, and he was threatened. [Professional 3]

Living in fear of reprisals only isolates a person further. Therefore, people with child sexual offences may need extra support from the authorities when dealing with threats of violence or abuse, as in the above case:

But the RMO's...are very good...they went and knocked on [the door of those who were threatening him], they said 'we know that you've done it, we're not expecting you to say anything, do it again and there will be repercussions.' And it never did happen again. (Professional 3).

As stated by Professional 3, abusive and threatening behaviour is real and it happens but “I don't think it happens as frequently as offenders think.” The real belief that they could be abused or subjected to violence, influences child sex offenders in the community and it impacted upon many of the men in this study, regardless of if they had been subject to it or not.

No matter how careful a child sex offender is in hiding their identity or keeping themselves safe by managing their own identity, abusive or violent behaviour can occur against them at any point. For example, Andy stated that he was subjected to verbal abuse from his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, who saw him walking in the street, prior to attending our interview:

I just happened to bump into them in [town]...I didn't recognise them, I just carried on walking and then I just heard all this shit come out of their mouths... ‘paedophile, raping your own kids.’ I was gonna hit him with this fucking walking stick, but I thought ‘better not’ [laughs].

This incident highlights once more the precarious nature of the daily lives of the participants and it places into perspective the difficulties some of the men had in managing their social identity. This was not the first incident of this nature and Andy already had fears and anxieties associated with his child sex offender status:

Going for a walk...and what have you...because you know, the stigma of being a sex offender, you feel as if...it's like a paranoia, you feel as if everybody's looking at you and they know what you've done.

Of all the men who participated in this study, Dave indicated that he had been subjected to the most violence:

I've been physically attacked three times, hospitalized twice. I've got a steel plate in my eye socket where I got battered. I got laid out...didn't even see that coming and then I got done in the hostel as well...Yeah, I've had my share...At first I became hermit-like and just thought 'stuff it, I'm not living like this.' That's what made me more determined to become more vigilant as to where I went...

Although he was attacked in the AP setting, most of the violence occurred in the community. As a result, Dave changed his routines and lifestyle. He avoided his nearest town, unless he had to attend probation appointments. He said he thought he was more "conscious" about his own well-being and safety in the community. The term "conscious" here, represents Dave's previous approach to life in the community and how he had changed his behaviour, the places he went to and the people he mixed with. To be "conscious" in this respect denoted his understanding that he should make rational choices about his involvement with society, especially if he was vulnerable and at risk of further attack. This was another way in which he employed a self-risk management strategy to help him move away from further risk.

Dave also chose his peers carefully and explained how none of them knew about his sexual offending history, albeit apart from one with whom the police disclosed information as discussed in Chapter 5. This was more than an omission with regards to his past, it was a tactical effort to gain friends and to have company. After years of living on the fringes of society, as an outcast, Dave had finally started to feel accepted by others. He said "nobody has said a bad word for me

[and] a lot of people have said ‘oh yeah he’s a sound lad’” whilst adding “people go out of their way to help me now.” This was a risky tactic and it showed the lengths that Dave was going to, just so he could have some normality in his life.

6.2.3 Incidence of Violence or Verbal Abuse from Others: The Approved Premises

The role of the AP has been discussed in the previous chapters. The AP is a popular risk management tool for OM’s to use when they are looking to find suitable accommodation for their supervisees, especially when they are released from prison. It provides a strand of resettlement that is often missing when child sex offenders are being reintegrated, an issue that was covered in both chapters 2 and 4. This shelter offers food and warmth to the men who reside there and it is also supposed to offer safety, particularly to the vulnerable. It is an easy housing option for men who have difficulties finding accommodation due to their offending, their risks and the social reaction towards them especially if they are a high-profile or well-known case. Finally, the AP has the resources to help a person move on and transition from that environment into something more suitable and permanent.

The experiences shared by the participants featured below, offer an alternative view, that the AP is a toxic and unsafe environment due to the mix of general and sex offenders. The AP does not segregate these offending types, which is in direct contrast to the prison environment from which most of the participants had been released. George and Adam therefore faced abusive, threatening and violent behaviour while they were in the AP. Their accounts suggest that living there provides a unique set of challenges in relation to reintegration and desistance. George faced violence at the AP from a resident that he was previously friends with:

A thing happened at the hostel when I was there. I thought this lad was joking. He had a cricket bat. I was sat on a chair and he walked up, offered it up to my knee and whacked me...people [in the hostel] had been saying things [about his offending] and he's sort of believed it. So, the following day I said 'do you realise what you did with that cricket bat?' He said 'yes I do'. [George replied] 'So I tell you now mate, it's a good job they took it away from you because I was about to get it and do the same to you'.

Prior to this incident, George felt that others saw him as "alright" and he could "have a laugh with them". He added that some of the other residents thought he was "a great person to know" and this had made him "feel good". It was not clear however, whether these people who thought he was "alright" were sex offenders or not, or whether they knew about his previous offending. What was clear was the attack was provoked by others in the AP and perpetrated by an AP member. This was an unprovoked assault on George and it resulted in him wanting to be "more careful" around other people adding that if incidences of this nature continued, or if people knew who he was, he would "withdraw", becoming more isolated. Professional 2 said violence of this nature in the AP was common: "I've got a guy [a sex offender] currently at...our approved premises, who's been subject to threats of violence by others". The stigma of being a child sex offender in an AP, housing offenders of all types, arguably offers up a significantly more testing environment than for the non-sex offending man.

Adam's experience in the AP did not result in a physical attack, but was verbal and threatening in nature:

...the only behaviour I've faced is luckily when...four days after I got out. One of the lads found out my name, went on the internet, found out what I'd done and he came to me and went 'I know what you've done' and I went 'oh...good for you'. I went and told the staff at the hostel straight away, they had a word with him and it sort of eased off. The only time he ever had a go at me was when he was pissed and then he started giving me little digs...so I'd ignore him. He never got violent with me luckily...he threatened it a couple of times but he never actually got violent. He did it to a couple of lads that he found out about; he hit one of them over the head with his hand and threatened another one. But with me he never actually...

The mixture of offenders, issues with alcohol and substance misuse and the negative stigma surrounding child sex offenders in the AP, created a space which shaped Adam's and the experiences of other participants. Professional 4 talked about this space, with reference to the shift in dynamics due to this abuse and violence:

There's a lot of it [abuse and violence] going on in the hostel, a lot in approved premises, nonce is the word of choice in there, it's often shouted out at people. It creates a lot of anxiety for people. It wobbles, destabilises them, because they don't know where that's going to, they don't want other people to know about their offending, and then they don't know if things are going to get physical. It can also affect the dynamics in a big way in the hostel because you've got a mixture of both types of offender. So violent offenders against sex offenders it's not good when those sort of dynamics raise themselves.

It can be argued therefore, that this challenging environment disrupts the participant's ability to manage their identity and the stigma associated with their offences. This in turn may influence their self-identity, the reintegration process and their desistance journey.

6.2.4 Summary

The stigma of being a child sex offender in the community was a difficult one for the participants to live with. Expressing wishes to be accepted in the community as “ordinary” or “normal” was at odds with a social identity so tainted that violence and verbal abuse was almost a dominant feature. Indeed, those men who were not subjected to such negative occurrences, hid their identity from others, changed their routines to keep safe and became isolated. This was through fear, self-protection and a wish to adhere to their community restrictions and conditions. For a sample size of 10 men, the rate of violence and negative behaviour specifically directed to them, because of their child sex offender status and stigma, was 50%. Reingle (2014) suggested the rate of offenders becoming victims of crime in general was higher than non-offenders, but this was not solely linked to their status as an offender and was not only related to violent acts. Aaltonen (2016) stated that this offender-victim overlap was in-part due to the socio-economic backgrounds of the offender-cum-victim being similar to other offenders, but again did not assert only violent occurrences. However, these studies showed how the sharing of space in society with other people who were also offenders was an indicator that offenders were more likely to become victims of crime. The participants of this study shared spaces and places with other offenders, the families of the victims, people they used to work with, members of the public and media representation. The propensity to not be accepted by others, to have a tainted social identity and to be subjected to abusive and violent behaviour was high for these men. Their status and stigma as child sex offender meant they

were more vulnerable and at risk of being attacked than other offenders. Further research into this specific overlap is called for here, with one question being whether there should be separate AP's for people with sexual offences.

The final section of this chapter will discuss the aspirations of the participants. Future hopes and goals are often shaped by our everyday experiences. It can be determined from the above discussion and the previous chapters, that the post-conviction life of the child sex offender is a difficult and complex one. This chapter has focused on the self and social identity of the men and it is argued that this stigma has an effect on their future. If they struggle to deal with this identity they may struggle to feel aspirational or seek out the same opportunities as non-sex offenders to create meaningful goals.

6.3 Aspirations

People with child sexual offences face challenges of both an internal and external nature in relation to self-identity and social identity. Aspiring and goal-setting helps with motivation to reintegrate, to partake in OBP's and to form an alliance between offenders and professionals (Ward et al., 2007). The general view of child sex offenders is that of risk and danger, where their aspirations are largely overlooked (Vess, 2009). However, more recently, goals and aspirations are fundamentally important when attempting to understand the everyday aspects of their lives (Laws and Ward, 2011). Stigma has been established throughout this thesis as a force reaching into almost every aspect of the lives of the participants. The following discussion will identify how some of the men did not have set goals or aspirations while others had a clear path they wanted to travel. They were asked what they felt the long term effects of the child sex offender label were and what goals they had. Where possible, links to stigma and the child sex offender label will be established.

6.3.1 “Efforts to Change” – or not

Nick was determined to adapt to his new life and shake off the stigmatization associated with his past behaviour. Throughout his narrative he talked about how family members and some of his friends did not use any kinds of label against him and therefore felt he did not “have a problem” because of this. The most important factors in Nick’s life were to get “a job, a relationship, get married, have children, stay off the drugs and stay out of prison.” Placing criminogenic goals alongside his social milestones showed how important he felt they were, especially if he was ever to refrain from offending. The self-appraisal of his goals and aspirations showed how he wanted a different life from the one that related to offending behavior. He wanted to establish a legitimacy in the community and move away from the stigma and labels associated with drug misuse, general offending and child sex offending. Appleton (2010) believes that offenders who demonstrate a shift in their narratives to a more pro-social one, benefitted because they were more likely to desist. The aspirations of Nick to change his life and distance himself from the negativities associated with the label, gave him hope and as McAlinden (2011) has stated these ‘efforts to change’ (p. 172) should be supported by others when people with child sexual offences are attempting to reintegrate and ultimately desist.

Making these ‘efforts to change’ (ibid) as a man with sexual offences was difficult for Allan and he thought he would “just have to get on with life” in the best way he knew. He had little in the way of hope or aspiration and he was not being offered any ‘tangible social opportunities’ to help change his life (Weaver, 2016: 121). If he had the opportunity to meet new people, to feel part of the community once more, to be “normal” Allan would have been more enthusiastic about his future and would have been more motivated to succeed in the reintegration

process. Living in the community and being labelled as a child sex offender, in his view, limited any aspirations and goals he may have had:

...it just makes you sad. I suppose you get used to it. Like going to the police station, I just do it. It's like being in prison, you just do it... [now I say] fucking do it and get on with it...and then get out, it's all you can do.

This limitation of goals was a by-product therefore, of Allan's isolation, lack of family or emotional support, the child sex offender label and his inability to accept how different his life would always be. He held on to the hope that his daughter, the mother of his victim, would want to get in contact with him again and this goal was somewhat unrealistic in nature. He had not yet found a 'purpose' in his life (Maruna, 2001: 99) and this had a negative effect on his self-identity and his future outlook. Purpose in life helps a person to create goals and to create meaning for their existence.

When Dave was asked what the long-term effects of the sex offender label were for him, he answered:

I think that's bearing out in the fact that it stifles your lifestyle...drastically...it definitely cuts down on what you can and can't do in your life, I have to accept that.

He talked about a loss of freedom as a direct result of his sexual offending and he suggested that if he only had street offences he would be able to travel and do all the things he wanted to do. With sexual offences he would be unable to travel, get Visa's or leave the EU and said "I'd love to go

to Australia [but] they wouldn't even let me get off the plane." His hopes and goals for the future gave promise that he wanted to change his life, especially in terms of sexual offending, but he was not ready to accept a totally legitimate existence:

[My hopes and goals are] to not offend sexually again. I have a bit of a distorted view on this...my attitude to life is: as long as I can't get jailed for it, what the hell? I still smoke weed...it's my only vice in life. I've got to the point where I'm not going back to jail...that's number one, 'do not do anything that's going to get you back in jail...end of. And the rest...anything else? Just get off my back.

Dave's path towards reintegration had been varied and he had achieved quite a lot since his release from prison, along with the realisation that he had the potential to re-offend and the authorities had little trust in him. If what he said was true, then his path towards reintegration and desistance was becoming established and he was trying to change his life and his behaviour.

6.3.2 An Adaptive Strategy

Overall, life for the participants was fairly mundane, with little or no opportunity to successfully lead a satisfactory existence, arguably with the exception of James and his employment. Unlike most of the participants in Appleton's (2010) study, the men here struggled to gain a form of normality. Instead of being satisfied with their circumstances, they had to reduce their aspirations and live accordingly. For example, when Phil was asked about his future aspirations he said:

I don't really look that far...for the moment I literally take each day as it comes because every time I have tried to make future plans they have just fallen apart.

