



# *University of* **HUDDERSFIELD**

## **University of Huddersfield Repository**

Bradley, Lauren

The Needs and Experiences of Women Offenders Upon Their Release and Reintegration Post-Prison

### **Original Citation**

Bradley, Lauren (2017) The Needs and Experiences of Women Offenders Upon Their Release and Reintegration Post-Prison. Masters thesis, University of Huddersfield.

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/35216/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: [E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk](mailto:E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk).

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

**THE NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN OFFENDERS UPON  
THEIR RELEASE AND REINTEGRATION POST-PRISON**

Lauren Amy Bradley

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of MSc by Research – Criminology and Criminal  
Justice

The University of Huddersfield – March 2017

### **Copyright Statement**

- i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns any copyright in it (the “Copyright”) and s/he has given The University of Huddersfield the right to use such Copyright for any administrative, promotional, educational and/or teaching purposes.
- ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts, may be made only in accordance with the regulations of the University Library. Details of these regulations may be obtained from the Librarian. This page must form part of any such copies made.
- iii. The ownership of any patents, designs, trade marks and any and all other intellectual property rights except for the Copyright (the “Intellectual Property Rights”) and any reproductions of copyright works, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property Rights and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property Rights and/or Reproductions.

## **Abstract**

In recent years, research exploring women's transitions from prison, and resettlement into the community, has highlighted that returning to substance abuse (Broome, Knight, Hiller, & Simpson, 1996), developing mental health problems (Eshareturi, Serrant-Green, Bayliss-Pratt, & Galbraith, 2014), and finding suitable accommodation and income (Richie, 2001), are the most prevalent problems for women post-release. Little previous research has, however, explored these issues from the perspective of the women themselves. Within the current research, the experience of three female offenders post-release, and nine professionals working with women on their release from prison, are foregrounded in exploring women's transition from prison to community. Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and a thematic analysis explored the transition experience for women after prison. Findings revealed that four of the main barriers in effective reintegration were; setting up and keeping suitable stable accommodation, accessing a regular income (whether that be through employment or benefits), physical or mental health problems, and return to substance misuse and co-dependency. Whilst these findings supported previous literature, further findings indicated the lasting impact of prison on women, as well as the importance of women's engagement and relationships with social and professional support services on release. The findings presented within this thesis support a model of transition designed by Binswanger et al (2011) but also point to possible developments of the model in its application to women's transition from prison. Further implications for theory and practice are also discussed.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the University of Huddersfield for both the vice chancellors research degree scholarship and for their support in this research. More specifically, my supervisors Grainne McMahon and Melanie Flynn for their continued dedication, guidance and insight. I would also like to thank all of my family and partner who have continued to support me throughout my project. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to give thanks and recognition to the services and participants who took part within this research, without whom this research, and contribution towards understanding women's release from prison, would not have been possible.

## **The Researcher**

I am relatively new to the field of criminology and the area of women's offending, my experience thus far being psychology based (briefly covering psychological explanations of crime) with the focus of my prior research upon mental health and the support in place for such. However, having a deeper interest in women's experiences, particularly resettlement and reintegration post-prison, led me to explore this area in greater detail within this thesis.

## Contents

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Figures and tables .....	7
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	8
Chapter 2 - Literature review .....	11
Suitable and Stable Accommodation .....	15
Income, Employment and Education .....	17
Substance Misuse.....	19
Healthcare and Mental Healthcare.....	21
Personal Relationships and Family Ties upon Release.....	22
Societal support and Stigma.....	25
Professional Post-Release Support Services .....	27
Rationale and Research Questions .....	31
Chapter 3 - Methodology .....	32
Approaches and Method .....	32
Details of the process of data collection .....	33
Participant information .....	35
Method of Analysis.....	36
Ethical Considerations .....	37
Chapter 4 - Analysis/Findings .....	41
1 - Substance misuse.....	42
2 - Income.....	42
3 - Accommodation.....	43
4 - Health.....	43
5 - Social and professional support .....	44
5.1 - Personal relationships .....	45
5.2 - Support services.....	49
6 - Impact of prison .....	55
6.1 - Positive impact of prison.....	56
6.2 - Negative impact of prison .....	56
6.3 - Societal Stigma .....	59
6.4 - Feelings reported on release.....	60
Chapter 5 - Discussion .....	63
Lasting effects.....	63
Personal Relationships .....	65

Societal Support.....	69
Support Services .....	71
Limitations of Thesis .....	73
Future suggestions and implications for research, theory and practise .....	75
Chapter 6 - Conclusion .....	78
References.....	81
Appendices.....	91
Appendix 1- Participant Information Sheet - Women .....	91
Appendix 2 - Participant Information Sheet - Staff .....	93
Appendix 3 - Consent Form for Services.....	95
Appendix 4 - Consent Form for Women .....	96
Appendix 5 - Consent Form for Staff .....	97
Appendix 6 - Interview Guide for Women .....	98
Appendix 7 - Interview Guide for Staff .....	100
Appendix 8 - Sarah Interview Transcript.....	101
Appendix 9 - Chloe Interview Transcript .....	111
Appendix 10 - Janine Interview Transcript.....	119
Appendix 11 - Ruth Interview Transcript .....	125
Appendix 12 - Naomi Interview Transcript.....	133
Appendix 13- Kate Interview Transcript .....	141
Appendix 14 - Laura Interview Transcript .....	146
Appendix 15 - Elaine Interview Transcript.....	154
Appendix 16 - Helen Interview Transcript .....	162
Appendix 17 - Zoe Interview Transcript.....	168
Appendix 18 - Amy Interview Transcript.....	175
Appendix 19 - Olivia Interview Transcript.....	179

**Word Count: 24,889**

## **Figures and tables**

Figure 1:	Model of the transition experience health outcomes (Binswanger et al, 2011).	Page 13
Figure 2:	Help-seeking hierarchy in male offenders (Blank-Wilson, 2013).	Page 14
Table 1:	Participant details for women who have been in prison.	Page 35
Table 2:	Participant details for Staff/Professionals.	Page 36
Table 3:	Research Findings presented from the Thematic Analysis conducted on collected data.	Page 41



## Chapter 1 - Introduction

Not only are 51% of women offenders reconvicted within one year of their release from prison (Ministry of Justice, 2011), but, when they leave prison, only 8.5% gain employment (Ministry of Justice, 2013b) and 41% do not have any suitable housing arranged for their release (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Adding to practical issues such as these, a large number of women offenders (38%) have at some point self-harmed (Power, Brown & Usher, 2013) and an even larger proportion have attempted suicide (46%, Light, Grant & Hopkins, 2013). These statistics highlight the importance of researching women's release and resettlement from prison to begin the process of improving the success of their transition. The Ministry of Justice (2015) report that there is a 9% reduction in offending within one year for those women who seek women-centred support services post-release. Therefore, it is vital to explore what support services are in place for women when they leave prison, whether they are effective and what improvements could be made. To understand this transition, social networks and families, as well as the needs and challenges that they face, it is first imperative to explore women's experiences as they reintegrate and resettle post-prison.

Sociological and criminological theory have aided in unravelling the complexity around offending in women, outlining gender differences in the pressures on individuals, often leading to an involvement in offending behaviour. One prominent theory of offending is the general strain theory (GST, Agnew 1992), a development of Merton's (1957) strain theory, which puts forth the idea that offending is associated with an individual's levels of social strain. When discussing women offenders, Agnew (1992) suggests that the main source of social strain for women is largely dependent upon women's status in society, and is largely influenced by women's oppression.

More recently, Broidy and Agnew (1997) developed upon this idea, distinguishing between types of offending in men and women dependant on their levels of social strain, and outlined various strands of social strain more specific to women. These types of social strain ranged from failure to meet expectations, lowered social support and difficulties in relationships with others (namely employers, partners or family members), sexual or physical abuse, and the authors also suggested 'role strain' associated with the housewife role or "pink-collar" jobs (Broidy & Agnew, 1997). As discussed by Barlow (2014), women are more likely to internalise this social strain and offend through less violent crimes such as drug taking, or property crimes to fund substance abuse. Though the GST presents that social

strain upon women is likely to result in criminality, this is not the case for every woman, and Agnew (1992) suggested that factors such as low self-esteem/confidence and levels of social support may affect the likelihood of a woman turning to crime when under social strain.

A similar theory explaining women's difficulties when they are offending was put forth by Heidensohn (1989), more recently discussed by Chesney-Lind (1999), termed the 'double deviance' theory. Authors suggested that women are treated more harshly when they commit crimes compared with their male counterparts because they have not only deviated from social norms by offending, but have deviated from what is expected of a woman, not conforming to expectations of female behaviour (Chesney-Lind, 1999; Lloyd, 1995).

One can see from the ideas put forth above on general strain theory and double deviance, the complexities of women's experiences through the criminal justice system, and their release back into society as an (ex-)offender. Due to these underpinning ideas from the theory discussed, the importance of exploring transition experience in women specifically is clear; gender neutral, or non-gendered, research cannot fully outline the experience from a woman's perspective.

The current thesis will aim to explore women's experiences of finding suitable housing, income, health/mental healthcare, and dealing with substance misuse, investigating the extent to which these factors may impact a woman's release from prison. Further, this research will also aim to explore the support offered to women on their release, (both personally through family reunification and through professional support) as well as women's satisfaction with this support, investigating what gaps currently exist and could be improved. The following chapters within this thesis aim to contribute in answering these questions, to gain a richer understanding of the post-release transition for women. With a deeper recognition of the difficulties and barriers during reintegration, professionals will be able to support women offenders more efficiently, leading them from recidivism and in turn protecting the societies and communities within which they live. By improving support for women, and breaking down barriers towards engagement with such support, research such as this may be the first step in directing and supporting women offenders in building rich, fulfilling and purposeful lives.

Initially within this thesis, the literature review will outline prior research conducted within the area of women's offending, their release and barriers toward their resettlement. This review will summarise what is currently understood about women's release from prison

whilst highlighting gaps that exist in what is understood about this transition. Following, the methodology employed within this research will be outlined, with findings from the interview data collection presented within the analysis section. Finally, these findings will be discussed alongside both theory and prior literature, with suggestions for future research and practice put forth.

## Chapter 2 - Literature review

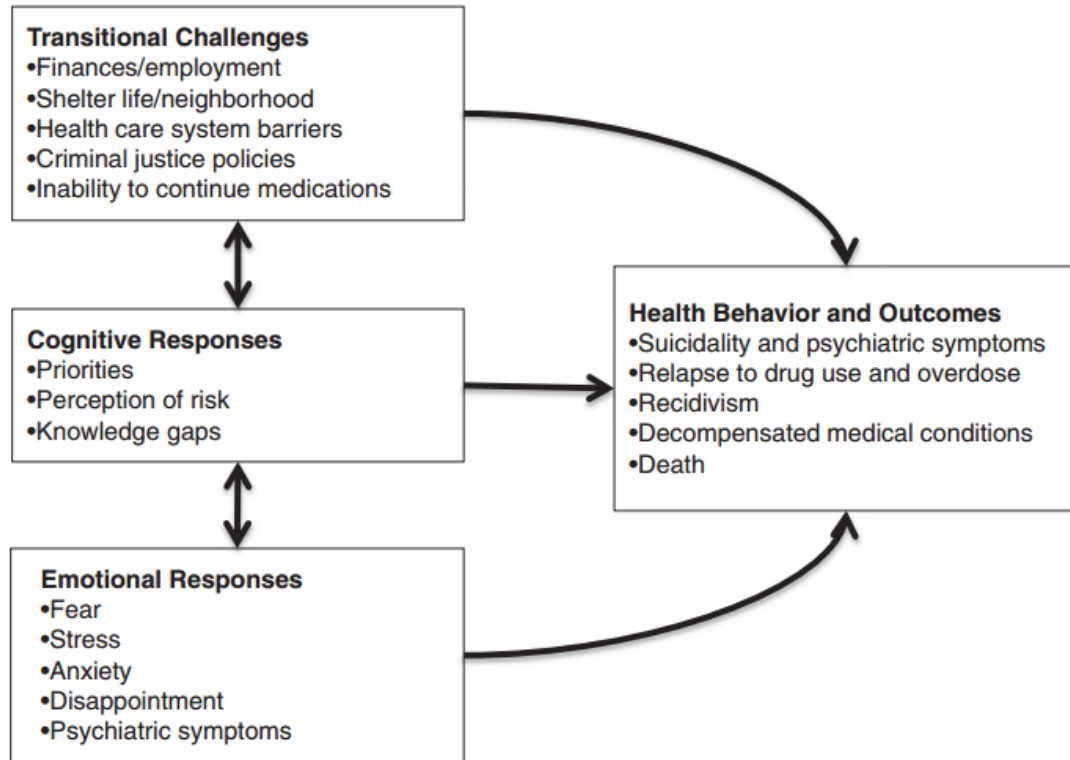
The literature review that follows will begin by broadly introducing previous studies in the area of women's release from prison, highlighting models and theory that have been developed in order to present this transition. Following, the literature will explore in more detail some of the factors affecting women's resettlement and reintegration when they leave prison. Finally, concluding from what is currently understood (and what is not) of women's transition from prison, the aims of the research and specific research questions will be presented.

Existing literature has begun to explore the reintegration transition for offenders when they leave prison, and has started to build a picture of what transitional challenges exist for reintegration. Findings have reported that drug and alcohol abuse remained one of the largest concerns for offenders when they re-joined the community, as well as low-income/lack of employment, difficulties finding suitable housing, and having minimal support and social networks (Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009). However, not only was this research of a quantitative nature and hence very little detail regarding the context and experience of facing these barriers were reported, but also Dooren, Claudio, Kinner and Williams (2011) noted the importance of gender-specific research to fully understand the transition experience for women. More recently, Doherty, Forrester, Brazil, and Matheson (2014) interviewed women offenders after their release from prison, and their findings presented a combination of both contextual and personal factors impacting women's wellbeing and transition success. Person specific challenges and barriers that arose within the data include the individuals' desire to change, their level of self-esteem, addictions or prior trauma (which may include bereavement, violence or abuse) or developmental traumas in childhood (Doherty et al, 2014).

Challenges may also be contextual or situational, and findings further presented the positive impact of support through family, interpersonal relationships, or treatment programmes and counselling, upon the transition success (Doherty et al, 2014). Women have also listed further situational challenges following prison; gaining volunteer experience, education or training, continuity of professional services, dealing with either mental or physical health problems and returning to motherhood (Richie, 2001). The qualitative methodology employed within Richie's (2001) research ensured that women's experiences be explored and their voices could be heard, however it should be noted that as this research

could now be considered outdated, it remains unclear if the picture of women's transition from prison has changed since this research was conducted. Not only have authors commented on the effect of such losses and challenges upon women's wellbeing (Armstrong & Weaver, 2013; Evans, 2007), but also Ward and Stewart (2003) suggested that only when these factors are encompassed and fulfilled, is the individual able to lead a 'Good Life', desisting from crime.