Losing hope in this way, being able to attain meaningful goals and living in the moment resulted in Phil living a 'menial and lonely existence' (Appleton, 2010: 167). This was because of the effects of the label, which he said was "something I have got to accept, and find...ways of moving on, which is not going to be easy...it's just a huge struggle." He said the main reason he felt so unmotivated to make plans was because he was "struggling" in the AP, which was a "disgusting" place and it had caused him "huge strain". Once again, the AP environment has been highlighted by a participant as being stressful and this is further evidence of the negative psychological impact it can have on some of its residents. Therefore, the possibility of leading a normal or ordinary life may be hard to achieve in this environment.

George said the only hopes and goals he had for the future were "to try and live a normal life." Normality in his case was important and the only way he could picture himself achieving this goal was to "keep out of trouble...keep on going as long as I can." This was another example of a participant adapting the scale of his aspirations, to ones that equate to no more than merely adhering to licence conditions, or to no longer offend. The only problems he perceived were:

Unless people get to know what I'm labeled [and] if nobody knows, I'm OK with it, but if people do get to know then I'm going to have to be very careful when I go out.

The stigma of his offending may inhibit his ability to achieve his adapted goals and he added that he would have to move away if he was ever 'outed'. His life was therefore placed into a framework

of limitations, especially the ones set by the courts or by probation. This can be compared to the example given by Andy:

I know my limits and I'll tend to stick to them limits for the rest of my life...where I can go and what I can do. When I'm out on licence I can do what I like, but it will still be there. It basically gets inbred in you, which is a good thing because it keeps you out of mischief, trouble and keeps you on the straight and narrow.

This was Andy's explanation of how he had modified and adapted his life to fit in with the regulations that restricted him and to help him be realistic when it came to goal-setting and achieving these goals. His future was set upon small, achievable goals such as getting "somewhere to live" and to "get a garden"; normal aspirations of many people in society. If he was to achieve this level of normality he knew it would take time and effort and would not happen overnight:

You don't know what's around the corner. Obviously I can have my hopes that things will improve with my family, whether they do or not I don't know. We'll have to wait and see.

Andy's final point of "We'll have to wait and see" gives a sense of ambiguity in his own understanding of what his future could look like. This was an indication of the journey he had travelled, up to the point of interview.

Long-term goals were difficult to achieve and they did not feature in many of the participant's plans. Those who had plans to get married, have children and build trusting relationships, such as Nick, had not formulated any solid ideas of how they were going to be

achieved. Stu was more hopeful than some that he would find a relationship, but he did not have any intentions to purposely enter one because of the long-term effect of the child sex offender label:

I don't think I'll ever have a meaningful relationship with anybody. I'll have acquaintances, people who I'll have a nodding talk to, but other than that...I just can't see me extending that trust that far.

The long-term effect for Stu manifested itself in his attitude towards others, their possible perceptions of him and this had an effect on his goals and hopes for the future:

I deal with that every day, I live in the moment, I do my meditation. Don't let myself get stressed out. Go for walks...I have my routine which keeps me on an even keel.

Living for the "moment" and having "routine" was Stu's way of dealing with life in the community as a sex offender and he did not want anything to spoil that. He felt like he had learned his lessons after offending and then re-offending and this had the effect of increased awareness of his self and social identity. His goals were not aspirational and they reflected how his life was adapting and how he was learning to accept his situation:

I want to get a place of my own which I can put my stamp on, make it my place, my refuge and say 'sod the world'. What money I've got left I'm gonna spend on me, gonna go on holidays...I'm gonna leave nowt for the kids...I'm gonna spend it.

There was no intention to build ties with his family, this was not a goal because he knew it was not realistic given the nature of his crimes. Instead his goal was “to be as happy and contented as I can make myself” and because prison was not somewhere that he ever intended on going back to again, he accepted the need to make his life as comfortable as he could in the circumstances.

6.3.3 A Chance to Prove Change

Finally, the accounts that Sean and Adam gave about the effects of the label and their hopes for the future were very similar to one another. They showed how aware they were of being a child sex offender and how they wanted to change, and be given a chance to prove they had changed. The sex offenders in Appleton’s (2010) study ‘found it significantly harder to rescript their biographies due to the stigma associated with their past’ (p. 169) and this was reflected in Sean’s explanation of the long-term effects of the child sex offender label:

It’s going to be a long-term effect and there’s nothing you can do about it...it will never change. The population say once you’re a sex offender, you’re a sex offender, you will never change...even though you will change.

Adam was afraid of being ‘outed’ because he too understood the effects:

It will always be there and it will never go...I’m always on my guard now. Will somebody find out? That’s always on my mind. When I’m in my flat I can relax. But when I’m out, I’m always on guard and looking.

For these two men, it was not about the dangers or risks they felt they may pose to others in the community, it was how others would react to them and how they believed they would always live with the stigma. This was true in many of the experiences of the participants because the label would always be there, even when they had completed their prison licence or their registration. Indeed, this reflected Hunter's (2010) findings that some white-collar offenders find it hard to move away from the label and be accepted by others:

They were unable to view any positives in a future in which their identity as offenders was already determined. Understanding that release from prison would force them to confront difficult decisions was to understand how they had changed (p. 220).

Sean had started to confront these 'difficult decisions' (ibid) throughout his time in prison and beyond, into the community. He began to understand how he had changed and what he wanted the future to look like:

What goals do I have? To live out my life in peace and harmony without any problems...that's my future...I never stop thinking about what I've done, I will never stop thinking about the people I have hurt. I can't change the past, but I can change the future and by changing the future, this means no more victims, no more jail time...

Adam had spoken about an important goal of his and that was to see his son again in the future, and this was an important part of his reintegration journey:

Proving to everybody that I'm a changed person and that's the only thing I can do...prove to people that I'm a changed person and hopefully one day...they won't forget...but they might start forgiving me...I think I will be proving that for the rest of my life.

To do this, to prove change, Adam said he wanted to “work out” why he offended in the first place. His whole process was therefore a learning curve and it meant he had to understand his risks and his own behaviour so he would not “get too complacent...I might drift into my old ways.” This links with the earlier views that the life of a child sex offender in the community is a precarious and vulnerable one, due to the stigma, the lack of significant resettlement opportunities and strict risk management procedures.

6.3.4 Summary

It can be determined from the above discussion that most of the men wanted to live ordinary or normal lives in the community, a similar finding to some important desistance studies conducted since the turn of the century (Maruna, 2001; Appleton, 2010; Hunter, 2010). What was particularly important for this study, was how the participants gave a rare glimpse into their world with specific focus on the mechanics of setting and achieving goals. The ordinary life that so many of the men searched for, was beset on all sides by external factors linked to stigma, lack of trust, the AP, risk management procedures, fear and low expectations coupled with aspirational change. The men who did set goals, did not however have well thought out plans, with clear targets. As such, the goals appeared to be fleeting, lacked substance and in some instances would be difficult to achieve. The effect of stigma was of great importance here, because societal views and values placed on the treatment of child sex offenders in the community meant they were not afforded the same

opportunities to create meaningful futures as others. If they had the chance to succeed, their very status as a child sex offender would be brought into question, even if they were unlikely to ever offend again.

6.4 Conclusion

The participants of this study were people who wanted to try and live normal, ordinary lives in the community but found great difficulty with this because of their child sex offender status. Living with this stigma caused anxiety, fear, worry and paranoia and this often led to an increasingly isolated lifestyle, where secrets and lies became the norm. Abuse and violence was experienced by 50% of the men and those who had not faced this, were often very aware that it could happen to them especially if other people knew about their offending history. It was alarming to hear how some of the men had been abused both physically and verbally in the AP setting, with stories of similar actions being presented by some of the professionals. This had the potential to damage any journey the offenders may have been making towards successful reintegration and desistance. They may have been inclined to reoffend or breach their conditions, to return to the safer environment of prison. The notion of time and space in relation to the offender journey is therefore highlighted as key towards understanding the mechanics of successful reintegration.

The participants often viewed themselves as sex offenders because this was what society determined them to be. They wanted to move away from the label and create as much distance between themselves and it, so they could prove to others how they were a changed person. This change was hard to prove and it had a dramatic effect on their future goals and aspirations. It was felt that the participants were merely existing in a society that does not want them, rather than living a fulfilling life. Aspirations were lowered as a result and the participants reluctantly accepted

that an ordinary life, similar to the ones they had prior to conviction, would never be a reality no matter how hard they tried. This effected their drive and determination to succeed, resulting in limited goal setting and low expectations. The move towards a crime free life, an offender free identity and an acceptance from others were three of the hardest elements to achieve for the participants. It was almost as if their ‘search for a meaningful identity’ in the community was thwarted at both a micro and macro level (Farrall and Calverley, 2006: 79).

Chapter 7 - Analysis

This chapter will explore the findings of the previous results chapters in more detail. First, the range of similar participant experiences and recurring themes shall be discussed. This includes the effect of limited relationships, employment and the AP environment on reintegration. It then moves on to how the participants would often have to hide their identities in the community as a form of self-protection and an attempt to gain acceptance from others. Finally, the chapter moves towards an idea influenced by Foucault (1977), Mathieson (1997), and more recently Bauman (2013): the concepts of panoptic and synoptic surveillance. Second, the underlying theoretical model proposed in Chapter 3 will be revisited, to consider its continuing validity. An alteration of this model has been applied to allow a better fit, considering the previous results presented in chapters 4-6 and the ensuing analysis below. The changes to the model will highlight how the participants of this study were actively involved in their reintegration processes and that they did so in a variety of spaces and over differing lengths of time. Therefore, it has further been developed from a hypothetical model of reintegration to an illustrative model of reintegration and desistance from crime.

7.1 Similarities in the Participants Experiences

7.1.1 Limited Positive Relationships

All the participants in this study expressed how they had lost family and friends as a direct result of their offending and subsequent conviction. They struggled to regain these associations in the community, which was a similar finding to many studies on reintegration and desistance (Crawley

and Sparks, 2006; Farrall and Calverley, 2006; Appleton, 2010; Harris, 2014; McAlinden et al., 2016) and this made their social capital seemingly worse than previously enjoyed (Niven and Stewart, 2005; Gobbels et al., 2012). For example, the number of family relationships the men had maintained was minimal, with only one participant, James, reporting how he remained at the family home with his mother. In addition, all the men were single and they all reported how difficult it would be to make new intimate and/or sexual relationships, due to issues with disclosure, trust and a fear of being 'outed' as a child sex offender; a finding that concurred with Mills (2015):

Renewing social contacts was usually a fraught and difficult process for those with a conviction for a sexual offence. Meeting new people was bound up with questions about disclosure of offences...Disclosure also risked rejection. (p. 391).

Fear of rejection was very real for many of the participants and could lead to further isolation and a demotivated attitude towards the building of new relationships. For example, in Chapter 4 Stu's issues of disclosure and how potential relationships could be negatively impacted upon were covered, showing how he would have to choose carefully as a result. Adam discussed how he was isolated in the community and the fear of rejection manifested itself in the form of being 'outed' as a child sex offender. Conversely, Sean gained a new friendship with two people, yet he faced possible rejection by taking the risk to disclose his child sexual offences as early into the friendship as he did. This couple were his only friends and they knew the truth about him, helping him to disguise his pseudo-identity as an armed robber and any accompanied, counter-factual narrative,

to others, negating or minimising the risks of rejection and being ‘outed’. Altogether their relationships were limited and differed to the ones enjoyed prior to their most recent conviction, through the loss of family and friends. The arguable exception to this was Dave, whose long criminal career had already resulted in two divorces and whose almost permanent exclusion from his family circle preceded this. His circumstances had changed many years prior and he was only in contact with his daughter and a handful of friends who did not know about his sexual convictions. Although the prospects of finding and maintaining relationships could be construed as bleak, all the participants placed great value on the relationships that remained and they relished any contact with family and friends.

Offenders of all types, place significance on the importance of maintaining, renewing and pursuing relationships. Silberman (1978), for example purports how marriage and families often help an offender to move away from crime. Laub and Sampson (2003) acknowledged how the value of marriage, especially strong ones, will increase over time and the potential offender will have more to lose should they return to or engage in criminal activity. Marriage and its ensuing institutional ties, were available for some of the current participants, and they often offended during this relationship, even though it is important to note that during the time of the research none of the men were in this form of relationship. Chapter 2 highlighted how most child sexual offences are committed in the family home, often against the most vulnerable and easily accessible people, including sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. However, the relationships that many of the participants had with their children were more than sexual in nature and some had not offended against these people. For example, internet offenders are only a “few clicks” (Professional 11) from offending and this can occur in the comfort of their home, without having

to move away from the computer. The internet offender will not necessarily offend against their own children, but they will still lose the right to have meaningful contact with them, post-sentence.

Significantly, as a result of their convictions, limitations were placed on who they could have contact with, which would more often than not be family members or other children. An important aspect of how and why child sex offenders offend is due to feelings of isolation or in some circumstances the existence of poor social skills (Harrison et al., 2010). When they return to the community they regularly have their means to offend (children) removed. Whilst this is often essential, it has the potential to make them more isolated and socially limited. In comparison, a drug user, whose illicit drug use would adversely affect the marital and parenthood bonds at the time (Schroeder et al., 2007), would be able to access drug treatment or move away from negative peers, and is still likely to maintain or reform healthy relationships (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001). This means that a drug user who has abstained from drug use, can to return to a normative family environment and be able to enjoy the comforts of familial love; the child sex offender, although they may not be offending, rarely can.

The societal and legal response towards child sex offenders is different when compared to non-sex offenders. A return to normal life may seem abhorrent for some people because of the severity of the offences (Mills, 2015). This severe offending therefore often calls for harsher punishments and licence restrictions, which evokes a 'just deserts' mentality (Von Hirsch, 1976: 23). The State or society may feel the child sex offender deserves whatever legal sanction or public reaction they receive because of their behaviour. An over-prediction of the risk they pose in the future may result in harsher responses. Leniency may be viewed as unworthy, any comforts the offender may enjoy, post-sentence, may seem to be an insult to the victim. Retribution in this sense is justified through crime control measures to make the offender pay for what they have done

(Cullen and Gilbert, 1982). In turn, therefore, this has a detrimental effect on the child sex offender's attempts to enter new relationships. In a 'just deserts' (Von Hirsch, 1976: 23) framework, additional suffering is placed upon the offender in the name of public and victim protection. They may not be permitted, by the State, to establish certain relationships, usually with families or people with young children, or they may find it too difficult or distressing to enter new, meaningful relationships due to issues with disclosure. Some relationships for child sex offenders are not able to form or exist, for legal reasons.

In comparison, some of the most pertinent studies on the reintegration and desistance of offenders (Maruna, 2001; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Weaver, 2016) acknowledge how relationships are often useful in the reintegration and desistance processes because they are allowable and possible. Weaver (2016) highlights a 'bond' (p.216) between people in the context of social relations and how this bond is maintained through friendships, intimacy and familial connections, making successful reintegration and desistance more probable. The participants of the current study were often not able to enjoy allowable or possible relationships. For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, George relocated to start a fresh, new life, and with this came the fact that he was not able to maintain any previous relationships because of his offending. Any new ones were superficial or fleeting and this was a pattern seen with many of the men. The experiences of child sex offenders in the current study, therefore, were different in comparison to studies conducted on common street offenders. They were not afforded the opportunities, or encouraged as a priority, to establish or strengthen friendships based on familial pro-social ties.

The participant's pre-existing relationships relied on the continued reciprocation and co-operation of friends or family members. Should that family member decide to cut ties with the offender, this could hinder further chances of social reintegration, because any support they

previously had, would be gone. Those who moved away from the situations and circumstances in which offending had previously occurred or could occur in the future, meant that social reintegration could potentially be difficult. These men, it could be argued, experienced a form of enforced ‘knifing-off’ from past associations, family and from most of society (Maruna and Roy, 2007; Laub and Sampson, 2003). This segregation meant the child sex offender would often be removed from positive influences, of which the desistance literature exclaims would promote desistance further (Laub and Sampson, 2003). This aspect of resettlement produced negative effects of increased social isolation, mistrust in others and a fear of disclosure, rejection or being ‘outed’. Studies have expressed how the development and maintenance of relationships play a large part in the promotion of positive reintegration, pro-social lives and desistance (Farrall and Calverley, 2006) and having ‘healthy social networks is a well-recognised protective factor reducing the likelihood of sexual reoffending’ (Mills, 2015: 392).

With respect to the contact offenders in this study, it could be posited that access to children, via adult relationships was a step towards offending. This could be through sexual fantasy and grooming behaviour, therefore being close and in a relationship where the other adult had children, was not preventative but causal. Thus, the prevention of further child contact is a necessary element of their risk management. Perhaps, therefore, for contact child sex offenders it may be in their best interests to not pursue relationships, especially if children are a factor. Whereas on the other hand, internet offenders often offend whilst avoiding tangible relationships as they spend a ‘significant amount of time in online chat rooms as a primary social and sexual outlet’ (Briggs et al., 2011: 72). This suggests that the improvement of relationships for this kind of offender may reduce further risks of offending as they may not feel the need to socialise on the

internet. However, this may be easier to posit than reality would suggest, as the typology of internet offender is becoming more diverse as further research is conducted (DeHart et al., 2016).

7.1.2 The Difficulties of Gaining Employment

Contemporary studies that discuss offender reintegration, offender life experiences, resettlement and desistance, often show that the future employment prospects of ex or continuing offenders are hampered because of criminal convictions and imprisonment (Maruna, 2001; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Appleton, 2010; Weaver, 2016). With ‘Offending and employment...generally found to be negatively associated’ (Geest et al., 2016: 112) and how imprisonment halts or suspends any progress towards gaining employment, especially for young men (Laub and Sampson, 2003), the future may seem bleak for any type of offender. Changes in the employment climate over the past 30 years have seen the demand for manufacturing and manual labour decrease, with the need for more intellectually based skills increasing (Farrall et al., 2012). This may further inhibit offenders, as this was often an outlet into stable and paid employment. Employment of this nature would take up most of a person’s time, reducing opportunities to offend, and would increase the money they had in their pocket, again reducing the need to offend to gain money (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). This is supported by Farmer et al. (2015):

Work [provides] meaning to individual lives and gives individuals ‘something to lose’ by getting in trouble with the law again. Employment also involves new forms of new routine activities, informal social controls, social supports and the possibility of meeting role models who are not involved in crime. (p.330).

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the unemployment rate for people over the age of 16, who were available to work between March and May 2016 was 4.9% (ONS, 2016). Data associated with offender unemployment, showed that 75% of offenders released from UK prisons claimed job-seeking benefits within two years of release (Ministry of Justice (MOJ), 2013). The same report established how those offenders who gained employment within one year of release were significantly less likely to, or took longer to reoffend than those who did not (MOJ, 2013). This evidence suggests employing offenders and allowing them to earn money and gain social ties to the community helps to reduce the risk of reoffending. This would in-turn help them to reintegrate and potentially move towards desistance from crime. The above statistics, however, were only suggestive of common, non-sexual crimes and the sexual crimes included in the report were negligible, adding no solid conclusions to their rate of employability or employment. The only suggestion proposed was how none⁴⁰ of the offenders who completed the SOTP had gone on to proven (P45) employment within the first year of leaving prison, suggesting how this is a group of offenders who are categorised as 'harder to help' (p. 42), and as a result may show higher rates of reoffending.

It seems, that gaining employment for ex-offenders in general, is difficult but not impossible, as 29% of the offenders sampled by the MOJ (2013) gained employment within two years of release from prison. However, these statistics do not specifically demonstrate the difficulties that people with sexual offences face when they are trying to gain employment. It is noted that sex offenders come from a range of backgrounds and have a range of skills, giving them the potential to have more skills in comparison to the 'normal' offender. Additionally, the statistics

⁴⁰ Within this report, there is no data provided to give an indication as to how many offenders were engaging in SOTP.

do not further proffer how many people with child sexual offences enter employment, post-conviction.

The current study, demonstrated how James was the only participant employed out of the five men who were actively seeking work. This employment is not necessarily an indicative picture of the opportunities of all child sex offenders due to the small sample size. Indeed, it was more an indication of how a man had been able to gain a job with a firm who did not request previous conviction information, before, during or after the interview. Mills' (2015) explained how 'employment was seemingly impossible' (p. 391) for his participants to achieve and thus they had 'little motivation' to overcome the challenges of finding work. It is therefore fair to say that while ex-offenders face discrimination in the employment market, child sex offenders face double discrimination, because of their status as an offender and as a sex offender.

Furthermore, Mills (2015) asked the question of who wants to employ a sex offender? To answer this, the issue of policy must be discussed, albeit briefly, to help establish the current position. The introduction of the DBS in 2012 after the merger of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), was a further measure to help protect vulnerable people from risk of harm (Thomas, 2016). This increased use of the DBS has served to further inhibit the employment opportunities of all offenders (Farrall et al., 2012) especially if they are going to be working with vulnerable groups (Thomas, 2016). The employment opportunities for people with child sexual offences has therefore decreased. The findings of the current study consistently demonstrated how difficult it was for the participants who were actively job seeking to find employment because of their child sex offender status and this was consistent with other, similar studies (e.g. Brown et al., 2007). Farmer et al. (2015) explained the effects of disclosure further, and their findings were similar to that of the present study:

...most of them [child sex offenders] had careers prior to and during their sexual offending...a number of participants reported the difficulties they had in obtaining work following their conviction. Some of them reported how employers would reject them when they learned of their conviction, and some had a resigned helplessness that they would never work again (p. 330-331).

The preventative nature of the DBS (Thomas, 2016), coupled with a societal questioning of the morality of employing child sex offenders in any line of work has served to preclude this group from ever being able to gain or maintain a vocational position. Studies have shown that sex offenders are 37% less likely to offend if they have stable, meaningful employment (Kruttschnitt et al., 2000) and sex offenders who continued to offend are more likely to be unemployed (Brown et al., 2007).

As discussed briefly above and in more depth in Chapter 4, only 1 in 10 of the participants of the current study was employed. Four were actively seeking employment and the remaining five were either retired or unable to work. The men who were looking for work, all noted how negative the experience had been. The findings here, were consistent with the results of Harris (2014) and it meant that the participants did not place as great a priority on gaining employment, as they did on gaining relationships or indeed, finding a suitable and more permanent place to live. They had a resignation that they would always struggle to find work because of their sex offender status. The retired men did not see employment as an issue and did not express any desires to work, even though this may have helped to negate feelings of social exclusion and isolation. Frustration was felt by the men who had offended on the internet, especially Adam who was finding it increasingly hard to gain employment, due to having his ability to search for jobs limited. Indeed, in a

‘technological age’ (Peck, 1983: 893), the use of computers in the workplace is commonplace and this could limit the types of jobs internet offenders can apply for.

7.1.3 Internet Offending – Difficulties in a Technological Age

The literature concerned with internet sex offending is growing (Seto, 2013), but the studies on the desistance, reintegration or management of this kind of offender is limited. Such offenders ‘present a particular challenge’ for those assessing the risk of further offending (Grubin, 2016: 150) with Seto (2013) stating there is insufficient data to help establish what works. In the present study, it was apparent that those six men who had internet offences had more difficulty in adjusting to modern day living than those men whose offences were contact based (offender-victim). This was a prevalent theme throughout their narratives and presents as a significant finding of this thesis.

Case law has suggested that the blanket ban on the use of the internet as part of a SHPO is not only ‘onerous’ (R v Hemsley, [2010], EWCA Crim 225) but ‘impermissible’ (R v Smith & Others [2011] EWCA Crim 1772). Given the nature of modernity in a technological age, the use of the internet is all-encompassing and therefore the reliance on its use is not insignificant (McCarthy, 2010). In banning all online activity for some offenders, the courts must consider the potential to commit further harm if unsupervised access is permitted. As part of their SHPO’s, the internet offenders in this study suggested they were subject to such a ban. Whether their interpretation of the restrictions was accurate, or simply a self-imposed way to ensure they managed their risks in the community accordingly was unclear within the data collection. However, in short, the participants felt this preclusion from internet usage was detrimental to their

overall ability to reintegrate; more so than their non-internet equivalents. For example, George recounted having to visit council offices to pay his council tax, rather than being able to complete any payments on the internet, Adam expressed how he was unable to job search on the internet and Stu could not date online. These are routine activities that ordinary members of the community often take for granted and it meant these men had to adjust their lives to fit in with the restrictions.

The internet has shaped how people share, manage and gather information (Blaisdell, 2009) and it plays a large part in the daily lives of many. The unsolicited nature of the internet, means any potential internet offender is only a few clicks away from viewing illegal images at home, on their phone or in an internet cafe and they are very hard to detect. It is not usually until computers are seized that the perpetrators are caught, and it is often for these reasons why legal restrictions state they must not access the internet or own any device capable of doing so. While life would be difficult for most people if they did not have access to the internet, the participants had to adapt and learn to live without it or rely on others to access it for them. Adam's experience of job hunting was limited because of being unable to use the internet and he had to attend, in person, the job centre and undertake face-to-face training. The risks of Adam using the internet in an unsolicited fashion were too high for him to be allowed access, so public protection is favoured here (Lussier, 2016) and links directly to the new penology discussed by Feely and Simon (1992). The internet in the case of Adam was an 'old haunt' (Farrall et al., 2014: 160) and was linked to his offending behaviour, therefore the restrictions in place were designed to move him away from the associated risks.

Desistance literature suggests that desisters often occupy different and new spaces (Farrall et al., 2014) in a similar vein to Adam and his adaptations made with his job searching. However, the internet is used for more reasons than simple employment searches, with virtually every aspect

of a person's life available in a virtual form. This includes paying bills, online banking, insurance quotes, online shopping, gaming, TV, Skype, applications, education and social media. Today, there is an inherent expectation that people will have an online persona, or a presence on the internet. Here, the boundaries between the private-self and the public-self appear to be blurred as societal expectations suggest the sharing of information over social media is normative. On the other hand, in the days when the internet was only a concept, Froming et al. (1982) suggested how the public-self 'consists of the overt, externally observable aspects [of a person] such as physical appearance' and how the private-self 'entails the covert aspects...that cannot be observed by others' (p. 477). In relation to internet offenders, it is therefore argued that a lack of cyber-space persona is both overt and covert in nature. It is overt because it is observable: no online persona exists. It is covert because of the legal (therefore unknown) reasons behind this. Therefore, in a modern age, if a person does not present with a digital persona, this raises suspicions and questions about their inclusion within society. This is a further obstacle that child (internet) offenders must negotiate when reintegrating into the community.

Marshall (1950) exclaimed how the processes associated with becoming a citizen were based upon equality, freedom of speech and liberty. Mossberger et al. (2008) expanded upon this by stating that these elements are not only related to the everyday rights of a person, but also include their rights as a 'digital citizen' (p. 1). Modernity therefore expects a person to incorporate this digital persona within their everyday lives and this is something that the internet offender cannot do. Doubts and raised suspicions do not help the child sex offender to establish a credible and accessible life in the same way as other people do. Undoubtedly this is to protect the public from further harm and to negate the capability to offend, but it is argued here how this conversely effects reintegration.