Transitional experiences were further put forth by Binswanger et al (2011), in a model presenting health outcomes following release for both male and female offenders (Figure 1). Binswanger et al's (2011) model initially encompassed the importance of transitional challenges for offenders on release, listing finances, shelter, healthcare/medication, and criminal justice policy, as the main barriers for those leaving prison. Further, the model includes cognitive responses within the individual which are often dependent upon the individual's characteristics, responses often include; the offenders prioritised needs, their perception of risk either to themselves or their family, and gaps in their knowledge surrounding such challenges. The model then goes on to outline emotional responses that are typical within such a transition; fear, disappointment, anxiety, stress and even psychiatric symptoms. The model comprises these factors, and suggests that when such factors are present, offenders will develop negative health or behaviour outcomes such as relapse into addiction, psychiatric symptoms, and reoffending, decompensated medical conditions and in some cases suicides or death.



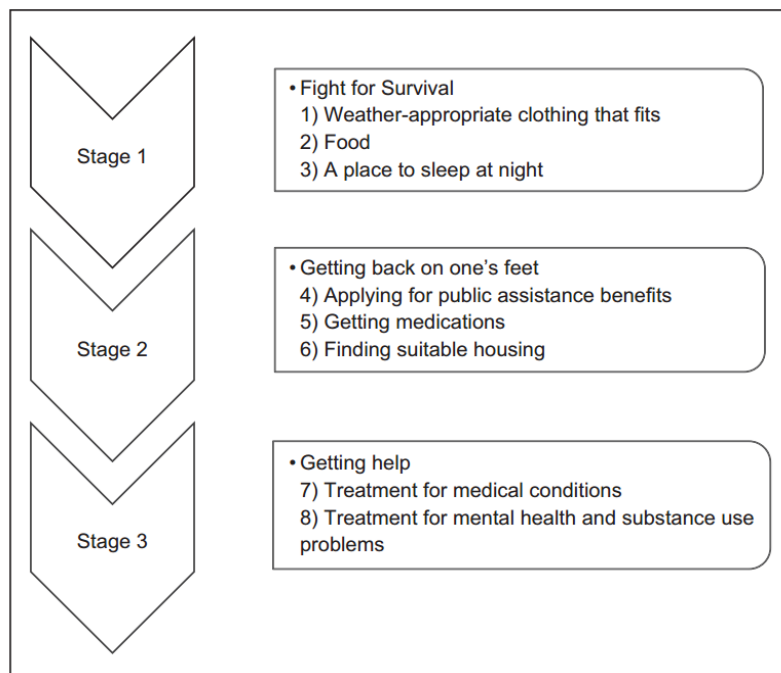
**Figure 1: Model of the transition experience health outcomes (Binswanger et al, 2011).**

However, as this model presents the transition experience for both genders, it is possible that this experience would differ between males and females individually. Further, what currently remains to be explored and validated within Binswanger’s (2011) model is the extent to which transitional challenges are listed in the model, and whether an extensive list is put forth for challenges faced upon release from prison.

As outlined by Binswanger et al (2011), those transitioning post-release have reported that priority of their needs are important in the success of their transition. Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation originally suggested that in order for us to function most effectively, we must satisfy a hierarchy of needs; firstly, our physiological needs, then safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and finally self-actualisation. A later development of the theory (Maslow, 1970) further suggested that meaning and predictability within an individual’s life, curiosity or certainty for the future should also be considered as an important need to strive for personal wellbeing. However, it should be recognised that today, Maslow’s work on human needs and motivation is outdated and hence the claims of the hierarchy may not present an accurate picture of human need, nor how this may differ upon release from prison. More recent authors have discussed the theory of need alongside the

study of criminology and more specifically towards those released from incarceration, suggesting that only when each tier of this hierarchy is satisfied, will individuals be motivated to desist from crime upon their release from prison (Williams-Queen, 2014). However, Tay and Diener (2011) outlined that some participants reported fulfilling social needs when basic needs remained unmet, and that should these higher (psychosocial) needs be met, individuals may still experience positive subjective wellbeing. The authors suggest that this is largely attributed to a person's socio economic status, as those in poorer areas are less likely to fulfil basic needs though social support is present.

Blank-Wilson (2013), developed a help-seeking hierarchy which theorises the importance of needs following prison and more specifically outlines the needs throughout this pathway as reported in interviews with both male and female ex-offenders. It was suggested, as within Maslow's (1970) theory, that the most important needs are the most fundamental to survive (clothing, food and somewhere to sleep), followed by getting on their feet; income, medication and suitable housing, and then finally; therapy and treatment programmes (see figure 2, Blank-Wilson, 2013).



**Figure 2: Help-seeking hierarchy in male offenders (Blank-Wilson, 2013).**

Research in majority male samples have supported such ordered needs, prioritising education and employment over counselling and therapeutic support (Williams-Queen, 2014). However, findings have reported that women on release from prison have prioritised

reunification with their family, support in staying drug/alcohol free, medical treatment or counselling, and parenting support (Lund, Hyde, Kempson, & Clarke, 2002; Snyder, 2009). As is clear from these conflicting findings, the importance that an offender places upon their needs following prison differs with gender, and hence Blank-Wilson's (2013) help-seeking hierarchy may be too generalised to present an accurate picture of need fulfilment for both genders individually.

A vast amount of the current literature concerning offenders is quantitative data (Dooren et al, 2011; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009), which neglects detailed personal accounts of individuals' experiences, thoughts and feelings throughout their time in prison and their reintegration post release. Furthermore, much of the qualitative interview data that does exist, does not explore gender differences at all (Davis, Bahr & Ward, 2012), has often focused on the experience of male and female offenders in unison (Dooren et al, 2011) or is outdated (Richie, 2001). Leverentz (2006) has commented that the way in which these transitional challenges arise and impact individuals will differ based upon gender, and in order to fully explore the transition experience for women offenders, gendered research is necessary.

The factors discussed here between various authors and models outlining the transition pathway, outline the features of (and barriers towards) reintegration, that will be discussed within this thesis. The remainder of this literature review will delve further into what is currently known and understood about each of these factors in more detail, evaluating the extent to which they impact transition success.

### **Suitable and Stable Accommodation**

As has been highlighted from the theory discussed previously, finding good quality housing can often be an important initial challenge for those women who have been incarcerated. For some this is the most prominent difficulty as often it is the first thing that is required upon their release from prison (Richie, 2001; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009).

During resettlement, there are currently various services that are able to support offenders into the appropriate types of accommodation, whether that be a hostel, supported living, council living or private rented. Services such as the Together Women Project (2016) offer 'through the gate' support for women by providing plans to ensure they have accommodation and benefits in place for their release. Further services such as NACRO (2016) and Shelter (2014) also offer support across England and Wales in the form of advice and emergency housing upon offenders' release from prison. However, whilst such schemes



and support services are in place to support both men and women upon their release from prison, much of the existing research evaluating the effectiveness of accommodation support does not reflect such coverage. Curtis, Garlington, and Schottenfeld (2013), reported that women do not always meet the criteria for emergency or council housing support, whilst Richie (2001) reported that women are placed back into the same areas with the same people as prior to their release, with one participant saying “I was put back out on to the same streets that led me here” (pp.378). This was further supported by Boer (2013) who commented that accommodation, whilst important, may result in worsening transitions and may increase risks of reoffending in instances where housing is situated in at-risk areas for crime.

Recent authors have also begun to theorise as to why finding suitable housing presents such a problem for these individuals, one of which has suggested that a large barrier towards this is the financial expense incurred (Glynn, 2009; Richie, 2001). Often this is the case, due to individuals being unable to arrange benefits or find employment quickly post-release, and hence the process is made more difficult without a steady income (Glynn, 2009). This will be discussed in more depth later in this thesis. Authors have also noted that a further barrier to accessing suitable steady accommodation post-release is within the role of being an ex-offender and possessing a criminal record, as this often means women will not fit the necessary criteria for emergency accommodation (Richie, 2001). Women have discussed that the low-income housing services which are available for support in finding people council houses or somewhere to stay, are often only available for those with clear criminal records (Curtis et al, 2013).

The prison to community transition is made much more difficult where increased amounts of relocation and readjustments are necessary, negatively impacting the women’s wellbeing (Carlen & Tombs, 2006), something which is amplified when extending this to children and other family members as well as themselves, as this adds further pressure knowing they are being relied upon by others (Caddle & Crisp, 1997; Carlson, Shafer, & Duffee, 2010). Whilst issues surrounding motherhood within this transition will be discussed later, these claims make clear that familial factors such as having a partner or children may amplify the need for stable and longer term accommodation upon release.

Research findings have presented the impact of appropriate accommodation upon reoffending rates, reporting much lower recidivism in those who had managed to obtain secure and stable housing after their release (Aos et al, 2006; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007;

O’Leary, 2013). However, whilst these findings alone are not enough to conclude that accommodation was the sole cause of a reduction in reoffending, authors have been able to conclude that having a stable abode is at least a significant factor contributing towards desistance (O’Leary, 2013).

The findings above have outlined some of the barriers and restrictions in place for women finding accommodation on their release from prison and the influence that a lack of this stable housing could have upon a woman’s return to crime. It seems that though these problematic areas remain relatively well understood from the literature, difficulties remain within the process and support in place for women. What the literature presented thus far has not yet explored, are what factors women would consider as suitable housing and what gaps remain (as well as suggested improvements and developments) within service provision for women post-prison. These areas which remain less understood, will be covered within the current research.

### **Income, Employment and Education**

One of the reasons finding suitable housing is so challenging for this group of individuals is a lack of income immediately upon release, something that presents challenges of its own. National Offender Management Service (NOMS, 2012) reported that for a large amount of women following release, they have no income until at least a month after leaving prison, becoming dependent on others for money until their benefits are in place. Furthermore, NOMS noted that as women may be under pressure to provide for family or children, they may return to theft or street working as a method of rectifying their financial situation. However, as these findings are drawn from quantitative research, this was unable to differentiate between those who have accessed professional support, nor able to outline what differences there may be should women have support setting up their income upon release.

As noted by Brown (2011), employment (or some sort of pro-social occupation even if that is unpaid), can be vital for those released from incarceration as it enables pro-social interaction, introducing individuals towards new social networks and relationships. Further to this, employment allows a positive form of control and routine for the individual which is often lost during the transition away from incarceration, as discussed by Pape (2014). Habitual routine can not only be an important factor in reducing reoffending but is also able to give an individual motivation for development and progression in their lives, improving the wellbeing and sense of purpose within the individual throughout such a transition (Shivy

et al, 2007). However, for women leaving incarceration, gaining employment presents barriers of its own.

Amongst challenges for women gaining employment on release, such as health concerns, transport costs, and even recent experiences or trauma, recent literature noted that often women lack the motivation that is necessary to find a job after prison as they have no reason to need employment (Atkin & Armstrong, 2013). Those who already have secured housing, perhaps with family, or have a steady income of benefits often see no reason to apply for full time work when they may already be going back to a comfortable lifestyle (Holzer, Goldman, & Stoll, 2003). These findings however, remain unable to explain why those who do not have the benefits of housing and government income available are reluctant to apply for jobs, and hence indicates there may be further causes for offenders in not having employment.

Within this area of employment, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), developed the social cognitive theory of careers, which suggests that personal factors such as gender, health, and ethnicity when coupled with self-efficacy and their perceived outcomes, goals, and developments, will result in how motivated an individual is to seek employment, and further, how motivated they are to pursue a specific career (Lent et al, 1994). As the theory suggests, a person's gender can be important within motivation in finding employment, this is something which has been further developed upon by Richardson and Flower (2014). The authors discussed that one barrier facing women specifically would be the types of jobs that are likely to be available to them, those expected of females such as childcare or cosmetic work, and for women offenders to appear that they are desisting from their old lifestyles they must fit in with these societal expectations as women (Richardson & Flower, 2014). However, whilst such positions may be flexible with hours and shifts or even have education and qualification opportunities, higher paid positions often have prohibitions in place for women with criminal records, barring them from career development (O'Reilly, 2014; Richardson & Flower, 2014). Brown (2011) went on to suggest that due to the level of stigma within our society that comes attached with having a criminal record, often companies are reluctant to employ those individuals that have been incarcerated. Employers have noted that often within the hiring process, the label of 'once an offender always an offender' may attach (O'Reilly, 2014), with 65% being unwilling to hire a former prisoner regardless of the offence (Holzer, 1996). As this leaves a remaining 35% of employers that would hire former offenders, it may be useful for future research to explore the reasons behind these statistics to

investigate what factors of being an offender are off-putting to employers. However, what remains unclear is the extent to which employment support services can support women leaving prison within this situation, and whether anything can be done to improve this challenge for women.

For women, one motivating factor towards gaining employment can be to support and feed their children, however, as over half of the mothers released from prison are the sole provider and source of income within their family, being able to work the hours necessary to fund childcare to look after their children may become a further strain for these women (Shivy et al, 2007). For those women with children that may wish to find employment, childcare presents a considerable challenge as often much of their income must go towards nurseries or child-minding – rendering employment useless in the woman's eyes, as the individual may be more financially well off looking after their child themselves (Galgano, 2009).

A further barrier in finding employment for ex-offenders is often having a lower level of educational attainment and lower skill set than others of the same age (Brown, 2011). When interviewing women upon their release from prison, Richie (2001) found that often offenders have never had a full education and left school early, they also lack skills in specialised areas and may have never had the opportunity to learn a trade or discipline. As well as skills required for various career industries, individuals often lack skills such as CV writing (Keil & Samele, 2009), interview skills, social networking and ability to apply for jobs unaided (Davis et al, 2012). Though research such as this can determine that women are lacking essential skills, what remains unclear is whether women are reluctant to develop in these areas, or whether the opportunities are unavailable for women.

As Richie (2001) notes, these challenges concerning income for women post-prison may leave them dependant on family members and left feeling hopeless with no way of moving forward. Women have commented that this then has a knock-on effect in other challenges associated with their pathway to reintegration, such as in securing accommodation, being able to afford to attend appointments, and childcare (Eyre, 2007).