7.1.4 The Approved Premises and 'Moving On'

It was highlighted throughout the results chapters that the AP was viewed by the participants as a difficult environment to live in. Those who resided there wanted to move on quickly and those that had, were glad to have done so. Violence against people with child sexual offences was high and the mix of general and non-sexual offenders was a contributing factor in this. This caused the stress and anxiety levels of the participants to be high, producing unwanted feelings of being unsafe in a place where they should have been at their safest. Compared to the segregated prison setting, the AP presented challenges that some of the men had not had to cope with for many years, with some of the men in old age and clearly vulnerable when compared to other younger, non-sex offender men. Crawley and Sparks (2006) discussed how elderly men in prison were often preoccupied with a 'fear of being assaulted once released' (p.74) which mirrored the actual, lived experiences of the present study's participants. They provided clear and interesting information about life in the AP, something which is scarce in the literature on sex offender reintegration (Reeves, 2013) and something which was invaluable to this research.

According to Reeves (2016), the AP has a function, amongst others, 'to support safe resettlement and reintegration from prison into the community through a gradual, risk managed re-entry process' (p.280). This is contrary to most of the experiences of the study's participants. Moving on and out of the AP, was a cathartic experience for the men as it allowed them to move away from the child sex offender label associated with it. Arguably, if the AP was not a mix of general and sex offenders, the environment would be supportive and safe, as Reeves (2016) suggests. However, McLean and Maxwell (2015) illustrate the impact of having a known sex offender hostel in the community:

Having [a sex offender] hostel in the locality was a key topic of discussion [for the respondents of this study], as some of the street protests had related directly to it...[a]nd yet their view of another hostel, also located in their area, was quite different. This had been operating for many years as a homeless hostel. Local people worked in it and felt it was part of their community. (p.26).

Therefore, if the participants of the current study desired successful reintegration and ultimately moving towards a non-offending future, then the transition from the AP could be the first step towards this.

Not all aspects of the AP were negative. Indeed, this environment can provide support and decrease feelings of isolation and community segregation for some offenders. For example, Adam spoke about how the AP staff helped him considerably in his attempts to resettle and he credited them with his continued liberty. Stu also acknowledged how the AP staff were doing a good job in a difficult environment. In fact, the process of moving out of the AP environment has the potential to increase isolation and feelings of loneliness, which consequently can increase the risks of reoffending (Grubin, 2015). This is because the previous support afforded to them by the AP staff was no longer available to them. In this sense, transitioning from a professionally supportive environment, to living alone, was potentially damaging to the participant's overall reintegration. Even though they had suffered violence at the hands of other AP residents, they often relied on the professional response of the staff. In their own home, they would not be afforded such a service and the only support they could rely on was the police. Although this is a normal part of everyday life, for people who had relied on others for support, either in prison or in the AP, this caused some

fear and anxiety. This fear and anxiety manifested itself because of the perceived reaction the participants thought they would get from an unsupportive public.

7.1.5 Identities

For the participants, having the identity of a child sex offender in the community was an all-encompassing experience. They were presented with few chances to move away from the identity, to shake off the stigma, or to be able to live ordinary non-sex offender lives. It was clear how the label of child sex offender would stay with them for many years, if not for life. Those men who had not disclosed their offending past to others and therefore had not been 'outed', still lived life as a child sex offender incognito. This is not a suggestion that they were still offending, it is an acknowledgement of the difficulty of disassociation with the child sex offender label. Normality, therefore, was not achievable in the same way as a thief or a drug user due to this label. Their life was mixed with secrecy, lies, deception and mistruths, all to protect their identity and their own well-being, with Sean's recreation of his offending history, from child sex offender to armed robber being a good example of this. Identity protection in this sense was a form of social control; behaviour and identity were controlled due to the stigma involved with being a discredited person (Goffman, 1963). Signing ViSOR for life, living in an AP or being verbally and physically attacked due to their child sex offender status, were all reminders of who they were and how others viewed them. Indeed, not having a job, not being able to find employment because of the child sex offender label reinforced this for some of the participants (Mills, 2015). This exclusion is at odds with a reintegrative framework, one which specifies the need to include others, to move away from negative labels, to accept their ability to change and to confront the offender in a way that is inclusive (Braithwaite, 1989; Cohen, 1973). However, the stigma of being a child sex offender

was limiting their ability to be included. Many of the men wanted to start afresh with their lives, but in real terms they would never be able to regain a clean slate in the true reintegrative sense.

All but one of the participants had experienced prison and their experiences of hidden identity and the effects of stigma in the community, mirrored the experiences they may have encountered in the prison setting. For example, Schwaebe (2005) stated how in prison, sex offenders were vulnerable to abuse and assault because they would ‘generally survive their [prison] terms as members of a pariah’ (p.614) and were frequently reminded of their ‘devalued status’ (Tewksbury, 2012: 614), especially if they were housed on separate, vulnerable prisoner wings. Being separated from other non-sex offender prisoners is normal in many English and Welsh prisons and it is one way to help protect sex offenders from abuse and violence, although there are an increasing number of sex offender only prisons. Not all prisons ‘formally recognise vulnerable prisoners’ however, and have no ‘designated vulnerable prisoner unit’, with HMP Durham being a notable example of this (HMCIP, 2010: 12). Nevertheless, all the participants who had experienced prison had previously been housed on vulnerable units. Learning to survive in this prison setting, may have helped them to move into the community. To negotiate the AP safely, to adopt strategies when people recognise them or to live as an unknown amongst other people was a form of ‘tension management’ (Goffman, 1963: 164). This negotiation of the internal conflict, meant the adoption of different techniques to hide their identity and live in the community with other, ‘normals’ (ibid: 57). Being able to ‘pass’ (Schwaebe, 2015: 614) as an ordinary member of society is a step towards a normal life. Furst and Evans (2015) discovered that heroin users, like sex offenders, also use these ‘passing’ (p.130) techniques during their own reintegration. Heroin users in their opinion share common experiences of stigma, within the criminal justice system. For example, the media portrayal of heroin abusers is inherently negative, they will find it hard to gain

employment upon release from prison and they stand to lose all they have gained should they go to prison or recidivate. Like the present study, Furst and Evans (2015) concluded that sex offenders used passing to help deflect their true identities from others in comparison to heroin users whose techniques were acceptable to non-offenders.

If Maruna (2001) is correct in the assumption that desistance is only possible if the ex-offender 'develop[s] a coherent prosocial identity for themselves' (p.7), desistance will be difficult for those people whose very existence in the community is determined by their previous behaviour. The previous behaviours of the participants and the subsequent losses and restrictions endured and imposed upon them has led most of them to adopt an identity which, in the main, did not highlight these indiscretions. For example, Sean adopted an arguably un-prosocial identity of an armed robber and this identity was more acceptable within his new social circle than his true child sex offender one, even if it was firmly entrenched within criminality. Conversely, Sean's only close friends knew about his sexual offending and this was a major factor in his ability to build trust with other people. James made sure his identity was hidden from non-family members, helping him gain and maintain his employment. He was known to others as a child sex offender in his close community and this caused him some concern, but it did not influence his desire to hide and ultimately shake-off this undesirable stigma. Stu could hide his identity at the local Buddhist centre, but suffered abuse on the street when he was identified, demonstrating how the strategy of passing has structural limitations. Adam remained isolated at home and when he wanted to job search he would have to declare his offences, reiterating that his identity was a spoiled one (Goffman, 1963). Hiding in his case seemed to be the preferable choice. George was known to the local police as a child sex offender and this caused conflict with a close relationship. He had not hidden his identity from her, however he did hide it from other members of society. If the

acquisition of social bonds is determined or co-relates to personal changes in identity (LeBel et al., 2008) and this identity change links once more to social relations (Weaver, 2016) then the hidden identities of the present cohort appear to contradict existing desistance theories.

The act of passing, where the participant has adopted a hidden identity, helped with the reintegration process as their undesirable past could not be readily highlighted by others. The control of information was mostly in the hands of the participant as they had the power to choose who should know and when it was appropriate to disclose. Unlike the mortification process apparent in prison processes (Goffman, 1961), where the person is stripped bare of their identity and a new self is created, the participants in many respects had the ability to reinvent their identities to fit into society, to be accepted. The choices made, were largely determined by their own actions. For example, when Stu was being abused in the street, he had the choice to retaliate, however he chose not to, he chose to walk on and ignore the abusers. This had the effect of not making himself vulnerable to further legal sanctions and of not highlighting his hidden identity to other members of the public. To the ordinary member of the public, Stu's character was unassuming and it would not be apparent that Stu's 'performance' (Goffman, 1959: 204) helped him to blend in to normality. The abuse was intended to discredit this performance, to embarrass Stu. However, he continued to play his new character and this helped him to remain creditable. Passing therefore, enabled Stu to avoid a risky situation. Overall, the example of passing within the accounts of the participants helped build relationships, choose appropriate employment and ultimately improve chances of reintegrating with success and moving towards desistance from crime. With this said, it could be argued that the act of passing could also be linked or confused with the act of hiding, which will be explored further below.

7.1.6 Isolation in the Community

Hiding identities and trying to pass as a normal member of the community was often conducted in the form of isolation and being away from others. This is where the confusion may arise, where isolation is linked to hiding. Indeed, if a person is hiding, then they are not passing their identities, they are avoiding the chance of others knowing about their crimes and being able to identify them. However, this was not the case with many of the men. Isolation in this sense is linked to the lack of available relationships, new or old. Passing occurred daily when they were in the community, as the information they relayed to others was managed by them. Disclosure of offences was hard for the participants, as they did not want to be discredited (Goffman, 1963). This resulted in a choice to no longer pursue employment or relationships, through fear of being exposed. Consequently, there were instances of social isolation, which was unhealthy in the eyes of some of the professionals interviewed because such behaviour has the potential to increase risks of reoffending. Isolation, brought on through a lack of social and emotional support, exasperates sexual deviance and fantasies as the child sex offender's needs have an influence on their behaviours (Farmer and Mann, 2010). The lives of the participants appeared to be mundane and non-intrusive, but these are factors which have the potential to increase risks, to heighten the need to seek behaviours which have given comfort in the past. This is not to say that isolation or mundanity will increase risks further within this cohort, it is simply an explanation of one of the many factors that increase the chances of an onset of this behaviour type. The experiences for these men were not dissimilar to that of the participants of Appleton's (2010) study of life sentenced prisoners in the community. They shared a comparably normal and ordinary existence, generally led by the trappings that most people experience, paying bills, shopping, job searching or negotiating economic and social pressures. However, for the participants of this study, this was

harder to achieve because of their status and because of the associative risk factors explained above.

Even though their identities, in the main were hidden, the participants were not readily willing to engage with the community and had less desire to gain employment because they would have to disclose their previous behaviour. These are factors that are believed to inhibit reintegration and desistance from crime, points that have been highlighted throughout this thesis. However, for these men, this was normality, there was an acceptance that the community and employers would not readily accept them because of their past offences. Hiding identities, leading to isolation, is just one step in the reintegration process and it was acknowledged by the men as such. Here, life and identity are again, firmly in their control and they can choose to tell who they want, or live how they want if it is within the law and the restrictions imposed by the courts. Sometimes, living apart from others, from possible rejection, was easier than facing negativity. However, isolation also helped them to slowly rebuild new identities, as discussed above, and therefore move away from the past. One way in which they did this was to disassociate themselves from the label. For example, James: the trusted employee; Alan: The normal guy next door; Stu: member of the poetry club; or Sean: Buddhist. Tewksbury (2005) said 'If one is not widely known as a registered sex offender, the likelihood of experiencing collateral consequences is diminished' (p.76). To do this the men embraced hidden identities to keep themselves safe. It may seem as though they were not isolated in the traditional sense of being completely alone, however they were isolated with the few above exceptions. Their acknowledgement of isolation was a positive step, because they could reflect upon their own position and place, in context to what they wanted to achieve and what the community and the law expected of them.

Mills (2015) suggested that feeling ‘isolated from meaningful social contact and a sense of community characterized’ her interviewees’⁴¹ ‘lives after prison’ and this ‘was not something that necessarily improved in time’ (p.390). This suggests that any future form of social interaction is unlikely for most of the current participants because of their status as child sex offenders in the community and the lack of bond they had with those around them. Child sex offenders are arguably punished in more ways than other offenders, because they are sentenced, imprisoned, released, shamed, lose family and live in communities where they may be known as a child sex offender. They therefore may suffer abuse and harassment due to their status (Tewksbury, 2015).

The use of post-conviction intervention and risk management tools, such as ViSOR or the SHPO, mean the UK Governments zero tolerance approach (McAlinden, 2008) to the control and regulation of child sex offenders has led to more restrictions and less chance of meaningful social inclusion than general offenders. The use of regulatory measures has ‘led to social withdrawal and heightened anxiety for sex offenders [which are often] common precursors to reoffending’ (Tewksbury, 2015: 78-79) and is experientially different from the accounts found in the desistance and reintegration studies named above. For example, the men who were asked about the restrictions they faced in the community, were all able to articulate what they were and what they meant in terms of lived experience. George kept a copy of his SHPO on his person to remind him of the legal expectations required when in the community. The perceived risks they pose should they flout licence conditions or veer from expectations placed upon them, further isolated them as a group of offenders. The thought of being watched or ‘outed’ by others, increased isolation as a

⁴¹ Mills interviewed 6 male child sex offenders in the community as part of a wider project to designed to understand the experiences of men convicted of sexual offences, released from prison to a probation hostel. See Mills and Grimshaw (2012) for further details.

way of keeping safe. This increased self-panoptic management, their abstract response to the influences of risk management, fear and the pressures of society to conform.

7.1.7 Self-Panoptic Management as a Response to State Measures of Control

Child sex offenders are controlled by the State. Within the community this is achieved using sanctions, restrictions, ViSOR, SHPO's, surveillance and supervision. These measures of social order, directed specifically at all sexual offenders, should not only be considered as methods of dealing with deviant sexual behaviour, they are also a way in which control is exerted, regulation is encouraged and discipline maintained (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2013). Control is exerted through specific rules determining what the child sex offender can or cannot do. Regulation is encouraged to help the child sex offender fit into the community through the display of normative behaviour. Discipline is maintained because the child sex offender understands the consequences of non-compliance. Even though these measures are invisible and non-tangible, they are a visible form of power that was felt by the current participants, daily. Here, 'visibility becomes a trap' (Bauman, 2013: 53) and is intended to change the behaviour of the child sex offender, making him aware that not only is he being watched and subject to surveillance, but he must also regulate himself to stave away the consequences of any further infractions.

Panoptic power, as explained by Foucault (1977), was conceptualised as a tool to manage populations in an 'omnipresent' and 'faceless' (p. 214) way, in stark contrast to Bentham's tangible panopticon: an architectural, all-seeing institution where the inmates did not know if they were being watched, or by whom. Bentham (1761) described it as 'The Idea of a New Principle of Construction applicable to any sort of Establishment, in which Persons of any Description are to

be kept under Inspection’ [capitalisation in original] (p. n.p). In contrast, Foucault’s (1977) interpretation of panoptic power, meant it was invisible in the sense that it could not be seen, but was visible in the way that people knew it was there. Panoptic power in this sense comes from the top down, it is imposed upon others, with the potential to stifle and further restrict autonomous behaviour.

The participants of this study could understand the expectations of the powerful and live their lives in accordance to this. For the participants of Farmer et al’s. (2015) study, control over one’s life gave the offenders a sense of achievement and a belief that they were on the right track in terms of moving away from crime. Control for the current participants came in the form of self-regulated behaviour, the desire to reintegrate without the need to offend further. If desistance was to be something real to aspire to, then self-panoptic management would have to be a part of their reintegration process. The concept of self-panoptic management is simple: power is exerted by the State and society in the form of prescriptive regulatory powers and perceptions. The child sex offender wants to feel in control of their own life and the belief that they are doing so, helps them to feel normal and to conform. In doing this the child sex offender must adhere to the rules and regulations placed upon them, in the knowledge that if they do not, they may face serious legal, financial, emotional, familial or social consequences. This is where the many are being watched by the few. This is not panoptic power in the traditional Foucaultian sense however, but rather a form ‘of DIY panopticon’ or self-panoticism (Bauman, 2013: 69).

The concept of self-risk management was discussed in relation to the experiences of the participants in Chapter 5, which highlighted how the men could not be physically watched or surveilled always and they must be trusted, to a point, to exist in society without further offending. This is similar to the concept of the ‘DIY panopticon’ (ibid) introduced above and suggests that

people can self-manage in society as they are subject to ‘surveillance without the surveillors’ (ibid). Here, child sex offenders are subject to a form of synoptic surveillance, where the many are watching the few, or so the offenders may believe (Mathieson, 1997). For example, all people live in a society where CCTV is the norm, rules and regulations must be followed and laws must be abided by. Non-offending people do not have the same level of intangible surveillance that child sex offenders do. They do not have the aforementioned surveillors. Child sex offenders must abide by rules and regulations and laws, like ordinary members of the public. However, the difference is that they do have surveillors, even though they are not seen every day.

Within synoptic surveillance, the child sex offender may believe that all people are watching them, that all people know what they have done, thus regulating or changing behaviour and routines. The difference is that many child sex offenders, offending for the first time, did not have these levels of panoptic or synoptic power presented to them at the time of offending, in comparison to post-sentence. They therefore exist in time and space, in the knowledge of what could happen to them, what they stand to lose, if they should offend again. A further difference is how they may not be being watched, but there is a chance they could be. They could have a home visit, have their computers checked, have their relationships scrutinised, their workplaces informed, their information disclosed to local schools or their backgrounds checked on the bequest of a family member⁴². People within the community, ex-friends, work colleagues, family members or victims may see them and the repercussions of this for the child sex offender are uncertain. The participants of this study were all aware of this and therefore had to live their lives with this knowledge.

⁴² Community disclosure schemes are introduced in Chapter 2.

Dave, for example, was under surveillance by the police and arrested because of increasingly risky behaviour which contradicted his SHPO. Sean offered his computer for examination by his RMO and James gave his RMO his online passwords and user names to prove how his behaviour had changed. This was self-regulation and self-management in a panoptic sense. This self-panoptic method of governance and control, is potentially the most important way in which the State and the community manages the risks of child sex offenders, because of the power it exercises. The power exerted by the officialdom of the State means the consequences a child sex offender faces if they reoffend will have formal, legal repercussions. The participants, for example Dave, posited how this was enough to move away from offending. On the other hand, the informal, society/community based controls also exerted power upon the participants. Dave did not only fear the legal ramifications should he reoffend, but he also feared the responses of the community, family or friends. His self-panoptic regulation was just as strong when discussing these social controls when compared to the formal, official controls.

7.1.8 Summary

The experiences of the men showed some striking similarities from one another, along with similarities to the literature surrounding reintegration and desistance. The men demonstrated how their relationships were limited significantly post-sentence, with only one man, James, living with his family and Nick having the continued support of the family unit. This exasperated the feeling of loss within the narratives of the participants, as they discussed the gap between wanting to regain relationships and the reality that this may not be possible. Employment was a difficult for those men who were seeking it. James was the only man with a job, probably because of not having to disclose his offences to his employer. The evidence suggests however, that for these men, being

a child sex offender potentially negated the possibility of ever being employed. A significant finding of this thesis, suggests that the participants with internet offences, gave them less opportunity to reintegrate with success in comparison to their contact offending counterparts. This was due, in part, to the extra restrictions they faced whilst in the community, as an increased form of public protection. The AP, where many of the men had lived after being in prison, was a toxic environment. The threat of, or actual incidences of violence and abuse was commonplace, and this was in contradiction to the purpose of the AP. Many of the men hid their identities from others, because of the fear of being ‘outed’. This occurred in a number of ways, with ‘passing’ being a common form of self-protection. Furthermore, the men were often isolated, lacking social and familial support. They hid their identities, by strategically disclosing their child sex offender status at times of necessity. However, they also asserted how life was sometimes easier if they were alone, as the risk of being ‘outed’ was lessened. Finally, the participants adopted a form of self-risk management, where they understood how the authorities had the potential to inspect many aspects of their lives at any time, where they understood the consequences of further offending and where the potential to be watched and surveilled was a realistic possibility.

7.2 The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle: An Analysis

It is with little doubt that crime is a multi-faceted, dynamic and complex phenomenon that deserves the full attention and scrutiny of criminological researchers, allowing for theoretical development. The research, analysis and subsequent development of theory, permits social scientists to understand how people come to violate the laws of the state (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990), how they move through the criminal justice system, how they persist in crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003) and how they desist (Maruna, 2001), if, of course, they do. The underlying theoretical model

pertaining to this thesis, was an attempt to illustrate the intricate and complicated nature of child sex offender reintegration. By its very nature, the theory was an almost controversial statement of the fact that child sex offenders must reintegrate in contemporary society, regardless of popular judgements and it introduced the mechanisms that helped its operation. The theory was therefore an endeavour in its own right, as its position within the criminological understanding of how, if and why child sex offenders reintegrate and desist was at odds with legal and public opinion.

The original premise for the theory was for the provision of a model which considered the dynamic nature of criminal behaviour, personal affect, situations and external influences. It was thought that the mix of these components would help, guide, determine and shape the path of reintegration and ultimate desistance faced by the child sex offender in the community, on a case by case basis. Although this sounds passive in nature, where the child sex offender has little control over their lives and destiny (Braithwaite, 1989), the model in fact places the child sex offender in the centre, as they actively react to external and internal forces. It is the experiential nature of the design that enables the model to appreciate each offender's journey, rather than the adoption of a one-size-fits-all approach. Overall, it is felt that the model achieves this original premise but in a limited form. Throughout the process of research development for this study, the theoretical model was referred to, not only within the thesis itself but also by the researcher in a reflective and reflexive fashion. This section will therefore consider the original model and will suggest alterations to be made.

7.2.1 The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle: Development

The original model, as shown in figure 7.1 below, introduced how the concepts of Resettlement, Risk Management Procedures and Stigma could all influence the reintegration experiences of child sex offenders, whether this was in a negative or positive fashion. Thus, it was hypothesised that the likelihood of successful reintegration would be determined by these influences and how the child sex offender responded to them:

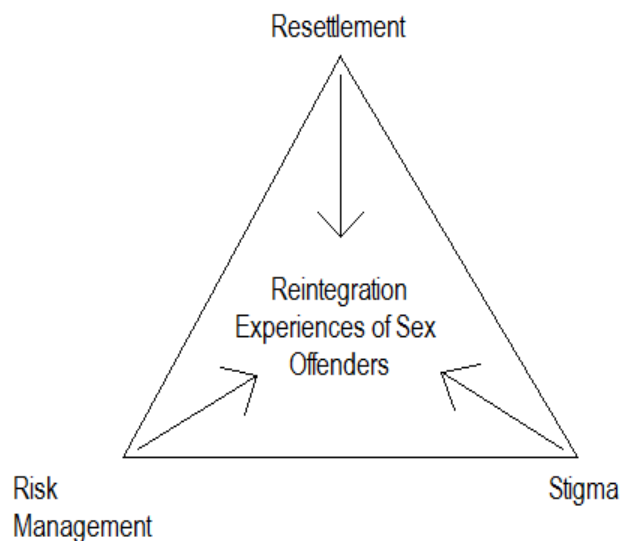


Figure 7.1: The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Triangle

However, this construct did not fully appreciate the complexities of child sex offender reintegration and desistance apparent within the existing literature and the subsequent presentation of the results and the analysis of those results undertaken above. First, the centre of the triangle focussed solely on the reintegration experiences of child sex offenders, whilst ignoring them as active agents of their own life. With specific influence taken from Christie (1977), who suggested how the criminal justice system was something that happened to the victim, in other words, they were passive, this thesis argues how child sex offenders are also viewed as passive by the criminal justice system. This is not to suggest the

participants of this study were victims, indeed, no comparison is insinuated, rather, Christie's thoughts acted as inspiration when attempting to understand the place of the child sex offender in the process. The reintegration experiences linked to risk management, stigma and resettlement in relation to the triangle did not interact with the participant and the model assumed the child sex offender was passive. In other words, they had no control of what could affect them in everyday life, similar to Christie's (1977) victims who would be sat in a court room, whilst the professionals around them determined their fate and the fate of the accused. This assumption was wrong, and it was clear from the results, that each participant was an active agent in their own life, with more control over their destiny than the literature illustrated or than the researcher had previously thought. Furthermore, the original model did not explicitly acknowledge the possible existence or process towards desistance from crime, an oversight that needed further development and is highlighted below.

The management of child sex offenders in the community is traditionally viewed as the responsibility of the professionals working with them. From the moment the offender enters the court room, the conflict between the offender and the victim is managed by lawyers. Assuming a guilty verdict is found, the path of the offender is quickly determined and managed by the State, which means the offender becomes passive. The State takes responsibility away from the offender and it is difficult for them to regain what they have lost. The participants of this study have shown how they have more responsibility in their community lives than was first assumed. Therefore, more assertion was needed to highlight the relationship between the participant and the three different aspects of the triangle. This interplay is key to understanding how the men negotiated their lives despite these influences.

Second, the Triangle did not illustrate with enough expression, the relationships between the three themes that were highlighted as the most influential. Expressed throughout chapters 4-7, stigma, risk management and resettlement all have an influence on each other and did not work in isolation. For

example, Nick recounted how he had relocated, from prison to the AP (resettlement and risk management) and how he understood the negative label associated with the AP within the community (stigma) and this impacted on his need to find more suitable accommodation (resettlement). Here, stigma, risk management and resettlement were present as dynamic and fluid aspects of Nick's life. The nuanced interaction shifted in purpose and meaning throughout his account. When he moved from the AP, the negative effects of stigma lessened, and he was seemingly at ease with his resettlement, whilst being aware of his obligations to adhere to his risk management plan.

The third aspect was the position the Triangle held in time and space. It was felt that the Triangle did not give consideration of the effects of the child sex offender journey through the criminal justice process and it omitted any effects of the passage of time. Chapter 2 highlighted how factors relating to age and society influenced an offender's potential transition towards desistance from crime, but the triangle did not acknowledge this. Placing the Triangle in time, would therefore consider the unique path that each participant expressed in chapters 4-7. As time passes, the influences that stigma, risk management and resettlement could have on the participant may change, becoming stronger or weaker. The participant, as an active agent, would be aging during this process and this also needed to be acknowledged. The men all demonstrated different journeys and pathways, whilst demonstrating similar themes, of which were recounted above. These journeys started at different points in their lives and this should again be acknowledged.