### **Substance Misuse**

Findings exploring substance misuse treatment programmes with incarcerated participants widely show excellent results (Bahr, Masters, & Taylor, 2012; Dutra et al, 2008; Yeom, 2011), though whilst this is the case within prison and straight after release, the same

is not reported when supervision ceases upon release (Gideon, 2009). In-prison treatment programmes are often successful due to lowered ease of access to drugs, on release however, individuals are unprepared to abstain or manage their addictions when such substances are readily available, and often access is effortless in their communities and social circles (Richie & Johnsen, 1996 cited in Richie 2001). Such individuals, who may return to their substance abuse, are often at a higher risk of not only reoffending (Broome, Knight, Hiller, & Simpson, 1996) but also overdosing due to a period of abstinence, followed by a return to large quantities of drugs in a short period (Chang, Lichtenstein, Larsson, & Fazel, 2015b). However, the literature outlined here has not gone further in qualitatively exploring the release experience for women to investigate other factors explaining why women return to substances on release. One cause for this may be however, that women are not abstaining from substances during their incarceration and hence their addictions continue upon release; The HM Inspectorate of Prisons estimated that 80% of women already substance dependant, continued their use of hard drugs such as heroin from within prison (Malloch, 2008). Further concerning regarding the use of substances within offenders, is that 19% of those who had never used heroin, did so for the first time during their sentence, indicating that more people may be leaving incarceration misusing substances than going in (Ministry of Justice, 2013a).

In terms of post-release support for substance abuse disorders, effectiveness has been indicated by lowered re-offending rates (Freudenberg, Wiliets, Greene & Richie, 1998) when compared to those who were ineligible for the programmes. Such recidivism however, is largely dependent upon counsellor competence, self-esteem in the individual, and peer-support within the programme (Broome et al, 1996) and continuation of treatment and support is highly essential for at least one year following release from incarceration (Gideon, 2009). Furthermore, Bevan and Wehipeihana (2015) suggested that even when women are appropriate candidates for rehabilitation, the lengthy wait is demotivating, meaning their levels of engagement drop as a result. This therefore highlights the requirement for support services and treatment programmes post-release to have a standardised level of competency in factors such as counsellor skills and peer-support networks local to every community and be quickly available for all offenders.

Therefore, whilst returning to substance misuse is a challenge for women offenders, the current research will explore the support in place; what is working, what is missing and, most importantly, what improvements could be made.

### **Healthcare and Mental Healthcare**

When individuals are released from incarceration, there is a wide scope of health and mental health issues that they may be facing, whether they are accessing treatment or not (Eshareturi, Serrant-Green, Bayliss-Pratt, & Galbraith, 2014). Richie (2001) reported that on their release many women were suffering from health conditions such as HIV, asthma, hypertension and diabetes, issues which the individuals commented make settling much harder without first getting their health under control. Research has also reported that 74% of women in prison met the diagnostic criteria for mental health illness and psychiatric disorders such as affective disorders, major depressive episodes, or disruptive behaviour disorders (Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle 2002), yet more than half of the women who suffer from such disorders have never been diagnosed or received treatment (Richie, 2001). What is further concerning regarding mental illness, is that those who have had a diagnosis and treatment either prior to or during their incarceration, are often expected to change medication or dosage upon their release due to care continuity disruption, something which can be extremely disruptive towards an individual's mental wellbeing (Carlen & Worrall, 2004).

The role accumulation theory (RAT), has widely suggested that the more roles an individual takes on, the more stressed, anguished and susceptible to mental health problems women will become (Sieber, 1974). Recently however, RAT has been applied to the study of criminology for the first time, exploring just how stressful taking on so many roles at once can be for those reintegrating into society (Martinez, 2010). When offenders are incarcerated, they mainly have one role: prisoner. However, upon release, a woman could go from this one role, to being a mother, a wife, an employee, a member of a society once more, a housing client, the list is endless. Such levels of stress are also able to shed light on the ever-expanding margin for those who receive little or no support with their integration, and emphasise the need for encouragement and assistance for individuals who are suddenly taking on so many differing roles within both their family and their wider social societies.

Whilst suffering from mental health problems is concerning enough, psychiatric disorders in women offenders are strongly associated with an increased likelihood of reoffending across both genders, especially if alcohol or drug dependency (dual diagnosis) is involved (Chang, Lichtenstein, Larsson, & Fazel, 2015a). Similarly, results have shown that for those dealing with alcohol problems combined with mental health problems, they were

more likely to re-offend earlier than other types of offenders (Castillo & Fiftal Alarid, 2011), meaning those with dual diagnosis may be especially vulnerable to recidivism. This highlights a need for mental health support not only for the individual, but also for the wider society and community to lower reoffending rates, especially for those with dual diagnoses.

One important healthcare concern for women is often finding appropriate contraception upon leaving prison, something for which timely planning is essential to link individuals with appropriate healthcare and services (Hammett, Gaiter, & Crawford 1998). However, as findings by Sutherland, Carroll, Lennox and Kinner (2015) showed, only 7.6% of women were prescribed with contraception within six months of their release, though this was increased by 34.7% in a sample of women who during incarceration were educated on the use of birth control, its effectiveness and necessity (Clarke et al, 2006). Though these statistics are unable to indicate whether the remaining women were offered contraception and chose to decline, or whether they were not offered the opportunity, it seems when women have been educated in contraception they are more likely to use such methods. This therefore highlights the importance of giving information at the earliest opportunity so that transitioning women can make a safe informed decision on their use of contraception.

Whilst the above highlights a clear concern within health and mental health problems and care for those released from incarceration, for many women interviewed, seeking and receiving treatment is often not a priority, and hence is often not picked up by the individuals' family or professional services (Caddle & Crisp, 1997). The prior literature surrounding health and mental health problems and support, have outlined that the primary concern for future research is not exploring what issues are present for women, but in exploring the way in which this affects their transition, and improving their engagement in support services on release. Hence the current research will aim to explore these issues in greater detail.

### **Personal Relationships and Family Ties upon Release**

One of the most important aspects within a woman's release transition, are the relationships and social networks around her, the quality of her relationships and support are influential in her desistance from criminal behaviour (Barlow, 2014). The notion is presented, that whilst social networks, intimate relationships and professional care (and the support and communication between such services) are important to reintegrate effectively, it is vital that such social support be positive and proactive to be a protective factor against reoffending. In

other instances, such relationships can be detrimental to the offenders, such as in intimate relationships or friendships where substances are misused regularly (Boer, 2013). This is the assumption of the relational theory (Kaplan, 1986), which outlines that a woman's motivation to live and do well is rooted in her connections with others and the view of herself that those around her will have. Major underpinning concepts within the relational theory are that her relationships, her social context and environment, and the value that the woman places upon those people in her life, are vital in determining whether she will commit deviant acts (Kaplan, 1986). However, the authors described here have not elaborated by distinguishing between relationships in a woman's life, and hence these differing relationships, such as children, partners and family, will be discussed in more depth below.

One of the most important and relevant issues concerning family reunification for those with children, is maintaining these relationships and for some this might include seeking support in regaining access to, or care of, their children – a vital component of the reintegration process (Shivy et al, 2007). Often this is the most important relationship for the individual to begin to repair, yet barriers such as custody, stabilisation and parenting disputes with the other parent can often arise (Morton & Williams, 1998). It is important when discussing and researching ex-offenders' relationships with their children, that we do not adhere to socially constructed ideas of 'motherhood' such as full time custody, or living with children as this may not always be a reality for individuals that have been incarcerated (Garcia, 2016).

Within the area of those post-incarceration, the triple threat (TT) model was developed which outlines the three major barriers between a child and an offending parent; trauma, mental health concerns and drug and alcohol abuse (Garcia, 2016). The model suggests that these issues, (each, or more so a combination) may weaken the relationship between the child and their mother which can become a hindrance to the ability of the ex-offender to reintegrate within their family and to parenting dynamics (Arditti & Few, 2006). The authors noted that these threats may lessen the mother's likelihood of being involved in the parenting and social relationship with their child, result in the development of mental health problems or result in further criminal behaviour in the mother (Arditti & Few, 2008). Whilst the TT model indicates barriers between mother and child relationships following incarceration, quantitative analyses indicated that most women remain close with their children post release (Arditti & Few, 2006). 79% of mothers reported feeling 'very close' to their children prior to incarceration, only dropping to 71% upon release, suggesting that these



relationship breakdowns may not be the case for many of the women released from prison (Arditti & Few, 2006).

However, when interviewing children of incarcerated parents, Siegel (2011) reported that one man when discussing his offending mother had explained that he held a lot of blame towards her for the quality of life he was now living, and thus felt very resentful towards her. This indicates that whilst women may have reported feeling close to their children, upon investigation some relationships may have been more complicated, and that the children may not reciprocate such feelings. Furthermore, other qualitative research has supported Siegel's (2011) findings; Arditti and Few (2006) reported that all women interviewed expressed that the prison experience had created strains upon their relationships with their children, and caused high levels of stress for the children involved. Richie (2001), in interviews with women reintegrating within their family lives, noted the extreme stress and worry that these individuals may go through coming up to their release, where often their biggest worry is the initial reaction of the child.

As discussed by Boer (2013) a relationship that may often breakdown post-incarceration is one with their partner. It has been noted that one of the biggest causes of disputes with a partner is concerning the care or parenting of a child which can often then lead to custody battles (Leverentz, 2006). Incarceration has widely been shown to reduce the likelihood that parents of a child will remain together (Arditti & Few, 2006), and divorce rates increase rapidly with incarceration (Siennick, Stewart, & Staff, 2014). Whilst this has been shown to be the case, it remains unclear the way in which these relationships breakdown, as findings have reported that dissolution of relationships may be largely due to long-term separation rather than the stigma or stereotypical views of incarceration itself (Massoglia, Remster, & King, 2011). However, the individual perception of those who have either lost intimate relationships, or those who have chosen to end them remain largely unexplored (Siennick et al, 2014).

A further concern within literature around women offenders' intimate relationships is that the results are largely mixed. Leverentz (2006) discusses the issue of co-dependency within relationships and friendships, and suggests that some women will abandon these relationships altogether due to the strain involved when a partner or peer is using drugs. Conversely however, many women have reported returning to their substance using partners and becoming largely co-dependent upon them, countersigning one another's drug using

(Leverentz, 2006). Others also discussed that women returned to prior intimate relationships with old partners often due to fear when domestic violence was involved (Harman, Smith, & Egan, 2007). Attachment theory has put forth an explanation as to why women return to detrimental relationships, describing women with low-self-esteem and those who are anxious about what others think about them as anxious-avoidant attachment types. Authors noted that those holding these attachment types are likely to be uncomfortable without close intimate relationships, and become dependent upon their partners to make their life worthwhile (Fowler, Groat, & Ulanday, 2013).

Developing further from the findings outlined concerning women's return to intimate relationships and relationships with children, authors have discussed women's other family supports such as parents, siblings and grandparents. Hedderman and Jolliffe (2015) presented findings which suggested that the prison experience weakens family ties upon release and creates difficulty for women returning to their families. Tiburcio (2008) also noted that this is often because they have 'burnt their bridges' with family and friends due to their prior behaviour, and the author further outlines that this is often intensified where substance misuse is involved. Whilst these authors have commented on these relationships, there remains a considerable amount more literature exploring women's relationships with children and partners upon release. Hence the current project will aim to explore a variety of relationships for women to ascertain their view of the importance and success of such family ties upon their release from prison. Further, as findings remain conflicted about the quality of mothers' relationship with their children, and women's return to intimate relationships, this is an area that the current research aims to explore in more depth. Investigating further around the success of reintegrating within a family unit and perspectives on relationships with their children and prior partners will be an important aim within this project.

### **Societal support and Stigma**

Researchers in recent years have measured neighbourhood contexts for those reintegrating into society, considering social influences such as harassment, attachments and social ties, behaviours of those in the community and social control (Burchfield & Mingus, 2014). It was clear from this research that these are strong indicators of the individuals perceived level of support within their community and social networks, which relax worries about reintegration and increase the perception that the community and neighbourly networks are supporting of their transition (Burchfield & Mingus, 2014).

One important factor indicated in increasing recidivism post-release, is the perceived level of stigma and social exclusion that so often comes with the label ‘offender’, often the stereotyping that comes with incarceration can have lasting consequences within an individual’s community (Foster & Hagan, 2007). Link and Phelan (2001) noted that beliefs within cultures and societies link differences in individuals to undesirable beliefs and negativity which creates a ‘them and us’ categorisation, causing the individual discrimination and a loss of status within society (Moran, 2012). Something which is commonly experienced in those who offend, this often results in either withdrawal/social exclusion from society, or may result in a strive for change within the individual which, if not met, may have negative health outcomes such as stress which can result from the social exclusion (Major & O’Brien, 2005).

Within theory surrounding social support, there are two dominant models which attempt to discuss our perceived support, care and compassion from those around us, rather than from the wider community (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The first of these models is the buffering hypothesis, which suggests that in times of stress and trauma we draw on support from those around us, and that it is during this time when we most need social support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Conversely, the direct effects hypothesis suggests that we need to have some level of perceived social support always or else there will be disastrous consequences to our health, wellbeing and mental instability (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

However, whilst these authors have theorised around the effects of stigmatisation and social support across genders, they did not explore in more depth the ways that this may affect and be interpreted by both genders differently. Further, these authors have not yet discussed how this social exclusion may differ in offenders from those of the general public. As this research is also relatively outdated, the claims may not necessarily be applicable to modern day media, stigma and social support. However, Walker (2010) considered the application of social support theory much more recently, specifically for those leaving prison after long periods of incarceration. Walker (2010), noted that both models indicate a strong need for support for individuals transitioning, especially during times of trauma such as this and reported both health and mental health dangers to these individuals in times of lowered social support.

Whilst findings have shown that friends, neighbours and colleagues are supportive of women offenders upon their release (Moran, 2012), it seems the same cannot be said on a

wider societal scale. As the double deviance theory suggests, within the media and society, women are viewed more harshly than male offenders as they are seen not only as a deviant offender, but as deviating from what is expected of female behaviour (Chesney-Lind, 1999).

Campbell and Deacon (2006) highlighted the importance of individual characteristics in the response from social exclusion, noting that some individuals will internalize such discrimination more than others which will affect the likelihood of whether they will challenge discrimination or withdraw. It is also clear that there are differences in how men and women seek support within their social networks post-prison, where women look more towards their families and friends, their male counterparts are much more aware of the social/community stigma and look towards professional services more so than their personal relations on release (Herrschaft, Veysey, Tubman-Carbone, & Christian, 2009; Walker, 2010). Furthermore, research indicates that those individuals who remain incarcerated are less concerned about public stigma (Benson, Alarid, Burton, & Cullen, 2011), yet those on release have noted that it has been a huge barrier for their reintegration (Van Olphen, Eliason, Freudenberg, & Barnes, 2009).

Developing on this idea, Tiburcio (2008) reported that those around women offenders may often vocalise negativity towards them for their behaviour or lifestyle, the authors noted the negative impact that this could have on a woman's self-esteem and confidence. Authors have noted that a combination of self-esteem and social support are essential in a successful re-entry for offenders (Davis et al, 2012) without this, the woman is sent further towards recidivism (Cobbner, Huebner, & Berg 2012).

The differences outlined here between men and women make clear that when the focus is on female participants, it seems more important to focus upon their perceived relationships and levels of support from family, friends, colleagues and children, rather than to focus on community stigma which appears to be less of a concern for women. This focus will be represented within the interview guides utilised within the current research, with more in-depth interviewing into the participant's experience of their familial support, and less about their experience of societal stigma and reactions from the wider community.

### **Professional Post-Release Support Services**

Visher and Travis (2003), discussed that an important dimension of reintegration is the professional support and policy surrounding the resettlement of offenders, and specifically that which differentiates the treatment and support for offenders. Women ex-

offenders have highlighted their need for support within a wide scope of areas; mental health support (counselling or therapy), abuse or anger management and financial support or help with finding employment. They have also noted that their transition was lacking support in securing housing, education and qualifications as well as driving licenses or CV skills training and cognitive self-change programmes which could be continued throughout their release (Lund et al, 2002; Williams-Queen, 2014). This need for support provision post-incarceration is not surprising when the benefits of professional supervision include improvements in self-esteem and reductions in self-harm and suicide (Commission on Women Offenders, 2012). Further, treatment programmes (before, during or after release), structure, guidance and supervision, and the development of realistic, feasible plans for the future (goal setting) can be essential in lowering recidivism (Willis, 2010). It has been largely noted that when support is available, such as family therapy or counselling, this can greatly aid in such life transitions and may be even more important for those that will have minimal contact with their children (Moe & Ferraro, 2006). Some mothers may either have lost custody of or no longer be in touch with their children and hence counselling or therapy for such individuals may be of greatest importance which highlights the significance and hence consideration within support for women post-release (Moe & Ferraro, 2006).

Whilst the importance and need for such support is clear, research within the UK has explored the extent to which offenders from eight different prisons accessed third sector support service organisations post-release, finding that only 1% accessed health services, and only 10% accessed drug and alcohol services (Gojkovic, Meek, & Mills, 2011). When considering that 27% of women are released with drug addictions, and a further 16% released with alcohol problems (Ministry of Justice, 2013c), 44% are released with mental health disorders (Broner, Lattimore, & Steffey, 2010 cited in Visser & Bakken, 2014), and over two thirds of women released were found to have some kind of physical health problem (Mallik-Kane & Visser, 2008), these statistics outline the scarce numbers of women actually engaging in support upon their release from prison.

Whilst this can suggest that women have highlighted their need for support, and yet are currently on the whole, not accessing or engaging thoroughly with the support services that are available, it is reasonable to assume that the support which is currently available for women is lacking in some areas and unable to keep women engaged on release. Though existing literature is unclear as to what gaps remain within professional support, female

participants have noted that they would prefer support policies designed for women, and that upon release they would appreciate a gendered support approach (Cobbina, 2010). Further research by McIvor, Trotter and Sheehan (2009), with female ex-offenders, found that their experiences post release were often most positive if they felt supported and valued by their parole officers, workers and practitioners within the prison. McIvor et al (2009) also noted that a women-centred post-release programme of support is critical for female offenders, indicating the need for further research into the experiences, needs and feelings of such individuals. Begun, Early and Hodge, (2016) reported that women on release are often not at a point in their lives where they are ready to employ changes into their way of life, and hence this is often one of the largest barriers to engagement. The authors went on to discuss further difficulties in engaging offenders post release, stating that often they are unaware of what may be available to them in terms of programmes and services, there are also feelings of shame when asking for help and support with their problems, as well as the costs involved with transportation to appointments (Begun et al, 2016).

The Corston Report (2007) addressed issues as such. Baroness Jean Corston began to write about the prison and reintegration transitions and pathways for women offenders, the way in which state policy may impact such, as well as making recommendations for future support services and approaches. Corston discussed women as having vulnerabilities which posed a risk to both their wellbeing as well as their offending (child-care issues, domestic violence, mental health or low self-esteem, unemployment, isolation or substance misuse). Further, large 'Titan' prisons, often far from a woman's home can result in a loss of family support, loss of contact with children, as well as impacting women's emotional support and wellbeing. These pressures and loss of support then add to many other struggles within the release transition, meaning women are then at risk of not only harm to themselves, but also a heightened risk of reoffending post-release.

Within her report, Baroness Corston (2007) suggested various improvements for women's future throughout the criminal justice system (CJS), commenting on the extent to which the current system which has been designed for men is unable to support women efficiently in supporting their mental health and wellbeing and leading them from a life of crime. Amongst her proposals, Corston commented on community support and supervision upon release, such as day centres for mental health support and gendered one stop shop support services with a multitude of agencies working together. Developing on this need for a

more gendered approach, the report called for modern updated women-specific policy, treatment/rehabilitation programmes designed for women and smaller women's prisons all over the country to slowly replace the bigger prisons, intending to avoid the long-distance women must often travel from their homes when they go to prison. Corston (2007) also discussed developments of the Together Women Programme (TWP), suggesting that there is a need for each woman to be assigned a 'Key Worker' upon her release, who would ensure a more emotional built relationship with the woman, hoping to improve her engagement with support. Further within the TWP initiative, key workers should be able to offer advice and access to mental and physical health teams or substance abuse support, support for issues such as housing, employment, education or skills training, financial skills help and parenting support.

However, in the 10 years that have passed since the report was published, various authors have discussed Corston's (2007) ideas and the government's response to her suggestions. Goldhill (2009), summarised that whilst overall the government's response supported Corston's claims and suggestions, various of her proposals had been disputed or disregarded, with the response largely outlining that many of the suggested provisions such as smaller more local prisons were not cost-efficient. Goldhill (2009) went on to note the importance of community post-release supervision, outlining that further investment in large prisons instead of mental health support, community support and supervision, or probation can be dangerous for women's wellbeing upon their release, and are likely to continue to be ineffective in lowering women's recidivism. These comments are able to highlight an importance in exploring the provisions that are currently in place for women within the community, and how these may impact women's transition experience.

More recently, the government issued a 'strategy for diverting women away from crime', which authors have described as being pre-occupied with discussing women in terms of their offending rather than their vulnerabilities or considering their role as victims (Evans & Walklate, 2011). As the report also presents a larger focus on the harm women do to others than the harm they are currently at risk from by their experience throughout the criminal justice system, highlighting a concerning contrast from the original proposals put forth by Corston (2007). The government's response strategy indicates a disregard for the impact upon women's wellbeing and their vulnerabilities during their time in prison and upon their release, indicating a misinterpretation of much of Cortson's ideas (Evans & Walklate, 2011).

This highlights a further importance in exploring to what extent Corston's proposals have been implemented within support for women offenders, and what is now offered ten years after Corston's initial report.

### **Rationale and Research Questions**

Whilst a breadth of literature has been discussed concerning the challenges faced by individual's post-incarceration, much of this remains unclear in the way in which the challenges discussed are perceived by women during this transition. A clear picture of the pathway, transition and experience that these women encounter has not yet been obtained, and whilst it is distinct that issues such as healthcare, substance abuse, income and housing are all important challenges to these individuals, issues regarding support post-release (both familial and professional) remain unclear in what way and how these issues impact women on their release from prison. Research exploring women's perceptions has utilised small sample sizes due to the nature of qualitative research, and hence a small array of women in this troubled and challenging position have had their voices heard. The current research is able to add to this understanding, encompassing the perspectives and experiences of more women who have undergone this transition and those who support them. Further, as the criminal justice system and support services change rapidly, research needs to be ongoing in this area.

The current research therefore aims to explore women's transitional and reintegration experiences when they leave prison. The research questions derived from the review of the literature are as follows:

- What are the main barriers for women after release from prison in reintegrating with communities and resettling?
- What types of support do women access after prison and is it appropriate and adequate?

The following section of this thesis will outline the procedures utilised and the methods and approaches adopted within the current research to begin answering the above research questions.



### **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

The following section of this thesis will outline the approaches adopted within this research, whilst explaining the method used within the project. Thereafter, details of how data was collected from participants will be presented, as well as participant information which will be listed with details such as offence type, gender and type of support offered. Then, the method of analysis will be presented, listing benefits and limitations of the chosen method of data analysis. Finally, ethical issues will be put forth, as well as how these were considered and applied within this research.

#### **Approaches and Method**

A qualitative approach was adopted within the current research, as it is able to privilege the voice of the individual under enquiry, giving precedence to their experience, perception and perspective through their own words (McLeod, 2015), something which was important within the research aims. However, both the benefits and shortcomings of qualitative data collection, as well as the methodologies applied within research should be evaluated prior to data collection (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001), and so are presented below.

When taking into consideration the nature and aims of the current research, invaluable breadth, depth and detail can be obtained through qualitative methods, enabling a rich understanding of women's experiences that could often be missed during quantitative research (Yin, 2004). However, more problematic areas within undertaking qualitative research were considered prior to data collection such as lengthy time consuming data collection leading to small samples (Flick, 2014). Further, qualitative research is often more easily influenced by both the presence and preconceived ideas of the researcher (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Though these limitations were considered within the current research, it remained important that the women to be interviewed be given a voice, no matter the number, hence qualitative research remained the most appropriate choice. Further, the below discussion will highlight the approaches adopted throughout the project in order to ensure such effects of the researcher were minimal upon the data analysis.

Qualitative research favours no specific theory, approach or methods over any other (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and hence highlights the importance of a discussion surrounding such adopted theoretical stances employed within this research. Within the current project, an inductive ontological stance (or 'bottom-up' method of analysis) was adopted, this involves

findings originating from the data itself, developing or supporting pre-existing theory (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014). Though the alternative, a deductive approach, aims to begin with a theory or model, attempting to apply this to the data, an inductive approach was more appropriate (and hence chosen) within the current research to minimise the level of researcher bias during analysis.

Further shaping the employed methodology within the current research, was the consideration of the epistemological position, between positivism and interpretivist. As positivism is concerned with facts and figures (often assumed within quantitative research), an interpretivist perspective was adopted within this project. Whilst on the whole this indicates that the researcher will form interpretations within the analysis of data (based upon what is learnt about a participant), to further limit the extent to which the researcher was able to influence the analysis, a phenomenological stance was adopted. This explores the perception and experience of the individual, looking at the feelings and emotions which have arisen from a concept or phenomenon (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Furthermore, from this phenomenological perspective it was assumed that our perceptions of the world result from our understanding and meaning given to the world and contexts within which we live (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013). Phenomenology (and hence interpretivist) is well suited to the current research which aimed to explore subjective experiences of those resettled post-incarceration, due to its fundamentally subjective ontological position.

### **Details of the process of data collection**

With regards to data collection, desired participants were women over the age of 18 who had, at some point, experienced incarceration and the subsequent release and resettlement. Prior to contacting any services or participants, the researcher sought ethical approval from the University's School Research Ethics Panel (SREP) and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), as participants were likely to still be under probation supervision. Having discussed the application with the NOMS ethical approval board, it became apparent that only research with a Ministry of Justice lead or doctorate status would be considered for approval. As the current research fell under neither of these categories, only women who were no longer under the supervision of probation (and hence NOMS) could be accessed as participants. Due to these circumstances, sole ethical approval was gained from the University of Huddersfield SREP.

Following ethical approval, the first stage of the process of data collection began with the opportunity sampling method, by contacting support services within the local area working with women following prison. However, it became apparent that once women have finished their probation orders, they rarely continue to access support services and hence of the women able to take part in this research, there were very few still known to professionals in the area. Following this difficulty in locating enough women on release to interview, the decision was made to include the perspectives and experiences of staff/professional practitioners working with women after prison as they could offer expert perspectives on the issues. From re-contacting services and organisations, various professionals were happy to be interviewed from both female specific support services, as well as mixed gender services (see Table 2 later in this report). Snowball sampling was then used to contact both further professionals and ex-prisoners experiencing release from prison through word of mouth, and offered to take part in the research. This sampling technique was advantageous within the methodology of this research, as it enabled more potential participants to be reached that otherwise the researcher would not have been aware of, at low time consumption for the researcher (Coolican, 2009). However, one risk with snowball sampling, is the possibility of participants taking part as a favour to others, to minimise the likelihood of this being the case, the participant information sheet made clear that participation was entirely voluntary, this will be discussed further later in the report. Furthermore, snowball sampling may lead to lowered variability among participants (and hence their views), as if they know one another they are more likely to hold similar experiences, opinions and views (Coolican, 2009).

Following contact with participants, ensuring that each was happy to participate, interviews were conducted through use of a pre-written guide. However, one limitation of interview data collection is the lengthy process for the researcher, which resulted in a limited sample size (Coolican, 2009). Further, within interviews it can always be possible that information can be missed by the researcher (Coolican, 2009). To minimise the risk of information being missed, a Semi-structured interview technique was adopted as this can allow the researcher to probe spontaneously enabling a deeper level of understanding of the individual's experience (Yin, 2004). Further, Berg and Lune (2014) discussed the importance of an adaptability towards new directions based upon subjective significance to the participant, whilst ensuring that the interview covers all topics set out within the research aims (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview guides utilised can be found in appendices 6 (ex-

offender women) and 7 (staff/professionals) and as can be seen included questions based upon the research aims developed from the literature review.

Interviews were conducted with 12 participants in this manner; 9 staff/professionals and 3 ex-prisoners who had experienced first-hand release and resettlement post-prison. These interviews were recorded by use of a Dictaphone to ensure ease within the transcribing process, meaning all information was recorded accurately. Finally, interviews were transcribed verbatim, and recordings deleted for confidentiality purposes.

### **Participant information**

Whilst participant names have been changed throughout this report, details for ex-offender participants can be seen in table 1, and details for staff participants can be seen in table 2 below.

**Table 1: Participant details for women who have been in prison.**

<b>Ex-offender Participant</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Offences</b>	<b>Time since last release</b>	<b>Details about incarceration</b>	<b>Other</b>
Sarah	8	Drug offences and violent offences	6 months	2 sentences, 1 for 6 years.	
Chloe	9	Drug offences & theft	6 months		
Janine	10	Drug offences & theft	4 years	26 sentences	Now a professional working in substance misuse recovery support.

**Table 2: Participant details for Staff/Professionals.**

<b>Staff/Professional Participant</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Type of Support</b>	<b>Gendered Support</b>
Ruth	11	Housing support.	Mixed gender.
Naomi	12	Support for Street workers.	Women only
Kate	13	Helping women stay free from crime, supporting women after prison on many problematic areas.	Women only
Laura	14	Retrospectively speaking about her work in probation working on rehabilitation courses.	Mixed Gender
Elaine	15	Housing support specifically for women leaving prison, working on other areas around resettlement.	Women only
Helen	16	Helping women stay free from crime, supporting women after prison on many problematic areas.	Women only
Zoe	17	Women's resettlement hostel.	Women only
Amy	18	Housing support specifically for those leaving prison, working on other areas around resettlement.	Mixed Gender
Olivia	19	Women who have offended in the last 6 months with personality disorder, helping support their reintegration.	Women only

As can be seen above, ex-offender participants differed on details such as type of offence and time since release, whilst staff participants came from a range of support services, some mixed gender and some women only. This enabled the research to be diverse ensuring a sample from different types of offender, and different types of professionals.