7.2.2 'The Complex'

Due to the dynamic nature of the interactions between, stigma, risk management and resettlement, the interactions between the child sex offender and the themes, and the appreciation of how the offender was an active agent in their reintegration journey, the Triangle was developed further. It has therefore

been renamed *The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Complex* (The Complex) and it is introduced below in Figure 7.2:

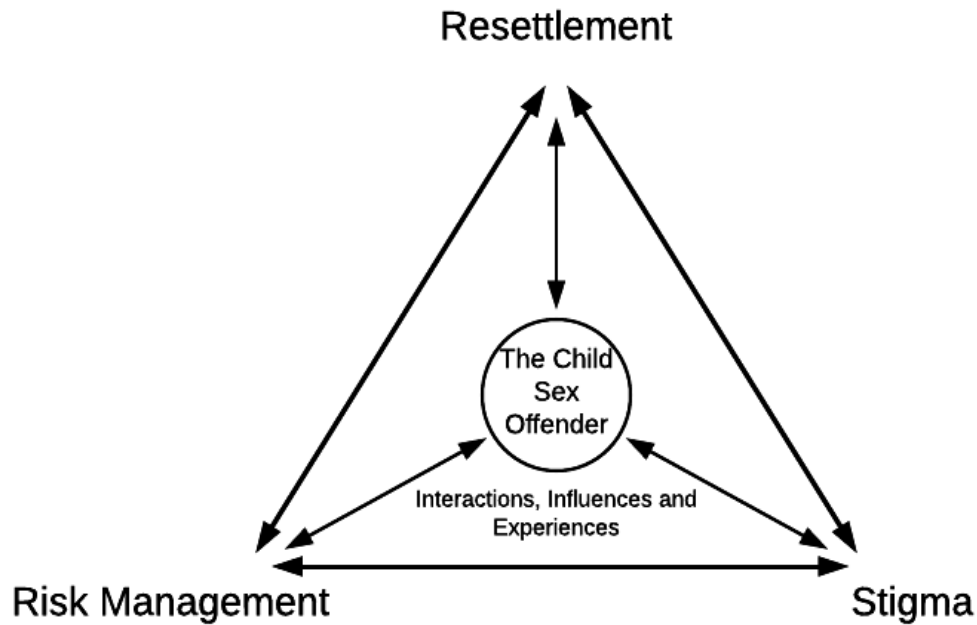


Figure 7.2: The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Complex (The Complex).

Changing the name from 'Triangle' to 'The Complex', signifies an acknowledgement of exactly how intricate, subtle and dynamic the nature of child sex offender reintegration and desistance really is. The Complex gives significance to the processes involved in the community reintegration of child sex offenders. It acknowledges the child sex offender as the active (rather than purely passive) agent in their reintegration, whilst showing how external (passive) influences must also be considered. Furthermore, the one-size-fits-all approach that the criminal justice system imparts on many offenders and arguably more so with child sex offenders, is somewhat negated by The Complex, as it appreciates the offender's individuality and the exchanges they have with each strand therein. Indeed, McNeill (2012) posited how the 'self-determination' (p.3) of the offender should be encouraged as criminal justice agencies seek to find ways to work with offenders, rather than upon them. Figure 7.3 illustrates how the offender is at the centre of criminal justice intervention and supervision:

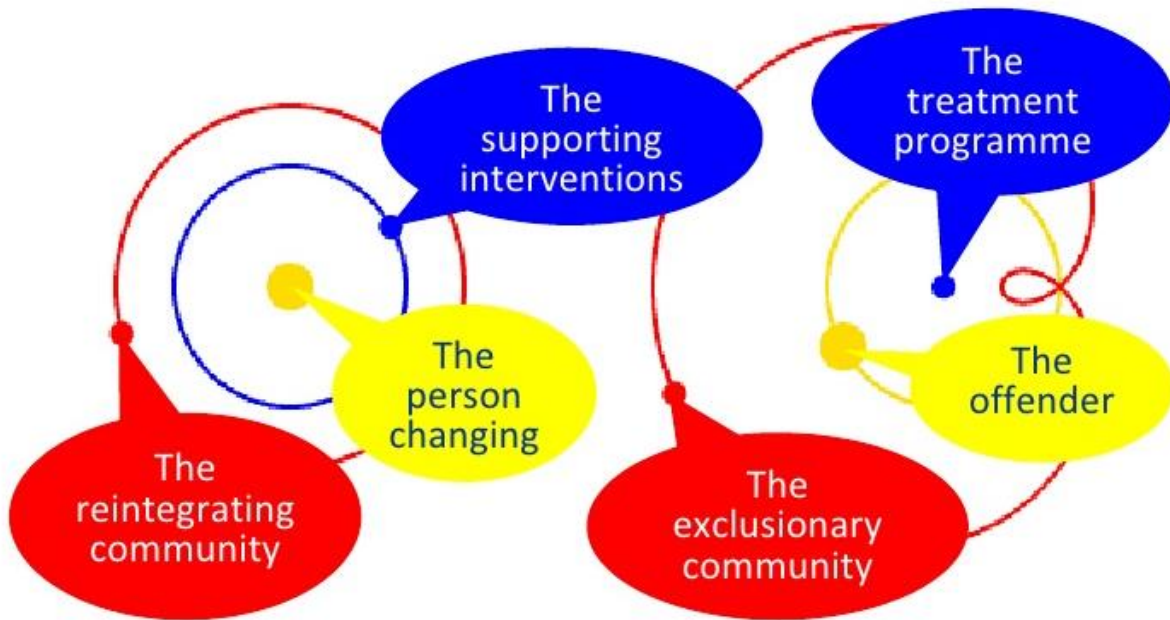


Figure 7.3: 'Copernican Correction'. (McNeill, 2012: 4)

Placing the person at the centre of the processes, in a 'reintegrating community' (McNeill, 2012:4), is a way in which the offender and the community can work together to help build better lives through support and understanding. It is questionable whether McNeill's ideas would bear fruit regarding child sex offenders in the community, but the concept is not far from the ideals of Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA), an agency discussed in Chapter 2.

Figure 7.3 hints towards the notion of how time and space are a part of the offender journey and this is something that Figure 7.2 omits when placed in isolation. Figure 7.4 and Figure 7.5 below, expand The Complex further with the inclusion of this journey element. Figure 7.4 is a representation of the Positive Pathway, for offenders whose reintegration experiences may lead to a decreased risk of reoffending and a positive move towards successful reintegration and desistance from crime. Figure 7.5 is a representation of the Negative Pathway, for offenders whose reintegration journey could be

representative of an increased risk of further offending. For ease of demonstration, The Complex has been simplified within these models and this can be seen below:

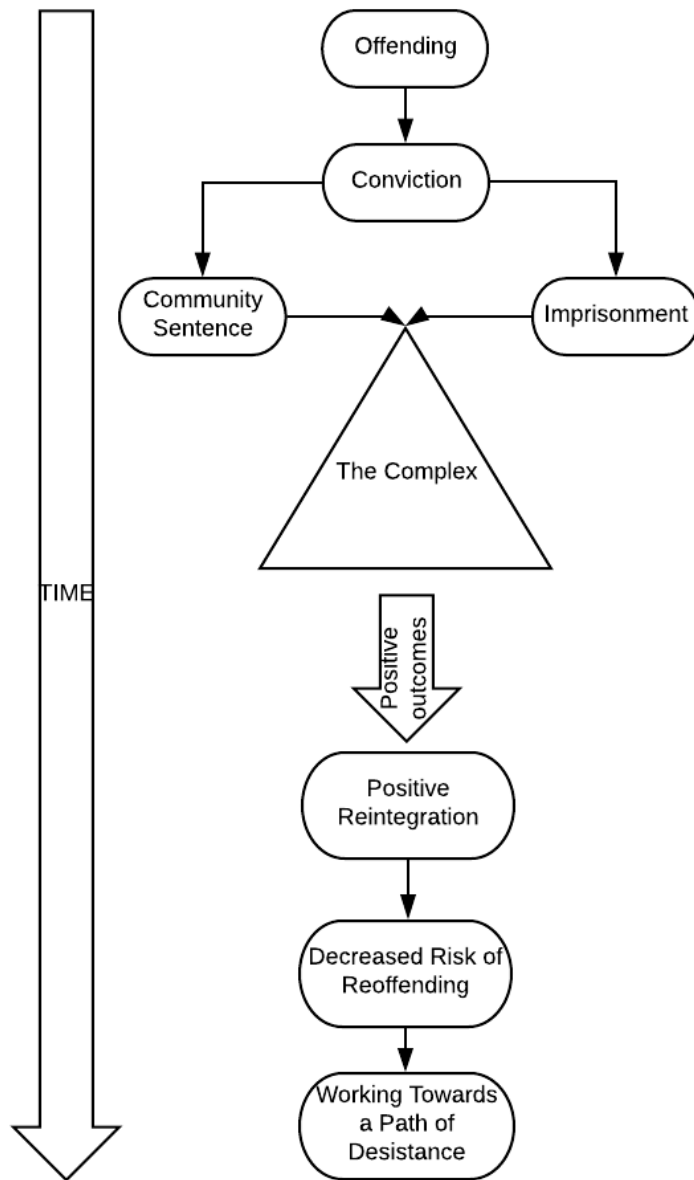


Figure 7.4: The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Positive Pathway

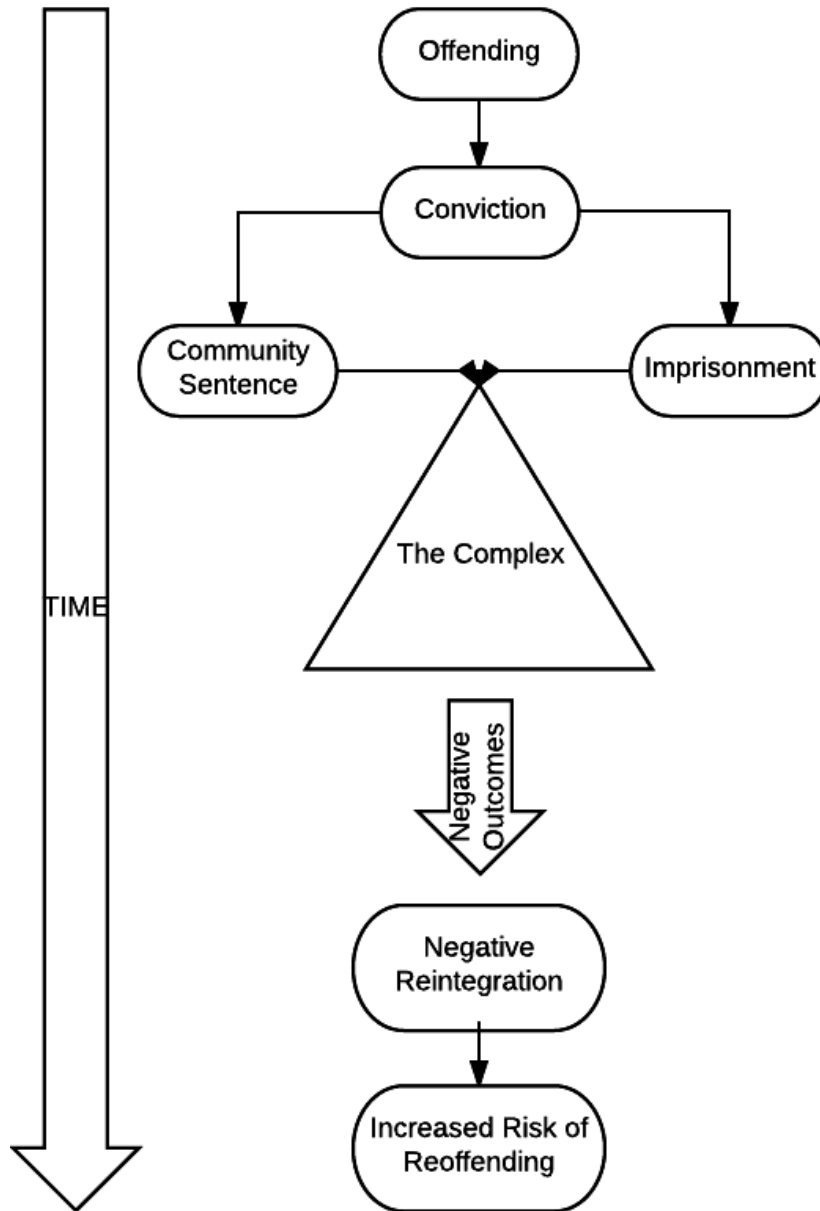


Figure 7.5: The Reintegration of Child Sex Offenders Negative Pathway

These pathways do not occur in isolation and it is appreciated that the models could interact with one another at any time, outweighing each other with the potential to result in neutral outcomes. For example, for every positive experience and interaction, which could encourage positive reintegration, there could be a negative off-setting one. This in turn could change the balance and move the person towards a more negative path. The subjective nature of how a person interprets interactions and

experiences will ultimately determine how they deal with a problem or how they move their lives forward. This is human nature and it must not be underestimated. What may work for one person, may not work for another and vice-versa, and the complex could potentially unlock these interactions, as long as they are taken on a case by case basis. The complex, alongside the positive and negative pathway models are therefore illustrative in nature. They help to visualise the processes and dynamics of the potential journeys a child sex offender may take in the future. They further illustrate the issues, interactions and realities that a child sex offender may encounter whilst in the community. This illustration therefore ties together the findings of this thesis and the literature pertaining to child sex offenders and desistance from crime.

7.4 Conclusion

It has been demonstrated how the participants of this study have different lives in comparison to their non-sex offending counterparts and they were lives that may seem alien and impossible to bare to most members of the public. For example, the participants were vulnerable in the community and this vulnerability was mixed with the issues of risk management, resettlement and stigma. The sense of isolation and the lack of community cohesion has pushed these men further away, when what they wanted was to gain a sense of normality and move on with their lives. To protect the public, the law has created rules and regulations that must be followed, which often isolated them further, effecting their reintegration prospects, which was often in opposition to their intended use. For example, the AP, a place designed to help, monitor and support, does quite the opposite. The inability to use the internet for the simplest of tasks further isolated the men, making life more awkward. Finally, this chapter has demonstrated how the participants were active in

determining their own destiny, rather than being the passive agents that may have been previously thought. It is this active part of their lives which is key. The more autonomy they have in their everyday lives and ultimately their future, whilst respecting the legal restrictions and procedures in place, the more likely they are going to reintegrate with success and move towards an offence free life, towards desistance.

The Complex, illustrates the influence that resettlement, risk management and stigma may have upon a person with child sexual offences in the community. It has highlighted that living as a child sex offender is complicated. The theoretical underpinning behind The Complex is that positive life experiences for child sex offenders, will help to promote positive reintegration outcomes and therefore a positive move towards desistance from crime. By using The Complex as an illustrative theoretical model, it is possible to visualise the lives of the participants, along with being able to determine what is successful and what is not. This is of importance, as it helps to improve academic knowledge of the life of the child sex offender and what negatively impacts on their lives the most.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This thesis was designed to evaluate how the community experiences of 10 child sex offenders were influenced by the processes of resettlement, risk management procedures and stigma and whether these elements impact upon their reintegration and desistance. It has demonstrated, through a qualitative methodology, how the participants shared similarities within these processes, but their experiences were also different from each other and often unique. It established how those men who lived in the AP were subjected to physical and verbal abuse, or the threat of it, due to their child sex offender status. It highlighted how men with internet offences were the subject of stricter legal restrictions, which limited their ability to reintegrate, when compared to contact offenders. Furthermore, the men adopted strategies to pass their identity, to hide their past behaviour and to negotiate life in the community as men with child sexual offences. This finding is particularly important, as it demonstrated how this adaptation helped to ensure their continued ‘safe’ existence in a society where they are not readily accepted by others. It also suggested how the men were actively in control of most of their life, post-conviction, despite having the aforementioned restrictions.

Through the development of an illustrative model, The Complex, this thesis has clarified how the men negotiated life in the community actively, with human agency being of central focus in their reintegration pathway. They were vulnerable and isolated, whilst lacking opportunities to reintegrate with purpose or success. The participants experience of resettlement, risk management and stigma were considered in chapters 4-6. The results were subsequently analysed in chapter 7, where the original hypothetical model’s utility was developed. This chapter will reflect upon what the interviews have discovered through the original contribution of this thesis and how they relate

to the research questions, it will then discuss what the recommendations for policy and practice are and what gaps remain for future research are.

8.1 What has been discovered?

This thesis asked a series of research questions and sub-questions. The first asked ‘what are the social processes that child sex offenders undergo, to help them resettle into the community?’ Upon examination, this thesis answered this by looking at their relationships, employment and housing and how they were all impacted upon. Some of these processes were felt more acutely by some of the men than others and this was because some men had more to lose than others, or some did not place importance in a particular process (employment for example). The main aspect of this answer has been the importance of relationship maintenance. All the men were single, with some being divorced because of their offences. They had limited positive relationships with other family members and those that remained were regarded as significant. For example, Nick had a supportive relationship with his mum, dad and brother, helping him to move to his new accommodation and to settle into the community after release from prison. When the participants spoke about successfully maintaining relationships, the actions were often reciprocated by both parties. This was evident in the risks that some family members would take to keep in contact. It was interesting to learn that some of the participant’s family members valued these relationships enough to risk ex-communication from the whole family. George’s brother expressed how the other family members would not approve of their continuing meetings. Dave’s daughter called him “Uncle Steve” to others, to hide the fact that they were still in contact. Once more, these instances are examples of the dynamic, nuanced elements of child sex offender reintegration. These men were

isolated in the community and the family members who chose to keep in contact were an outlet of support, albeit tentatively in the case of George.

A different aspect of the social processes involved was how the men with internet offences differed to their contact only counterparts. This thesis has highlighted how living in the community as child sex offender was difficult for the men, but with negotiation, motivation and resilience, they could reintegrate with success and purpose. However, for the men with internet offences, the difficulties were exaggerated because the opportunities to reintegrate were lessened. This was a major finding of this thesis because the literature on the reintegration experiences of internet child sex offenders is virtually non-existent. The social processes for the internet offenders who participated were therefore different. For example, life in the 21st Century is, for many people, dominated by the use of technology that can access the internet. For the participants, they are precluded from using such devices as a means to protect the public. The resulting effect of these restrictions led to the participants being unable to partake in everyday activities that non-internet offending people enjoy. For instance, paying bills, internet shopping, keeping in contact with friends and family via social media, or searching for and applying for jobs. Thus, reintegration is made difficult because of this exclusion. Furthermore, the lack of an online persona may lead to suspicion on the part of other people.

The motivation to find employment was diminished in nearly all the men, even the men who were retired expressed no wish to find employment, thus decreasing their social interaction. This lack of motivation was observed as being a causal effect of rejection. The likelihood of finding a suitable, secure job was very low, with only James being employed. It was low because the type of jobs available were limited due to DBS checks and the legal restrictions on the participants working where children may work, visit, study or be a customer. The men who applied for jobs

stated that fear of rejection was the main reason why they did not apply for as many jobs as they did, post-conviction, with some men saying they would never find a job. Literature often cites the importance of finding employment in the process of moving away from offending and gaining social capita (Brown et al., 2007; MOJ, 2013; Geest et al., 2016), whereas the evidence from the interviews, suggests that employment was not important to most of the men, because the chances of gaining it were slim.

Earlier, it was stated how the lives of the men in the community, were vulnerable ones. It is concluded here that the AP increased this vulnerability and placed the men at risk of violence, abuse and unsuccessful reintegration. Thus, arguably increasing the risk of licence breaches or reoffending. The local AP was a place that eight of the men had experienced. It housed a mixture of sex offenders and non-sex offenders. This mix of offending types caused conflict and tension in the opinions of the participants and some of the professionals. In prison, the management of offenders usually results in sex offenders being kept separate from non-sex offenders, helping to improve safety, as they are classed as vulnerable. Verbal and physical abuse was common place, in an environment that was designed to protect people post-conviction. It was alarming to understand that the professionals were aware of the nature of the hostel environment, but none of them proffered solutions to alleviate the issues and many of them thought the AP was the best 'tool' in their risk management 'box' for newly released sex offenders. The evidence suggests that whilst the AP was a useful 'tool', it negatively impacted on the participant's reintegration. This was because it affirmed their child sex offender status through verbal abuse, it placed them in fear of their safety, made them more vulnerable and isolated them. For the participants, the experience of the AP was akin to an extension of the prison (Adam) and it was only when they 'moved on' to their own accommodation, did they feel at ease and reintegrated.

In answer to the question ‘What are the social processes that child sex offenders undergo, to help them resettle into the community?’ It is evident that this is multi-faceted and personal to each of the participants. One aspect of life that may be impacted upon for one man, may not for another. The men all placed different importance on specific elements of their social existence, highlighting how the one-size-fits-all approach to criminal justice and community reintegration is not the correct one. Each social process invited interesting considerations as to what would be best for each man, living in the community as a child sex offender.

The second question asked was ‘what are the effects of risk management procedures on the lives of child sex offenders?’ In answer to this, risk management and the procedures therein, effected the men in both a passive and active way. For example, being passive meant the participants were accepting of their restrictions and responding to the power they exerted. This means that they would attend appointments on time, sign ViSOR when it must be signed, allow RMO’s to enter their houses or adhere to the rules of the AP. The consequences of non-compliance were enough to ensure compliance. However, they still had a choice to stick to the rules and those who had not in the past, faced these consequences. Being an active agent therefore, meant experiencing life and reintegration in the community alongside these rules and regulations and making the most of what they could do, rather than what they could not. There was a constant self-appraisal by the participants, of their own activities, resulting in the men checking what they were doing was correct. In relation to reintegration, this self-risk management was an integral part of their day. The panoptic nature of State regulation, helped to ensure that the men were self-panoptic: they were watching themselves, ultimately improving their self-awareness and ability to refrain from identifiably risky behaviour or situations.

Alongside the legal aspects of risk management, the participants often managed their own risks in the community as they could not be under close-supervision by either the NPS or the police all day, every day; even though this did occur to Dave as he was deemed to be a high risk of offending. As a result, the men adopted a self-risk management approach to their community life. Self-risk management came in many forms with avoidance, hiding identity, passing identity, isolation and appropriate disclosure highlighted above. However, due to the data gathered from the interviews, it was apparent that a different force was in action that helped the men to regulate their behaviour: self-panoptic management. The participants were all subject to differing forms and levels of legal restrictions and regulation by the State. Most of the time, these regulations would not come into force. For example, RMO's can infrequently visit the home of a child sex offender at any time, without warning. The unknown element of this legal relationship exerts power in a panoptic way: the few are watching the many, but the many do not know when or where they are being watched. This power helped to control the behaviour of the participants in a number of ways, as they avoided spaces, curtailed their internet use, developed other ways to job search, moved away from children on the street or avoided conversations with known mothers who had their children with them. This was not through fear of reoffending, it was through fear of being seen and having their licence revoked, resulting in arrest and a possible return to prison. This fear was stronger in the narratives of the men who had experienced licence revocation, as they developed a once-bitten-twice-shy attitude.

The third question asked was 'does stigma affect the lives of child sex offenders?' The simple answer to this was 'yes', however the true influences were far more subtle and nuanced than originally expected. This is because the effects of stigma were one of the over-arching factors within the experiences of the men and is a significant finding of this thesis. The pressure for the

men to remain safe, was apparent in many of their accounts. The most common aspect was how they managed their identity in the community. To be known as a child sex offender, or worse still a “paedophile” (George; Andy), was the least favourable outcome for the participants, because this increased the risks of being the target of violence and verbal abuse. For example, in the past, Dave was ‘outed’ in the community and suffered violence at the hands of others; whereas George and Andy were verbally abused. Identity management in its simplest form informing those who they needed to know about their offences. The men were careful about this disclosure and often anticipated any negative reactions because of this. For instance, Sean in his pursuance of friendship displayed all three of these elements: he had to disclose his offences to potential friends, allowed them to read what he termed as his “life story” over a weekend and said “you’re not going to like it” in anticipation of rejection. It is observed, therefore, that the participants took risks whenever they disclosed information about their offending to others, where these risks were necessary to help create friendships, reintegrate and reduce the effects of stigmatisation.

It was also observed how the management of information did not only occur with disclosure, it also occurred by hiding information and therefore hiding their identities. Hiding was not employed as a manipulative tactic to fool others, indeed there was no malice apparent in the men’s accounts, rather it was a form of self-protection. It was an example of how the men did not want to increase their vulnerability in situations where disclosure was not necessary. For example, Stu would attend a local poetry club once a month, or the Buddhist centre and none of the people were aware of his offences. It is here where the everyday dynamics of information management are viewed and appreciated. The participants chose who they disclosed to and when they felt it was appropriate. For Stu, he did not trust the people at the poetry club or Buddhist centre enough to disclose, plus he did not have to, so he did not. Dave had some friends who he did not disclose his

past to, because he did not have to. James did not have to disclose to his new employer. Consequently, the participants could maintain elements of their lives that were important to them and their goals of successful and meaningful reintegration. This choice gave them agency and control, whilst helping them to feel safe and less vulnerable.

A further important observation in relation to identity, information management and relationships, was the account of Sean and his willingness to adopt a counter-factual narrative suggests how all three of these elements are inter-related. This inter-relation can be illustrated through The Complex, where stigma (Sean's discreditable identity (Goffman, 1963)), self-risk management (adoption of a new, less vulnerable identity) and resettlement (Sean's relationships with his friends and others) all connect at the choice of Sean. Here Sean is central to the character of the armed robber being created, with the help of his friends. The creation of a new story hides the old one and moves Sean further away from his past and further towards reintegration, acceptance: desistance. Therefore, being accepted by others and not being isolated or vulnerable are key towards Sean's success in the community, as he previously sought acceptance from children in the form of illegal sexual relationships. His life at the time of interview was arguably "better" (Professional 2) than at the time of offending and his priorities had changed as a result. His relationship with his friends was strong enough to negotiate this new identity and to move away from the old one.

Child sex offenders are often viewed as a homogeneous group, with policies, ideals, stereotypes and public reactions linking them together as the same. The implementation and development of ViSOR is one such example of this, where all people convicted or cautioned of a qualifying sexual offence are placed on one database, regardless of the severity and nature of the offence. This leaves the child sex offender in a vulnerable position in the community, as society,

the law, the police and the media often do not want to understand the ‘how’s’ and ‘why’s’ of the offences, rather they want to vilify, persecute, isolate and stigmatise. Vulnerability is therefore increased because of this, as the child sex offender attempts to reintegrate, they are pushed further away due to lack of support, opportunities or safe places to live. This impacts upon their willingness to make realistic or long-term goals. It is this vulnerability that presents as an all-embracing similarity, not the offence types or offence causality, especially in the accounts of the men who participated in this thesis. Each man was individual, but vulnerable.