### **Method of Analysis**

As briefly discussed, there is always a possibility within qualitative research that the researcher's preconceptions or prior experience may impact the interpretation or analysis within the research (Joffe, 2012). To avoid such impact upon the current analysis, an inductive approach, a Thematic Analysis method was adopted, aiming to ensure that themes

are generated directly from collected data, through codes from each participants' transcribed words (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of conducting a Thematic Analysis were followed, and crucially began with a phase of familiarisation with the data, ensuring that the data was understood within context of its discussion. Following this stage, initial codes were drawn from within each transcribed interview, such as events and feelings that were verbally expressed by the participant (semantic codes) and underlying meanings within the data (latent codes) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). From grouping these codes into similar groups and categories, overarching themes were generated from the data and were reviewed multiple times by returning to the interview data to ensure themes represented what participants had said. Subsequently, each theme was defined and named and then analysed in depth within the production of the report.

As themes were generated solely from the data set, each theme is entirely backed up and grounded within the data, leaving minimal scope for interpretation during analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A further important advantage of this method of data analysis is the ability to highlight both similarities and differences between data sets, making it an appropriate method within research employing multiple participants or a variety of experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, Thematic Analysis remains dependent upon the researcher's interpretation in the way the codes are derived from the data, suggesting that the analysis may not be entirely subjective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, the choice of this method of analysis means that the researcher is unable to comment upon the language usage by the participant which may have been important within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As this method can be utilized within a variety of theoretical stances and within a wide scope of subject areas, this makes thematic analysis a widely adopted method for use within discourse analysis (Flick, 2014). Thematic analyses are also well suited to projects with the analysis of verbally contributed data (Joffe, 2012) making it an appropriate choice of methodology within the current research.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The ethical guidelines governing this research were put forth by The British Society of Criminology (2015, BSC) and list various risks and management strategies that should be employed within research of this nature. As participants are voluntarily taking part within the current research, their health and safety must be paramount at all times, ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to ensure their wellbeing.

It was made clear to participants that they had the right to withdraw at all times and could take a break should they wish. Right to withdraw has been discussed by The BSC (2015), who commented that on a participant level, this ensures the safety of the individual and makes certain that those who are participating feel comfortable to do so. It has also been noted that on a wider scale, ensuring the right to withdraw can encourage public trust within research ensuring that the exploration of phenomena and learning and development within academia can continue (Schaefer & Wertheimer, 2011). Furthermore, details of support services and access to a drop-in centre GP (accompanied by a map) were detailed on the participant information sheet in case the revelation of any personal experiences should result in harm to the participant's emotional wellbeing. As can be seen within Appendix 1, the website for the charity *Mind*, as well as a contact number for the charity *Samaritans* were also both highlighted to give a range of support services dependent upon which the participant feels comfortable.

To ensure that confidentiality of each individual remained of paramount security, participant details were only recorded by the researcher and were kept separate at all times from any interview data, so that no accounts within the final report could be traced to any individual. The importance of responsible and secure management of participant details has been outlined within the ethical guidelines put forth by The BSC (2015), but the weight of which is also highlighted and governed by the Data Protection Act (1998, cited in BSC, 2015). However, it was expressed by way of the participant information sheet (see appendices 1 and 2) that confidentiality would be breached by the researcher in certain exceptions as suggested by The BSC (2015). Such exceptions would be in the circumstances that an individual discloses either threat of harm to themselves or another individual, or wherein a disclosure of a crime that has not yet been dealt with by the criminal justice system is noted; by which the researcher is at liberty to take such information forth to the relevant authorities. Full consent was gained on this matter from each participant, ensuring and confirming their understanding (see blank consent forms in appendices 3-5).

Due to the means of research of this nature, it is unfeasible to keep participant experiences and accounts disclosed at interview confidential, due to the production of a report and presentation of findings within academic journals or at the University of Huddersfield. However, to ensure that no data could be related back to any individual, pseudonyms were attached to interview data so that each participant remained anonymous and no details were stored with any data at any given time, as was suggested by the BSC (2015). Participants

were also reminded they would only be required to discuss that with which they felt comfortable, and interview guides (Appendices 6 and 7) were pre-approved by the SREP to ensure questions were all necessary and required by the research aims. The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2010), noted the potential invasion of privacy within qualitative research of this nature and hence every measure was taken to ensure this was kept to a minimum.

As discussed previously, one concern within snowball sampling techniques is that this may lower the voluntary nature of participation. To ensure this was not the case, participants were reminded through use of the participant information sheet that their participation was entirely at their own discretion, and no incentives were offered to any participants at any time. Hanson, Letourneau, Olver, Wilson, and Miner (2012) also commented on such a risk of participants who are at risk of reoffending being vulnerable to incentives as it gives chance for the individual to gain from their crimes, further indicating a necessity that participation be entirely voluntary.

To reduce risk of emotional or physical harm toward the researcher as well as towards the general public, interviews were conducted at the locations of the support services initially contacted. In instances where this was not possible, the researcher was mindful of conducting interviews somewhere quiet enough as to not distress any passers-by of the general public. Further, it was confirmed that security or supervision were nearby at all times and that the environment was not entirely isolated for the safety of the researcher. Times and dates of interviews were logged with the researcher's supervisor to ensure that knowledge of contact with participants was known by others at all times. The necessity of such considerations were noted by the BSC (2015), in that research of a sensitive nature may pose a risk toward the interviewer or have potential chance of emotional harm to the general public or the wider population. The BPS (2010) went on to outline that this risk be heightened should any members of the public overhear any sensitive discussion of crimes, offending or similar topic areas.

Further, support services and the use of a supervisor at the University of Huddersfield remained at the foreground of priority throughout both the data collection and analysis phases of this research to minimise risk of psychological harm to the researcher from discussion and disclosure of topics of a sensitive nature. Maintenance of contact and supervision with the University has been recommended by Ritchie et al (2014), whilst other authors noted the



importance of counselling or support services should these be available (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2008).

Documents that have previously been discussed such as the information sheets, consent form and interview guides were submitted, alongside the risks and ethical considerations, to the school research ethics panel and granted full ethical clearance. These documents can be seen in the appendices 1-7.

The following chapter of this thesis will present the findings from the collected data within interviews conducted with participants, listing each theme that arose from the data and outlining differences and similarities between participants' views and experiences.

## Chapter 4 - Analysis/Findings

A Thematic Analysis was conducted across the data set made up of 12 transcriptions collected from both women who have experienced prison and release, and professionals guiding their support. Six main overarching themes were identified from the data, these and their codes and are displayed in table 3 below:

**Table 3: Research Findings presented from the Thematic Analysis conducted on collected data.**

Research Findings	
Main overarching themes	Subthemes
1. Substance Misuse	1.1 Returning to drugs and alcohol
	1.2 Problems arising from substance misuse
	1.3 Co-dependency
2. Income	2.1 Benefits
	2.2 Employment
	2.3 Consequences of lack of income
3. Accommodation	3.1 Homelessness
	3.2 Barriers in finding accommodation
	3.3 Suitable housing
4. Health	4.1 Physical health
	4.2 Mental health
5. Social and Professional Support	5.1 Personal relationships
	5.2 Support services
6. Impact of Prison	6.1 Positive impacts of prison
	6.2 Negative impacts of prison
	6.3 Societal stigma
	6.4 Feelings reported on release.

In this section, each of the themes above will be discussed, using the data collected with professionals working with women on their release and the women themselves. Whilst acknowledging all findings from the data collection, the focus for the data analysis will be upon themes 5 (*social and professional support*) and 6 (*lasting effects of prison*) as these were key issues wherein the previous literature has been conflicted and under researched. The other four themes above will be briefly presented now.

## **1 - Substance misuse**

A large concern for the women on their release from prison was their return to substance misuse, with some resuming these habits as a matter of priority on the day of their release. It was highlighted by both the staff and ex-prisoners that they are often able to access drugs during their incarceration, and as women's jail sentences are often so short, they are not able to attend rehabilitation programmes or deal with their addiction problems. Women discussing their experiences noted that from the financial strain that drugs entail, they turned to other substances such as alcohol, resulting in further addictions, whilst others use drugs to a greater extent around payday, leaving themselves with little money for the rest of the month. Professionals working within a support service specifically for sex workers remarked that following release, women often return to sex work or theft as a means to fund their substance abuse, highlighting an almost instant return to crime. Whilst many participants suggested that women are not motivated to deal with their addictions, a further suggested influence on women's return to substance misuse was co-dependency between partners, or between peers/acquaintances. Many participants noted that women reverting to these relationships involving substance abuse, or returning to environments where substance misuse is frequent, such as in hostels, may quicken their return to drugs and alcohol on their release.

## **2 – Income**

A large barrier to women's successful reintegration and resettlement after prison is the significant lack of income on their release. Whilst the women discussed that getting benefits in order is a priority, often this is a lengthy process meaning they have only £45 to last them for several weeks, often having to wait for a doctor's sick note before they can access benefits. Further, professionals guiding women towards employment highlighted that though some women would like to begin full time work on their release, many have a lack of skills or experience which makes developing a CV near impossible. In some cases, having a criminal record in the first place presents an instant barrier in finding work. Staff also commented that for some women, having no fixed abode or identification, has meant a need for support services to provide proof of identification for job applications, whilst other women are reluctant to apply for work due to low motivation or a lack of self-esteem and confidence. Due to this lack of stable income from either benefits or employment, women released from prison explained that they did not have enough money to pay for basic

amenities such as gas, electric or food, nor are they able to afford bus fare or childcare for them to attend their appointments which are sometimes listed in their license conditions. Further consequences of this lack of income may result in not only returning to street working or theft as previously discussed, but also large build-ups of debt.

### **3 – Accommodation**

The professionals and ex-prisoners stated that there are fewer hostels and suitable accommodation available for women than for their male counterparts, and also noted that women would have to travel further for these hostels, away from their family. Workers went on to explain that as part of an offender's license conditions, she may be forced to live with certain family members, or it may be outlined that she cannot return to her home, often leaving women "sofa-surfing" upon their release. Many of the women offenders seeking suitable accommodation after prison have difficulties as they have "burnt their bridges" with many services, housing associations or landlords, due to leading chaotic lifestyles, being nuisance tenants or, in some cases, misusing the accommodation. Similarly, staff participants discussed that having high arrears, low-income or convictions such as criminal damage or arson can put a "black mark" against a woman's name, making her low priority for future housing support.

Many of both staff and ex-prisoner participants indicated that women have a different focus and priorities in terms of what they view as being 'suitable housing', indicating a difference in accommodation need between them and their male counterparts. Professionals working with women and organising housing post-release suggested that women are homelier than men, wanting storage and possessions, making their house a home. Conversely however, the ex-prisoners interviewed outlined their ideal suitable housing as being the bare minimum with a roof over their heads, discussing that the location is very important, as well as the speed of the arrangements being put into place (it is preferred that this is in place prior to their release). Further, for those women who were mothers on their release, they outlined a need for ground floor flats, or the availability of mother-baby premises to get them used to living alone.

### **4 – Health**

Physical health problems were reported as being problematic for women on release by both staff members and the women. These included diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis (especially with sharing needles), pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, need for sexual

health education and contraception, scarred and weeping injection sites, women not keeping up with smear tests and screenings and ailments such as back problems and disabilities. However, professionals noted that many women do not access healthcare due to either being unaware of how to access it, being anxious about attending appointments or having a lack of motivation in wanting their health concerns treated. Additionally, women ex-offenders highlighted that access to dentists is extremely difficult, and noted that when registering with GPs, they are often told to return in a fortnight, barriers only amplified if the woman does not have a fixed address. Finally, findings from women on their release from prison showed that continuity of healthcare in prison is poor, with women released without medication, or their medication stopped prior to incarceration.

Mental health problems were also described by all of the participants indicating that women suffer from either, or a combination of; eating disorders, anxiety, depression (including self-harming and feeling suicidal), ADHD, personality disorders, schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder. Professionals discussed the differences between male and female offenders' mental health, noting that often males will have anti-social personality disorder, whilst females more commonly have borderline personality disorder, making it difficult to engage clients during mixed gender support groups. Further, staff noted that often there is no diagnosis in place, especially where anxiety and depression are concerned, or for cases where diagnosis is in place, it has not been thoroughly explained to the patient.

Professionals stated that supporting a woman with her mental health is vital in stopping the offending cycle, but outlined a lack of counselling support available, as well as services which are reluctant to work with those who have substance misuse disorders for their mental health. However, group work involving like-minded women with similar mental health problems, as well as courses such as mindfulness meditation, were noted to have had positive influences and support for women on their release from incarceration.

## **5 – Social and professional support**

The theme *social and professional support* serves as an overarching theme of the subthemes of *personal relationships* and *support services*, and is the first main theme to be explored in detail. Experiences of reuniting with family post-prison as well as partners and children and the way in which these relationships continued after prison will be presented.

Following, participants' experiences with professional support services will be presented from both the perspective of staff and ex-prisoner.

### **5.1 – Personal relationships**

One of the most commonly discussed issues in the interviews was personal relationships for women, and the support or problems involved when returning to these relationships after prison. The relationships discussed in detail in this section of this thesis are women's relationships with children, with their partners, with family members and with peers.

For those women who had children, the importance of motherhood was a common theme in the data. Professionals discussed that many women had already lost contact with their children prior to their incarceration. In other cases however, mothers had at least some sort of relationship with their children on their arrest, but by their release their children had either been adopted, were living with a foster family, or were living with a relative:

*“For the women I work with I think they’ve burnt most of the bridges with their family by the time they come out. I’ve had a couple who have sort of been in quite long term and they have received visits from their parents, but not really anything significant really, and any children they have had are gone anyway”* (Naomi - Staff, Lines 60-64)

One client even discussed that she had learnt to stay out of her daughter's life in order to have the best relationship with her she could hope for, Sarah discusses below that this is what she explained to the father of her daughter if he hoped for a better relationship with her:

*“I’ve learnt the best thing is just to wash your hands sometimes, ask for the keys and give her her stuff and stay out of it. Its better if you want any kind of relationship with her”* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 268-270)

From this comment, it can be seen that Sarah felt that distancing from her children was the better option to have a relationship with her in the future.

However, some women are more fortunate when they leave prison, and do regain their relationships with their children, but this does not come without problems and barriers. For some women, their main priority on their release is their children, whether that be to see them and reunite, or whether that is to regain full-time access and guardianship, but in Chloe's case it was too late to fully rectify her relationship with her daughter:

*“It’s difficult, we don’t get along a lot of the time because she is 15 years old, she’s got a gob on her. She has some medical thing and she turns around to me and says “If it wasn’t for you I wouldn’t have this, if it wasn’t for you taking drugs while you were pregnant I wouldn’t have this”* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Lines 170-173)

As Chloe's comment shows, her daughter still holds much blame for her physical health on her mum taking drugs whilst she was pregnant, and this is something that still holds a barrier for their developing relationship. Janine also commented on how her daughter moved away as she could not bear to watch her behaviour, whilst another daughter engaged in similar behaviours by taking drugs and following her mother's path:

*"My middle girl cleared off to Australia, because she just couldn't watch me destroy myself, she came back this year with my grandson and I met him for the first time, he's four, d'you know I could get really emotional about this. My eldest one, she's in the [service name removed – substance misuse support] project, she's alright is Becky but she's very much a product of my behaviour"* (Janine – Ex-Offender, Lines 111-114)

From Janine's comments, the way this hurts her emotionally can be seen and is able to present just how difficult these relationship breakdowns can be for women on release from prison. Further professionals expressed concerns regarding women reuniting with their children after prison, as sometimes family members are reluctant to allow the mother access to her children on release if they have been the main caregivers during her incarceration. These comments have indicated disputes with family members over care of the children:

*"I mean sometimes when children are looked after by their grandparents, the grandparents are reluctant to let the offenders see their children but that's because they know it can end up with them back in prison and that isn't always good for the children, so the families have the children's best interests at heart but it means broken down relationships between the offenders and their parents as well as with their children"* (Ruth - Staff, Lines 269-274)

Further barriers in reuniting with family post-release were concerned with a woman's family becoming intolerant of her behaviour such as attitudes or stealing from them, resulting in the family cutting ties and worsening relationships with the family, often forcing the woman towards negative peers for support:

*"I do get it from the other perspective that families have, like if it's somebody who is continually offending, especially if it's things like burglary or street robbery or taking stuff from their family, they have to say no and I do understand that"* (Kate - Staff, Lines 72-75)

Often adding to these disputes and divides within family relations, the woman's probation licence may also list that she is to either not return to the family home (and hence potentially leaving her homeless), or list that she must live at a certain address, something which, in one case, became a huge strain on a woman's relationship with her grandparents as one staff member explained:

*"She lives with her grandma and grandad so she didn't really have a choice in the matter and since they've been living together, there's been quite a few disagreements because she feels*

*like they're quite sort of overbearing, but then the Grandma has also been contacting me because she is quite fed up"* (Olivia - Staff, Lines 279-282)

However, some of the women on release indicated that their families remain supportive and for some women, they return to their families straight after release. Chloe discussed her concern for her family:

*"I was worried about if things would get back to normal with my family because my time in prison at the beginning affected my family greatly, I was more worried about them than I was myself"* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Lines 6-8)

Staff members discussing similar experiences with the women they have worked with, noted that their female clients were much more concerned about their level of support from their family than male clients. Elaine also notes below how this can mean that lowered levels of support for women on their release could be detrimental for their wellbeing:

*"For more of the prolific female offenders you'll actually find that the family, for obvious reasons, have cut ties so they don't actually have that family support and their peer group is normally the people that are in the same circumstances so that can be detrimental"* (Elaine - Staff, Lines 254-257)

Whilst relationships with partners have been discussed previously with regards to co-dependency and drug/alcohol abuse, women leaving prison may also be returning to domestically violent relationships or return to abusive partners. Ruth (a staff member) discussed, noting that she was uncertain of the reason for women's return to partners:

*"We've had women where there's been domestic violence and for some reason they will actually still have that relationship and will still go back to it, it is detrimental"* (Ruth - Staff, Lines 278-280)

In some cases, women may have known a particular partner for a very long period of time and may find it difficult to get out of this relationship on her release from prison, others however rely on this partner to give them a sense of purpose and to "give them back their life":

*"At the time I told myself my daughters dad is looking after me and I couldn't go home, you know puppy dog eyes and all that"* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Lines 166-168)

*"He's known me all my life so as long as I stuck by him, you know, it was alright. It was like I was relying on him to give me my life back"* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 260-262)

When these comments outlining dependence upon partners are coupled with Sarah and Chloe's substance misuse, it can be seen how returning to relationships as they have described can quickly become co-dependant and potentially detrimental to a woman's



recovery. From Sarah's comments, it can be seen that she had at this time, very little independence which may indicate lowered confidence around the time of her release.

Another of the women interviewed also discussed returning to an old relationship on her release from prison:

*"The thing that glued us was drugs and the lifestyle we lead...I think that if we can get somebody to countersign our behaviour, and visa versa, if I countersigned their behaviour, it kind of makes it alright because you're not on your own, because someone else is behaving the same way as you"* (Janine – Ex-offender, Lines 132-144)

However, as Janine is now a professional working to support women in recovery from substance misuse, she discussed her views on relationships during recovery and resettlement, and suggested that staying single and away from old unhealthy relationships is for the best for a woman's recovery:

*"We have a rule here that you don't get into new relationships, but I stress in any group I do is just find out who you are first because one thing that will always take you back is a relationship, back out the door that is, back using and back to jail"* (Janine – Ex-Offender, 145-148)

Similarly, staff also discussed how when women are released from prison, their friends may influence their success at reintegrating and resettling, and can be either beneficial or detrimental to the woman's wellbeing. For some women, seeing friends on their release may be the first thing that they want to do and for one woman interviewed, her peers acted as absent family, as Sarah discussed:

*"This girl, I mean she calls me Mum, we see each other as adopted mother and daughter. She started doing nails and just got in to doing mine and she noticed I was watching very closely what she was doing so she started teaching me and so I looked to see if there's anything to do with nails and I found one, so me and her went on doing it together, we were both giving each other that kick up the backside"* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 128-132)

In these cases, women are able to keep going friendships from childhood, and stay friends with those who were in different circles, perhaps not taking drugs or free from crime as Chloe described from her own experiences:

*"I have a couple of good friends, friends who I grew up with who were friends with my mum as well and they have always supported me. When Emily was a baby and I was in prison they used to fetch Emily up to see me in prison, but thankfully she was a baby, she wasn't even a year old so she didn't really know. I am still friends with them to this day, they are the ones that are not taking drugs"* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Lines 185-189)

For those however who return to relationships with those who use drugs, women commonly refer to these relationships as associates or peers and not as friends, and that it is

these whom become a bad influence on motivation and returning to these circles which are of detriment to the woman herself:

*“The friends are probably the wrong sort of friends, but when you say friends it’s not like us having a friend, they might be a friend for a particular reason you know, “What am I getting out of this?” (Naomi - Staff, Lines 248-250)*

*“I never had any friends in addiction, they were always associates, I had boyfriends and drama drama drama but no it was always associates” (Janine – Ex-offender, Lines 122-124)*

Finally, worker participants discussed that the above relationships are not always in place to offer a woman support, as many of the women who leave prison are completely on their own and have burnt bridges with everyone that they knew. In some cases, these women do not even have a next of kin:

*“I also understand how difficult it is for the women who have nobody and I think that until I did this job I didn’t appreciate that people could have nobody, “who’s your next of kin? Can I put you down?”, I think that says it all” (Kate - Staff, Lines 75-77)*

Kate also discussed how women that she has worked with just want to belong to someone and feel wanted in order to feel human again, indicating that for them, having someone on their release for support is the most important thing for their transition:

*“That need to belong that human beings have they will belong to anybody as long as you belong to somebody, it’s really really sad” (Kate - Staff, Lines 71-72)*

## **5.2 - Support services**

Within the current study, the data collection focused in part on support services and the professional support offered to women upon their release, especially in interviews with staff members and professionals. In this section, professionals’ views on their service’s funding and training will be outlined, staff and ex-prisoner offenders’ perspectives on gendered support (i.e. support specifically for women) and the need for female staff for female clients. Within this part of the analysis, barriers to engagement in support for women will also be outlined, concluding with participants’ suggested future direction for professional support and service provision.

Interviews with professionals working with women on their release from prison discussed the scope of their services, and it became apparent that there is little funding available for these workers to put towards their clients, and due to large caseloads a requirement for more staff is needed:

*“Funding wise, that’s quite dire for everybody at the moment and I think we are lucky to still be functioning as we are, I do appreciate that, it would be good to have a couple more workers but I understand the difficulties”* (Kate - Staff, Lines 136-138)

As Kate outlines, some services now have such little funding that the staff are surprised that they are still able to function and work with clients. Helen noted the gaps in support that she is able to offer her clients, noting that should her service have more funding, they would be able to go to further lengths to support their clients:

*“There is always room for more funding, because there is so much that we would want to do that we currently don’t have the capacity for, so my contract specific to female offenders was halved under transforming rehabilitation, I used to have four dedicated members of staff to work and support with women who were referred to us either through the CRC [Community Rehabilitation Company], so low to medium risk, or through the NPS [National Probation Service], which are high risk, I have now only got two members of staff, but the volume of women (service users) are the same, so it’s more for less. We would definitely like to do something more around mental health and something definitely more around housing”* (Helen - Staff, Lines 148-156)

It is significant that every member of staff, when asked about funding in their services, said that they feel unequipped in terms of funding and resources to support clients effectively, outlining a lack of funding for support in this area. Professionals also indicated that due to limited budgets, they are also unable to access the training that they require, indicating women are not being supported as efficiently as they could be. Should the budget be available, professionals noted that they would require more training in mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, as well as counselling and therapeutic intervention skills training, all of which would improve the service and level of support they would be able to offer women on their release:

*“I think as much training as you can do in regards to mental health and personality disorders and drugs and alcohol, I think it all adds, anything you can get, not that it’s available to me but yeah”* (Naomi - Staff, Lines 88-90)

From Naomi’s comments, it is clear that whilst she feels there are areas she would appreciate more training and hence has room for development, this is not available to her, suggesting that staff working with women on release do not feel fully equipped to do so.

A further issue outlined throughout the data collected, was regards to gendered support services for women on their release. However, the experiences and opinions discussed by ex-offenders were often conflicting with those of professional workers’. Views of the staff working with women post-release suggest that an all-female service is preferred,

with female workers, noting that this is due to women's emotional nature, being able to work more closely with those of their own gender:

*"I think for a woman you need to be supported by a woman, because then you bring all the gender issues into it, we get women. It's not just emotionally as well it's practically, we know what it is like to be a mum"* (Helen - Staff, Lines 178-180)

*"Women are asked in court if they want a female centre and the vast majority say yes. A lot have been through domestic violence, sexual abuse, and they choose to come to a women's centre and I think it's very beneficial... I choose to work in a gender specific place and I do believe that it works, I definitely do"* (Kate – Staff, Lines 142-152)

One ex-offender interviewed, now working as a member of staff in a substance misuse support service had similar thoughts about gendered support services, suggesting that this is necessary for women:

*"I think it's important, I worked for [service name removed] before I came here, because I worked for probation believe it or not and they gave me a job, so I worked in probation ... but I wanted to come and work in recovery. I feel, and I will say this about even here as well, we didn't have enough females, I have been a big advocate of females...I feel that men are supported more by men so why should women be different"* (Janine – Ex-offender, Lines 195-200)

However, as Janine appears to be commenting more so on her experiences in working with clients, than her experience when she was an ex-offender, it remains unclear whether women on release would have preference. From Chloe and Sarah's comments, it seems they do not. Sarah commented that she was more concerned with the same staff member being consistent and able to do their job, and Chloe noting that she gets on well with men and women and so had no preference:

*"Not bothered really, I've always got on well with guys and girls so it's not something I'd have noticed either way"* (Chloe – Ex-offender, Lines 203-204)

*"I'm not bothered as long as they know their job and as long as they don't keep switching and changing around"* (Sarah – Ex-offender, Lines 349-350)

Similarly, staff members were also asked whether they felt that they changed their behaviours and approaches based on the gender of the client that they are working with. Those working solely with women recognised differences and altered their approaches based upon this:

*"I think working with women alone, you get to know more about what women want and learn the approaches to take. I think that can be different to each individual but I think my approach is more similar with all my women than it would be if we had men too"* (Kate-Staff, Lines 152-155)

*“I think when I have worked with women that I work much more therapeutically with them, it's really really important obviously not to judge but to be mindful that their self-esteem is really really low, that you are really really careful and cautious, and also giving them praise as well” (Laura - Staff, Lines 140-143)*

Though some of those working at mixed gender support services did not acknowledge any differences between their male and female clients at all and do not alter their approach nor behaviour based on a client's gender:

*“I would say that we all find it quite easy to work with men or women... So I don't think that there's any difference, they can all be nuisance neighbours, they can all end up disengaging in support, anyone can end up relapsing with drugs and drink whether they're male or female, so I don't think it really makes any difference, the services that are out there are there for male and female so to us I don't think it really matters, it's not an issue really” (Ruth - Staff, Lines 119-126)*

All participants noted that women often do not access professional support upon release. Staff participants noted that often it is a licence condition for women to access the service, meaning they do not have the motivation and disengage quickly, or in some cases do not want the support at all, as they would rather return to their previous lifestyle. Further, professionals noted that other barriers towards engagement included a lack of trust towards staff and that accessing services could be too overwhelming for these women during an already highly stressful transition period in their lives:

*“Some of the most vulnerable women, they don't necessarily want to trust you because they don't know you” (Zoe - Staff, Lines 61-62)*

*“I think a few people, a few of the women feel that people don't listen to them after they have got their criminal record, they've got this appointment and that appointment and it's very overwhelming” (Amy - Staff, Lines 13-15)*

Furthermore, staff noted that often services are unable to work with women prior to their release, which would put women in a better, more stable position upon their exit. Whilst some staff noted that they currently are able to meet women at the gates, it was suggested that this is often too late, as women go straight to ex-partners and peers, something which may be less common if they had built a relationship with the professional beforehand:

*“I've also arranged with other departments to meet women at the gates, just so we can get them and take them to housing or wherever they need to be, to appointments. We have done that so many times for one particular woman I can think of and she sees us but she walks past and gets into somebody else's car who has also come to pick her up. So we have done that so many times and I think on the last occasion I said “I can't do this anymore” because obviously it's a big drain on the resources isn't it? Us going up and sitting outside, so yeah that's a barrier as well” (Naomi – Staff, Lines 26-32)*

Similar to the professional's views, one ex-offender participant, Janine, also outlined the need for pre-release work in this area, in order to 'catch' women early enough:

*"I think, and this is the work that I want to do eventually, I think doing outside support is great, if people will engage, but you are not going to get it, it's very very rare, maybe, but if we go into jail and start supporting them in jail, because the thing is in jail you're in a cell, and like I said you move from society and there's not much support and then you are released, so if you have built up no relationships with anybody, so you are going to go to your old associates and your old thing that you know because that's where you feel supported, that's where you fit in, whereas if you can go into jail and start supporting them in jail ready to be released and build up a relationship I think you will catch people. Its needed much earlier in the process"* (Janine – Ex-offender, Lines 173-181)