Does resettlement, risk management or stigma influence the reintegration and potential desistance from crime of child sex offenders? It is evident from the discussion above, that reintegration and desistance from crime are influenced by all the three themes highlighted throughout this thesis. However, they do not act in isolation, rather they interact with each other in a variety of ways, depending on the circumstances and the offender. This is where the development of the complex as an illustrative model is important and useful. The complex allows for a visual representation of the processes and experiences involved in child sex offender resettlement and potential desistance from crime. It shows that negative and positive influences impact on child sex offenders lives in different ways. Some of the participants experienced stigma due to their offences, and this manifested itself in the form of abuse and violence. Some of the men chose to ignore this, others wanted to retaliate, one man defended himself. Did this impact on reintegration? Yes. It made them more conscious and aware of their status. Furthermore, the influence that employability had on some of the men was felt more greatly than others. Gaining a job was not important for some of the retired men, however it was a main area of concern for Adam and James. Stigma interacted with resettlement and risk management in these cases, where James did not have to disclose any information about his offending, was not stigmatised and gained

employment. Adam was restricted to the jobs he could apply for and was stigmatised due to his offending. His reintegration was not as positive as James, but this did not mean that he was not reintegrating. However, if the reintegration journey was not positive, did this mean it always moved them away from offending? Not necessarily, the crux of the reintegration experiences for the participants, was the value they placed on the interactions with stigma, risk management and resettlement. This is the active element of the complex and it is an important aspect of this thesis.

8.2 Limitations of the Research

The contribution to knowledge that this thesis provides is not limited to what the results suggest, or the policy and practice recommendations produced thereafter, it also highlights what future research is to be considered. One of the limitations of this study was the sample size and the specific geographical area from where the participants were located. It is considered here, to help with generalizability of the data that both a larger sample size over differing locations would enhance the information gathered. It is noted however, that the research undertaken for this thesis gathered a good sample of hard-to-reach men, the logistics of the methodology could be replicated in other areas as means to recruit. This would provide further snap-shot information into the lived experiences of child sex offenders in the community.

To further enhance a project of this nature and to help operationalize the desistance and reintegration processes of the men, a longitudinal study over the course of many years is called for. This would provide greater detailed information, potentially over a person's life-course. Furthermore, a longitudinal study into the lived experiences of specific child sex offender typologies is also recommended. For example, female sex offenders, adult only offenders, young sex offenders or ethnicity and sex offending. The current thesis highlighted issues surrounding

internet sex offenders for example, adding valuable knowledge to the literature. However, an in-depth study concerning the opportunities of internet offenders compared to contact offenders, would provide rich and informative data, especially if this was linked to desistance from crime. Therefore, longitudinal or potentially life-course studies into the experiences of these different offender typologies is called for to help broaden knowledge into the dynamics of reintegration and desistance.

8.3 Recommendations

The findings above have highlighted significant issues that may be pertinent towards helping people with child sexual offences reintegrate and desist from crime, whilst being mindful of the need to maintain public protection. Lussier (2016) states that most sexual offenders are released back into the community, a point that has been made throughout this thesis, and if they are in the community ‘then issues surrounding their community re-entry and community reintegration needs to be on the agenda’ (p. 281). These ‘issues’ (ibid) are multi-faceted and complex, therefore several recommendations are suggested below.

The first recommendation being considered is how professionals who work with child sex offenders, should promote reintegrative and desistance-based processes by acknowledging the levels of autonomy that these men have when they are in the community. The evidence presented shows how the men were able to regulate and adapt their behaviour as part of their own self-risk management. If the professionals could adopt an inclusive approach to supervision, where the offender is acknowledged as being an active agent in their reintegration, able to make viable and assertive decisions without fear of reprisal, then they may be able to ‘buy-in’ to the risk management measure in place. This is important, because the men often lived in fear of licence

revocation and were unsure about what they could or could not do. Therefore, the NPS could adopt an approach to supervision that is more explanatory in nature, to help reduce or eradicate these fears.

Second, it was observed that employment was not a significantly positive factor in many of the men's experiences. They spoke about employment in terms of work they had previously enjoyed, rather than work they thought they could realistically achieve. To apply for a job was a demotivating experience, as they were often rejected. This rejection had a direct effect on their willingness to carry on job-seeking. It was evident that no jobs were available for the men, that employers were not willing to accept child sex offenders and that any training available would be completed in vain because of the lack of end results. The professionals who work with child sex offenders are recommended to place less onus on the need of the child sex offender to find meaningful employment as part of their reintegration process. In doing this, the offender/OM relationship can focus on the basic elements of living in the community, such as housing and maintaining/improving relationships. This ideal can also be applied to the NPS' relationship with the Job Centre, who necessitate that job-seeking is a means to gain a monetary allowance. Gaining employment is rare and a seemingly unrealistic goal for many people with child sexual offences, the continued search for jobs that may not materialise is demotivating and could be lessened, especially when the offender is in the early stages of community reintegration. This could then be gradually built in to reintegration plans when the child sex offender has settled and is positively reintegrating. Therefore, the NPS and the Job Centre can work in a collaborative fashion to adopt 'can-do' approaches to employment, where jobs that the offender can do are prioritised, rather than 'can't do' ones.

This leads to the third recommendation: increased, good quality, resettlement support for internet offenders. In a technological age, internet offenders are being 'left behind'. It is noted that their offending methods lend them to have their internet activities curtailed to protect the public, and little is still known about this phenomenon. However, it was observed that the men with internet offences had less opportunity to gain elements of their life that can help to promote successful reintegration and desistance. Although above, it was noted how there were few opportunities for employment, internet offenders had less opportunity because they could not conduct daily job searches for instance. This means that the NPS should hold supervised internet sessions for internet offenders, where the internet can be used either for job searching or social purposes. However, another measure could be the eradication of the blanket ban on the use of the internet, unless this is necessary under the guise of public protection. Internet offenders could therefore be allowed some access to certain sites, much in the same vein as parents do with their children. The devices used could be owned and monitored by the NPS and/or the police, in a similar fashion to the monitoring of internet usage by workplaces or universities.

The fourth recommendation is related to a central finding of this thesis: vulnerability. Throughout the interviews with both the participants and the professionals, it was evident that the men were vulnerable. It was discussed above what the nature of this vulnerability was, but it is suggested here that vulnerability must be highlighted as a significant issue, prevalent in all of the accounts of the men. Being vulnerable occurs through the social reactions towards child sex offenders, the fear of being 'outed' and the consequences resulting in this, along with being vulnerable due to isolation and lack of relational support, through to vulnerability linked with old age. Indeed, being vulnerable impacted on many aspects of the men's experiences and this must be acknowledged, not only by professionals working with child sex offenders but policy makers

as well. The NPS and the criminal justice system as a whole could adopt an increased educational approach to the realities of child sex offenders living in the community, with more input from the local community and the police. This may help to reduce vulnerability and increase awareness.

This links to the fifth recommendation: the development of sex offender only hostels. It was noted within this thesis, that the men who were housed in the local AP were subjected to or aware of violence and verbal abuse. This was primarily because of their child sex offender status. Housing child sex offenders with non-sex offenders increases the vulnerability of the child sex offender. This is not a practice that is common place in prison and it should not be a regular occurrence in the community. The researcher, based on the findings of this thesis, calls for improved protection by the NPS for the people within their AP's. It is recommended that sex offenders should be separated from non-sex offenders, with the creation of sex offender only hostels. However, this may in turn have a negative effect of increasing risk, as some child sex offenders may establish networks with other child sex offenders. To help avoid this, it is recommended that the length of residency be reduced at the hostel, that the residents are made fully aware of the seriousness and consequences of establishing networks and that communication between residents occurs only in the AP recreational rooms. These recommendations alongside have therefore served to further the knowledge of child sex offender reintegration, and have provided a thoughtful insights into what criminal justice, policy makers and society can do in the future.

Appendix I – Project Information Sheet – Professionals

A Critical Evaluation of the Reintegration Experiences of Child Sex Offenders in the Community

Project Information Sheet for Professionals who are Working with Child Sex Offenders

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of the research is to gain a better understanding of the experiences of adult men who have been released from prison after serving a sentence for a child sexual offence.

In particular, the project aims to explore some aspects of life in the community, post-sentence, for men who are often perceived as ‘beyond help’ and subjected to stigma and abuse due to the nature of their offences. It wants to explore how they live their lives in the community, whilst contending with risk management procedures, sex offender registration and treatment programmes aimed at minimising any future risk of reoffending. All in all, the project wants to help gauge an understanding of how released child sex offenders view risk management, resettlement and stigma and how this affects their reintegration and risks of reoffending.

As an interesting addition to the main study of child sex offenders in the community, this project would like to talk to you, a professional who works with child sex offenders; as it would be interesting to understand and appreciate the work you do with these men, helping to give an interesting comparison to the voices of the offenders.

The research will be carried out by Darren Woodward MSc, a PhD student at the University of Hull. I am also a serving Prison Officer at a local prison. However, this project is independent of the Prison and Probation service and it is being conducted as part of my studies.

I want to investigate:

- 1) What are the social processes that child sex offenders undergo, to help them resettle back into the community?
- 2) What are the effects of risk management procedures on the lives of child sex offenders?
- 3) Does stigma affect the lives of child sex offenders?

- 4) Does resettlement, risk management or stigma influence the reintegration and potential desistance from crime of child sex offenders?

What the research involves.

I would like to interview as many professionals in the field as possible. The interviews will last approximately one hour and will hope to discuss how your work with child sex offender's impacts on their reintegration and their risk of reoffending. It wants to appreciate what works and what can be done to help these offenders ultimately stop offending.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study as you work with or volunteer with sex offenders in the community. You will either be an offender manager, work with the police or have some involvement with Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA).

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this research. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason; any information that you have previously provided will be destroyed and not included in the thesis.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed by me, Darren Woodward at the local probation offices, in a small, private room. These interviews and meetings will be digitally recorded.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that this research will lead to a better understanding of how men with convictions for child sexual offences cope in the community and how they are managed. Men with child sexual offences are rarely given the opportunity to talk about their experiences, as it is usually taken from the viewpoint of the professional. You therefore, have the chance to be involved in a project that gives a voice to those men that you work with. Your knowledge of these men is very important to the project, without it the project would be one sided and may not reflect all the experiences that child sex offenders face. This knowledge may then influence the way men with child sexual offences are supervised and supported in the future; hopefully aiding towards their successful resettlement and a reduction in reoffending.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about participants will be anonymised. You will not be named but your views may be included in any published work. The digitally recorded interviews will be held electronically on University computer systems.

The digitally recorded interviews and your details will not be recorded together in the same document. The researcher will change names and locations in any and all published work so that you as an individual cannot be identified.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research will be submitted towards the award of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Hull as part of a doctoral thesis. It may also be submitted for publication in peer reviewed academic journals and may be written up into a book.

Consent Form - Professionals

A Critical Evaluation of the Reintegration Experiences of Child Sex Offenders in the Community

		Please initial box	
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I agree to take part in the above study.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Please tick box	
		YES	NO
I agree to the interview being digitally recorded.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored electronically and in paper form (after it has been anonymised) and may be used for future research.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix II – Project Information Sheet – Participants

A Critical Evaluation of the Reintegration Experiences of Child Sex Offenders in the Community

Project Information Sheet for Participants

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of the research is to gain a better understanding of the reintegration experiences of adult men who have been released from prison after serving a sentence for a child sexual offence. In particular, the project aims to explore whether you have been faced with any difficulties in reintegrating back into society. I am interested in asking how you are managing your life and what strategies you find useful in preventing reoffending

The research will be carried out by Darren Woodward MSc. I am a PhD student at the University of Hull. I am also a serving Prison Officer at a local prison. However, this project is independent of the Prison and Probation service and it is being conducted as part of my studies. For this reason, there will be no consequences of not taking part and any information that you provide will be treated with respect and confidence.

I want to investigate:

- 1) What are the social processes that people with child sexual offences undergo, to help them resettle back into the community?
- 2) What are the effects of risk management procedures on the lives of people with child sexual offences?
- 3) Does stigma affect the lives of people with child sexual offences?
- 4) Does resettlement, risk management or stigma influence the reintegration and potential desistance from crime of people with child sexual offences?

Along with yourself in the community, I plan to interview a small group of Offender Managers, the police and people who are connected with Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA).

What the research involves.

Initially, I want to interview yourself and a number of other men who have been released from prison for child sexual offences. The interviews will be separate from each other and will last approximately one hour. I hope to discuss your experiences in the community and how you are coping, post sentence.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study as you have either two or more convictions for a child sexual offence and have been released from prison. You are aged 21 or over and are male and are currently being supervised by the probation services in the community.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this research. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason; any information that you have previously provided will be destroyed and will not be included in the thesis.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed by me, Darren Woodward at the local probation offices, in a small, private room. These interviews and meetings will be digitally recorded.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that this research will lead to a better understanding of how men with convictions for child sexual offences cope in the community and how they are managed by the probation services. Men with child sexual offences are rarely given the opportunity to talk about their experiences, as it is usually taken from the viewpoint of the professional; you have the chance to be involved in a project that will allow you a voice. This knowledge may then influence the way men with child sexual offences are supervised and supported in the future, as the probation service will have a better understanding of your point of view and may be able to re-evaluate their current practices.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about participants will be anonymised. You will not be named but your views may be included in any published work. The digitally recorded interviews will be held electronically on University computer systems and will be password protected.

The digitally recorded interviews and your details will not be recorded together in the same document. The researcher will change names and locations in any and all published work so that you as an individual cannot be identified.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research will be submitted towards the award of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Hull as part of a doctoral thesis. It may also be submitted for publication in peer reviewed academic journals and may be written up into a book.

Consent Form - Participants

A Critical Evaluation of the Reintegration Experiences of Child Sex Offenders in the Community

		Please initial box	
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
I agree to take part in the above study.		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Please tick box	
		YES	NO
I agree to the interview being digitally recorded.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored electronically and in paper form (after it has been anonymised) and may be used for future research.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

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