From Janine's comments above, it can be seen that she suggests women would be easier to engage in support services, should they have had time to build up a relationship with their support worker prior to their release. Developing further on this idea, Ruth (a staff member) also noted that having multiple workers from different services may be one of the reasons for women's disengagement with services, a suggestion supported by Sarah's (an ex-offender) views from her experience:

*"I had to see so many different people and that was a bit much at the time, I didn't know how to go from prison to all that"* (Sarah – Ex-offender, Lines 350-351)

Ex-offender women discussed a difficulty in accessibility with professional support services being that they are disjointed with differing rules and are very separated:

*"The issue with the drug and alcohol services is that there are loads of different ones, and they are all very scattered, they all have their own different rules about getting medication...it was really really really scatty"* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Lines 208-211)

One of the professionals interviewed, Laura, suggested that in order to combat disengagement for this reason, one service which covers differing areas of women's support all in one place, would work better at engaging women in their transition:

*"In my view you need a holistic approach, a collaborative approach...They tend to be funded to focus on one particular strand, so it could be housing or it could be looking at their alcohol and drug intake, and really that should just be part of it, that should be part of the jigsaw really as well as something else, because if you just focus on one then the likelihood, from my experience, is that other areas are being neglected and they will eventually probably lead them back into their lifestyle they had before"* (Laura - Staff, Lines 65-77)

*"Even the practical issues, women don't turn up to all their appointments do they, so it's like, having more outreach, and probably just one support worker that they know really well who maybe has met them before their release, who can help with all of those strands; mental health, housing, income, alcohol and drugs and so on, even if that support worker can't do everything, they would do the liaising on behalf of the woman for her because otherwise it's just too overwhelming for them"* (Laura -Staff, Lines 80-85)

Other improvements, direction and developments were suggested by professionals for future support for women offenders after prison. The first gap that was noted by participants, was surrounding emotional support, where staff suggested that a person-centred approach was essential, focusing on underlying issues such as low confidence and self-esteem, whilst also having a focus upon the woman's strengths and positives:

*"I think that having services that maybe focus on things like... I suppose like a counselling service as well, a group work service, where women are there to look at building self-esteem and confidence. That could be done in a one-to-one setting or a group setting...if you have got low self-esteem that takes a long time to build up, so in terms of what I think would be great to see is more services that focus on those things"* (Laura - Staff, Lines 90-97)

*"More emotional support like I said, or even more social contact, trying to get them back out and feeling comfortable out socialising again"* (Amy - Staff, Lines 41-42)

*"To focus on 'let's have a look at your strengths', not to ignore or not look at any risk factors because of course you have to, but not to focus on that, to think about how to encourage and to motivate the women so that they feel good enough. So that's a very gentle approach, patience, and really looking for the positives when they can't see any"* (Laura - Staff, Lines 144-147)

Other more practical based support was suggested by the women interviewed, reflecting on the gaps they felt were in their support, such as more parenting support for those with children and more meaningful activities for women to use their time such as volunteering or hobbies:

*"So yeah I definitely think more help with offenders and their young children that's important. Parenting"* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Lines 271-272)

*"We had one woman who came out, she was literally out for two weeks, and she said that because she had a TV but no TV license or digibox, she was so bored that she literally went out met up with her peers, scored heroin and subsequently went stealing so went back to prison within two weeks"* (Helen - Staff, Lines 12-15)

Further, staff participants also suggested that there should be more of a focus on the woman's offending after her release, as often women have not attended any programs during prison due to short sentences, and so issues and education around her offending have not been dealt with:

*"Like, there isn't enough focus on the risk factors around offending, and working on the actual offence after prison, it's all housing and practical issues, I mean that's great but a woman can be in a house and might be reunited back with her children but she might still reoffend if there's been no work on that"* (Laura - Staff, Lines 77-80)

Programmes that women are able to attend through probation however, come with issues and concerns of their own, with staff suggesting that further work before courses,

building their confidence would be useful to support them in attending. Furthermore, as many of these programmes are designed for white males, meaning that women either find it difficult to relate, or due to issues such as childcare, are unable to attend the full programme:

*“All the programs, and they say this in the manuals, are designed and researched and their participant group is white men, and that’s a real issue because that means that we were offering programs to men and women on the same groups, but the programs and the design of them, the structure, the content, the length of them, were designed with men in mind, and actually what research says is that women’s needs are different to that of the men’s. So they couldn’t often relate, or they weren’t able to attend because of some of the barriers that were there for them, I mean they had children to look after in some cases, sometimes they have other commitments, they have appointments to make when they get out of prison and all that”* (Laura - Staff, Lines 26-34)

*“I mean they’re really anxious about group work sometimes and it takes a lot to get something out of them... I guess working with them on this beforehand and building up that confidence really so that they’ll do the whole course”* (Laura - Staff, Lines 136-138)

Finally, there were some grievances from professionals around services as a whole that are currently in place for women on their release. It was suggested that for these support networks to be most effective, they should be open evenings and weekends and longer-term, to support women effectively:

*“I mean our service is only open Monday to Friday 9-5, so I would say that another issue is that predominantly services are 9-5 and you know people’s lives don’t operate on a 9-5 do they, and what you find is that a lot of issues, incidents and where the support is really required is over the weekend, on an evening, things like that”* (Elaine - Staff, Lines 307-311)

*“...there needs to be a lot of support and it needs to be quite long-term...like for optional support services if they aren’t there for long enough then by the time the women have sorted themselves out for all of their issues, the support services are kind of letting them go, discharging them or whatever”.* (Laura – Staff, Lines 65-72)

## **6 – Impact of prison**

The final theme, *impact of prison*, was derived from the subthemes *positive impact of prison*, *negative impact of prison*, *societal stigma* and *feelings about release when leaving prison*. Though the current research did not set out aiming to explore the effects of incarceration and release, most participants did discuss these at some point during the data collection, and hence these are outlined below as further transitional challenges for women throughout their journey. First, positive effects arising from incarceration that women took with them on their release are explored, followed by negative effects upon the woman, and finally, societal reactions and women’s feelings and emotions upon release.



### **6.1 – Positive impact of prison**

Though previous literature has highlighted that prison has limited impact on reducing recidivism, the data revealed various positive outcomes and lasting effects of the women's time in prison, indicating areas where prison improved women's lives or where women experienced benefits of prison upon release.

As previously noted, Sarah learnt that altering her approach with her daughter, by having less contact and being less involved meant that she was able to form a better relationship with her daughter. Further, reflecting on her release from prison discussed that she has learnt to walk away from violent situations to deal with her anger and aggression:

*"I try not to get into fights, you know I'll try to walk away because I know once I start, I won't stop."* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 320-321)

Sarah also discussed that her time in incarceration has helped her to learn to stop judging people, and has become much more understanding of others following her release:

*"It's made me more wary of people, I have learnt not to judge people"* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Line 355)

Whilst Sarah has outlined various positive effects from her time in prison, she is the only participant to reflect on these positive effects. Sarah is also the only participant of the three women released from prison interviewed that had a longer (6 year) sentence in prison, the other two women interviewed had only short experiences in prison and discussed no positive effects to come from their incarceration.

### **6.2 – Negative impact of prison**

As the literature review and presented findings from the current research have indicated, it appears there have been very few positive effects of incarceration for women. On the whole, the lasting effects from being in prison (particularly as a woman) are negative and detrimental to women's lives. The following section of the analysis will outline those effects which are largely absent (i.e. those which should be expected from a sentence in prison) and then those effects which arose from incarceration upon release.

Firstly, findings concerning the impact of the women's time in prison include the loss that is endured during this time. As has been noted prior within this presentation of findings, women often lose their accommodation, their income (whether that be benefits or employment), their healthcare and sometimes medication. Furthermore, though all of the women offenders had experience with substance misuse, none commented that prison had

helped them deal with their drug/alcohol problems, and in fact all returned to drug using post-prison. Further, some women developed substance misuse disorders as a result of their time in prison:

*“They may have tried other stuff in prison because they can get their hands on it have no idea how, but they do, because some of them will say “I didn't have a problem before I went in””* (Zoe - Staff, Lines 125-127)

Staff members suggested that this was largely due to short sentence lengths for women in prison, indicating that they are going into prison, but not for long enough to deal with their substance misuse issues. Laura noted that whilst longer sentence lengths may not also be desirable, the current situation for women offenders, means that they are going into prison for drug offences, losing much of the little life supports and stability that they had prior whilst they are in prison, do not fit the criteria to attend rehabilitation programmes, and are then released with very little but have not had chance to deal with the larger problem of their drug abuse:

*“They are then going into prisons, but they are having really short sentences and because of that as well there's no interventions really put in place for those women and they can't attend the ones that exist because they might only be in prison for like six weeks, which don't get me wrong, they shouldn't be in prison for longer than that, or even be there in the first place, but the other side of that is because they are not there for a long time is that there are no interventions or support really put in place so it's more of a punishment”* (Laura - Staff, Lines 39-45)

A further concern highlighted by women after their incarceration, was the anxieties about returning to their old lives and resettling after prison. Many women that have been incarcerated, find it extremely difficult having no rules and no rigid structure on their release, creating anxieties about resettlement and living alone. Describing her current anxieties since she has left prison, Sarah discussed how she now lives with her doors open if she is on her own, as she feels intense anxiety about being locked in her own home:

*“I've still got that fear of having my bedroom door closed, the only time that my bedroom door is closed is when my partner's here with me. I always always have my front door wide open, I've also got a habit of sitting with my keys, you know sat making noise, I think it's a comfort thing having that jingling of my keys”* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 280-283)

Sarah went on to say that jingling her keys is a comfort to her as it is familiar and reminds her of her prison environment:

*“It's just I suppose even now that keys reminds me of prison, I still find I like that jingling noise, I think it's probably because it's familiar to me”* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 289-290)

These anxieties were only discussed by Sarah however, who was the only one of the women ex-offenders interviewed that had a longer prison sentence. The other two women interviewed did not reflect on such anxiety about release, though Janine commented that she felt she had been institutionalised by her prison experience:

*“I went to jail when I was 18 and I’m 49 now d’you know. I became institutionalised really, and the state took care of me, I just drifted along”* (Janine – Ex-Offender, Lines 13-15)

Sarah, who had served a six year sentence, also discussed more of the changes in her since her time in prison and her release, as she talked about changing as a person, that she had gone into prison quiet and pleasant, but came out having no fear of danger and would act on impulse:

*“I totally changed after prison. Before I went in I was quiet, I was pleasant but when I came out I was just a complete psycho, there was no fear of danger and I’d do something just for the sake of doing it”* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 150-152)

Sarah also talked about how she learnt new things during her time in prison, she learnt the skills in avoiding being caught and being able to get away with things, and she also talked about how she began self-harming during her time in prison, something she learnt from a fellow inmate:

*“What happened was I met up with this girl, a lovely young girl but she was a self-harmer and I asked her why she did it and she said it helped her helped her take her anger out, rather than taking it out on someone else she took it out on herself, so I tried it and that’s how it started. I found it helps and that’s why it started”* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 252-256)

Further lasting issues with a woman’s incarceration are due to women travelling further from their homes, families and children from their male counterparts, as professionals discussed:

*“The women in our hostels had travelled a lot further, a lot of the time. There’s a lot less female prisons to male prisons, and also less female-only hostels so like approved premise wise, there’s only, well I think well a couple of years ago, I think there was six, I don’t know what the current number is but there’s a lot less female-only approved premises than there are male’s ones so there’s a lot less chance that you’ll be close to your friends and family than if you were male”* (Zoe - Staff, Lines 44-49)

As Zoe noted, this may mean a lot less chance of seeing friends, relatives and children. Other participants noted that this has resulted in breakdowns of their family support and relationships, something which has been worse after prison than prior. When asked about her relationship with her family on her release, Sarah discussed that:

*“It was bad. It was bad before I went in but it was worse when I came out”* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Line 148)

Chloe further commented that she lost many of her things and photographs that she had cherished prior to her time in prison, when she was released these things were all gone, some of which were irreplaceable:

*“Clothes, photographs, cards. I have lost loads of photographs of my daughter”* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Line 284)

### **6.3 – Societal Stigma**

Discussed by participants as an effect of their time in prison, societal stigma (or not) was a complex issue between participants. Findings indicate a mixture of levels of support, with some reporting experiencing stigmas attached to being an offender, and others reporting positive support from neighbours and communities.

For some participants, stigma and perceived judgements from others was a very real problem for women on their release from prison. Janine, a participant who not only had her own experiences of release from prison and the stigma attached to this, but also now works within recovery for ex-offenders, emphasised that women offenders are not only stigmatised for being criminals and bad people, but further because they are mothers:

*“So a woman and a man have children, and they both get charged with the same charge, and they both get the same jail sentence, the shame is on the woman for losing the children, always is. The man might get mentioned, and this has happened to me, ‘mother of three gets jail sentence’ and I got the same sentence as Andy (partner), but the shame was on me”* (Janine – Ex-Offender, Lines 187-190)

Professionals developed upon this idea and suggested that the stigma exists because it is still unexpected of women to go into prison:

*“It’s just not expected of women is it, there aren’t many of them so it’s less heard of. I think women, compared to men, I think they get quite a raw deal, the women”* (Naomi - Staff, Lines 273-275)

*“I think that women who commit crimes are generally discriminated against more than the men who commit crimes”* (Laura - Staff, Lines 51-52)

As Laura outlined above, this is reflected in the differences in stigma towards women than as displayed towards their male counterparts. Further to this idea of stigma in society around women offenders, Naomi discussed the societal stigma especially around street workers, as well as commenting that she herself had been stigmatised purely as a member of staff working with these women:

*“For me, I just see them as a woman and whatever they do is not an issue to me, but for some people I know it is, I know it makes their skin go “Eugh!” you know, but for me it doesn’t. I have just been watching some CCTV now, and the guy who is operating the CCTV says “Eugh look look there’s a prostitute” (Naomi - Staff, Lines 259-262)*

*“When I first started I felt stigmatised as well because of the nature of the work” (Naomi - Staff, Lines 266-267)*

Conversely however, Sarah, a woman experiencing release from prison, discussed how she brought these negative views from others on herself through her actions and behaviour, suggesting this stigma and negative attitudes could have been avoided:

*“I think I bring it all on myself because if someone annoys me I’ll tell them “I’ll stick a knife in” them so I’ll tell them “I’ve not been to prison for no reason mate” that’s all they get off me so people around here are quite wary of me because of the extent of the offence” (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 310-313)*

A further participant drawing on her own experiences of release, Chloe, discussed having a positive response from others, both as she talked about her supportive neighbours and her experiences with social media, where she has found many to be supportive of her, especially of her participation in this research:

*“Neighbours have helped me out with food and money if I have been a bit short of money” (Chloe – Ex-Offenders, Line 245)*

*“I put on Facebook this morning, and obviously I didn’t put your name or anything, I put that I was meeting somebody that was doing a bit of research into my background blah blah blah and everybody has commented on it saying “Good on you Chloe!”” (Chloe – Ex-Offenders, Lines 247-250)*

#### **6.4 – Feelings reported on release.**

Finally, a main aim of the research was to explore women’s feelings and experiences on release from prison, reintegrating and resettling. Various feelings were discussed regarding a woman’s release from prison, including how a woman feels during this transition, what she prioritised upon release and her lasting feelings from the incarceration through to resettlement.

Firstly, both ex-offenders and staff working with women on their release commented that often women’s priority upon leaving prison was accommodation, income or seeing family and friends. However, whilst these practical issues were noted, all ex-offenders discussed returning to taking substances on the day of their release, indicating that what may have been their priority, and what they did were very different:

*“I would say it would be the housing first” (Amy - Staff, Line 18)*

*“I think that the first thing that they want to get sorted out is their benefits, an income, because obviously if they haven’t got an income, they can’t actually move forward anywhere or, they need their income obviously to survive basically”* (Ruth - Staff, Line 13-15)

*“I think children might be a priority more for someone who is coming out and going back home to their children where they would be providing for their children or where they’re back into a family home”* (Ruth - Staff, Lines 38-40)

*“I just drifted along, my priority was drugs”* (Janine – Ex-Offender, Line 15).

*“I used the same day that I came out of prison”* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Line 23)

Participants also discussed women having high hopes upon their initial release, though later finding that this was short-lived as they encounter barriers upon their reintegration:

*“I have found when people do come out of prison they can often be quite hyper, “I’m gunna do this and I’m gunna do this!” and “the world is your oyster!” and “the sky is your limit!” etcetera, you see them the following week and they are rock bottom because all their hopes and dreams and aspirations have all gone away because it’s hard surviving on nothing”* (Kate - Staff, Lines 108-112)

*“At the time I didn’t think I’d need support, I thought it was just going to be ‘in...nothing would change... and then out’ but obviously I thought wrong”* (Sarah – Ex-Offender, Lines 10-11)

Other feelings which arose during this transition for women included feeling guilty about committing the crime and having been sent to prison in the first place, something which is further intensified if the woman is a mother, indicating women feel guilty for their children after their previous behaviour. Ruth, a professional discussed her experience with her clients:

*“I believe that especially because if you’ve got children then there’s a lot more guilt there, men can be seen to be sometimes a step more removed or they might not see their children or being in their children’s life where a mother has been in their children’s life there can be quite a bit of guilt there”* (Ruth - Staff, Lines 235-238)

Other staff members discussed that women felt extremely lost on their release, needing guidance as to what to do and where to go, as they did not have a plan to set in motion:

*“A lot of them just seemed quite lost, a lot of the people that we worked with didn’t necessarily have a plan to go back to”* (Zoe - Staff, Lines 25-26)

Some of the professionals interviewed within this research, highlighted that women in this position following incarceration, often have very low self-esteem and dented confidence, and that they often put on a front when presenting to professionals, something which may act as a barrier towards their support on their release. Chloe further supported this, reflecting on

her own behaviour when she was released from prison, as she noted that even the loudest of women may put on a front:

*“I think it’s a confidence thing with me. I mean my mum would tell you herself, I am very loud and very brass, but sometime even the loudest and brass people put on a front”* (Chloe – Ex-Offender, Lines 153-155)

Finally, something which became apparent from many of the interviews conducted with participants, indicated that there comes a time in a woman’s life, one particular release after a particular sentence, where she becomes fed up with her lifestyle and wants to implement a change. This is especially important for those women with substance misuse problems, as both professionals and the ex-prisoners themselves indicated that there comes a point in their lives where they feel ready to come off of the drugs and alcohol, Janine for example had been in the prison-release cycle many years before one day she felt able to deal with her drug addiction:

*“I had 30 years of chaos to sort out and then from there I went back to prison and she came up to see me and she just said, you need to go to the basement, she said you need to live a live abstinent, I said what you talking about, she said you need nothing in your system what so ever, I said “well what will I do! What no drinking or nothing whatsoever?” And she said “no”. And I couldn’t actually see it, and then I went to [service name removed] and they taught me everything I needed to know and that’s where the help came in”* (Janine – Ex-Offender, Lines 54-59)

From this analysis and presentation of findings, it has been noted that participants felt that substance misuse, finding suitable accommodation, accessing income quickly and accessing healthcare/ mental health support were four main issues preventing a successful transition following prison. Furthermore, findings have indicated that access to support on their release, both through professional agencies/services and through personal relationships are essential for women’s wellbeing and desistance from crime. Finally, both positive and negative impacts of incarceration have been outlined, the stigma attached to female offending, and feelings surrounding release and reintegration. The next chapter of this thesis will consider these findings alongside the previous literature, concluding with suggestions and implications for future practice and policy.

## **Chapter 5 - Discussion**

The Analysis section of this thesis has outlined and described the experiences of women after their release from prison, as well as the professionals working with them on their support throughout these transitions. Findings were presented across four minor, and two major, themes: substance misuse, accommodation, income, healthcare (minor), support, and impact of prison (major).

The minor themes largely supported claims made within previous research discussed in the literature review. Initially, returning to substance misuse was found to be common in women upon their release from prison, with some discussing that they returned to drugs almost straight away, whilst other common issues for women were difficulties securing stable income and suitable housing upon their release. Further, some ex-prisoners and staff outlined that access to healthcare, both physical and mental, is a difficult and time-consuming process, whilst also acknowledging the breadth of healthcare issues for women on release, from HIV or pregnancy, to anxiety, depression or personality disorder. These findings largely supported that which previous literature has already outlined (Atkin & Armstrong, 2013; Brown, 2011; Caddle & Crisp, 1997; Curtis et al, 2013; Gideon, 2009; Glynn, 2009; Martinez, 2010; Richardson & Flower, 2014; Richie, 2001; Teplin et al, 2002).

The major themes, and focus of the presentation of findings, will now be discussed in line with previous research and theory. The discussion to follow will also outline the limitations of this research and finally the contributions and suggestions for future research and practice.

### **Lasting effects**

One of the focal findings within the analysis was around the lasting impact of prison upon women reintegrating after their sentence. Carlen and Worrall (2004), suggested that incarceration should do more than lower recidivism, by aiming to reform and rehabilitate the offender in giving them the opportunity to make amends for their wrong doings. However, this was only partly supported by the current findings, in that only one participant discussed positives that she had taken from her time in prison, such as learning techniques to deal with anger, learning to be more aware and less judgemental, and learning how to develop and improve close personal relationships. It should be considered however, that from all participants interviewed, only one reflected such experiences, and this participant was also incarcerated for the longest amount of time. Conversely, professionals reflected that those



who experience shorter sentences, more often endure more negative impacts of the prison experience and return to crime. This supported claims made by Drago, Galbiati, and Vertova (2009), who noted that although prison can have a deterrent effect, this will be minimal for short sentences, indicating that for these women, their time in prison may be purposeless whilst influencing loss of protective factors.

These claims put forth by Drago et al (2009), were further supported by the current findings, in that many losses and negative impacts of incarceration were reported by ex-prisoners and professionals. Participants indicated that throughout their incarceration and release (some of which only have sentences for 6-8 weeks), women may lose their accommodation, income, family support, medication and possessions. These experiences of loss support findings reported by Armstrong and Weaver (2013) in their predominantly male sample, and are able to strengthen an indication that similar losses are experienced across genders upon release. Though findings indicate such loss that women may endure, this is not represented within Binswanger et al's (2011) prison transition model, and hence it is suggested that should the model be developed to represent women's transition from prison, such loss be added to the model as further transitional challenges for women.

In addition to these losses, in many cases women have also developed negative effects of prison, as participants indicated that development of substance misuse issues during time in incarceration is common. Findings from participants suggested that this is because this may be the first time they have tried illegal substances, or for those who were already substance-dependant, they are able to continue their using throughout their incarceration. These findings supported previously discussed statistics, which reported that many offenders begin using substances when in prison, and that such substances are readily available for continuation of use during incarceration, indicating the sentence has had little rehabilitation purpose (Malloch, 2008; Ministry of Justice, 2013a). This is able to highlight that substance abuse may be considered as a transitional challenge for those without prior addiction, and can be considered as an impact on the woman from incarceration. Outcomes such as these for women upon their release have been found to result in long-term trauma, and disheartenment (Evans, 2007), something which was highlighted by participants interviewed within this research as some recalled learning self-harm in prison as a method of coping with feelings of stress, depression, and anxiety. Professionals also described women having high hopes when coming to the ends of their sentences, but quickly dropping in optimism when they were released, as well as women reporting experiencing stress, fatigue, or emotional and mental

health problems following the experience of prison itself, supporting findings reported by Martinez (2010). These findings also support the health outcomes listed in Binswanger et al's (2011) prison transition model, though future research could look to explore which specific aspects of the transition are associated with the development of poor health outcomes.

The HM Prison Service (2016), noted that prison as a punishment exists to encourage desistance post-release, however all ex-prisoners and most professionals interviewed within this study, described a return to some form of crime when women left prison. These findings support those previously reported by Huebner, DeJong, & Cobbina (2010), who in their research with women offenders, reported that those with substance misuse history, larger criminal records, a lack of suitable accommodation, returning to an old neighbourhood, or have a lack of family support, were more likely to reoffend within a period of eight years after release. As these factors were prevalent within the current sample, these findings may support a pre-existing likelihood for reoffending within the present sample.

### **Personal Relationships**

A second main theme, and further focus of the data analysis was the support that women receive upon their release, both in their personal relationships as well as in professional support services. Within women's family, friends, and other social networks after prison, largely discussed was their relationship with their children, where both ex-prisoners and staff members reported significant breakdowns in relationships. Some professionals discussed that women often do not have their children in their lives, and women speaking retrospectively of their release discussed difficulties in maintaining healthy, positive relationships with their children, largely supporting previous literature (Arditti & Few, 2006; Galgano, 2009; Morton & Williams, 1998; Richie, 2001). One difficulty in sustaining relationships between an offending mother and her child however, was found to be that often the child holds blame and resentment towards their mother on account of her offending, something which was previously reported in Siegel's (2011) findings. However, as in Siegel's (2011) research the child was interviewed, he was able to explain that he also loved and cared greatly for his mother despite these feelings of resentment, a perspective that the current research was unable to collect. Future research exploring women's release from prison, and more specifically their relationships with family upon release, could consider inclusion of both sides of these family relationships, such as interviewing the woman and her children, exploring the nature of the relationship from both perspectives.

Quantitative research from Arditti and Few (2006) indicated that most women remain close with their children post-release, however, the findings within the current research opposed these prior claims, describing a relationship breakdown with their children. Furthermore, whilst Arditti and Few (2006) also reported that women's confidence in their ability to parent and look after their children increased, participants within the current research discussed a requirement for parenting support, and more support re-building relationships between mothers and children. These findings not only suggest that improvements in the quality of mother-child relations could still be made, but further outline an area for more in-depth exploration. Future research looking at the mother-child relationship could attempt to ascertain specifically what could be done to improve and re-build relationships on release, whilst exploring this breakdown from the child's perspective may further develop an understanding into what aspects of the mother's behaviour are so difficult for the child to live with.

When discussing women's intimate relationships post-prison, both professionals and ex-prisoners interviewed noted an immediate return to these relationships being more common than a relationship breakdown, opposing findings discussed within the literature review (Arditti & Few, 2006; Massoglia et al, 2011; Siennick et al, 2014). Professionals further discussed that the main circumstances wherein women return to prior relationships were where domestic violence or substance misuse co-dependency were involved. These findings supported those put forth by Leverentz (2006) and Harman et al (2007), and can be detrimental for the woman's wellbeing and success of transition. These two risk factors for returning to prior relationships will be discussed in more depth below.

Firstly, participants discussed experiencing co-dependency as two people misusing substances within a relationship, often countersigning one another's behaviour, describing that if someone else was behaving in a similar way, this amended their own wrongdoing. These findings supported previous literature, which suggested that returning to relationships where the partner is continuing to use drugs or drink alcohol is often likely to lead to relapse of the individual, as both partners in the relationship encourage the substance misuse (Harman et al, 2007). A further concern about this return to co-dependant relationships, Walitzer and Dearing (2006) discussed that women are far more likely to return to substances when returning to live with drug/alcohol dependant partners than their male counterparts, indicating this risk is much higher for women offenders on release.

Secondly, returning to relationships involving intimate partner violence is likely to decrease a woman's self-esteem, as discussed by Edelson, Hokoda and Ramos-Lira (2007), who noted that victim vulnerability is an important factor in lowered self-esteem and hence important in those recently released from prison. Findings from the current study supported these suggestions, with staff participants discussing that those women who have been in domestically violent relationships may feel they have little options and do not see opportunities for themselves in the future. Harman et al (2007) however, discussed that in many cases women will continue to return to these relationships primarily out of fear and that the threat of abuse was a significant factor in remaining in these relationships. However, though professionals working with women upon release discussed women returning to violent relationships, suggesting that this does happen, one professional also noted being unaware of why they might do so, indicating that they may remain unmindful of the fear these women may be living with. This lack of understanding could create further non-engagement in professional support services, or lower staff's ability to support women appropriately, if they remain unaware of how their clients are feeling and are experiencing. From this, a suggestion would be to support all professionals in developing a deeper understanding of domestically violent relationships, as suggested by Peckover (2003), before they support a woman enduring this experience. This suggestion for further training around domestic violence is also reinforced by many of the professionals interviewed, as they expressed a requirement for training and understanding in this area.

As previously discussed, the attachment theory suggests that women will return to detrimental relationships in these circumstances as they may have low self-esteem and are anxious of others' opinions of them (Fowler et al, 2013). The authors also noted that those with these predispositions are likely to be uncomfortable without close intimate relationships, and become dependent upon their partners to make their life worthwhile (Fowler et al, 2013). The association between self-esteem and a return to relationships put forth by the attachment theory was partially supported by the findings of the current research, as participants discussed not only having low self-esteem, but also noted that "It was like I was relying on him to give me my life back". However, these findings were unable to draw a cause and effect conclusion from the data, as it remains unclear whether having low self-esteem and anxiety was the cause for these women in returning to their previous relationships. Further research could aim to ascertain whether these are primary reasons in women returning to

detrimental relationships post-release, as this could be crucial for interventions and rehabilitation programmes to focus on, improving women's self-worth.

Reported findings from participants were largely mixed concerning other family relationships. Initially, some participants discussed relationship breakdowns upon release, commenting that for women to come out of prison to no-one, having 'burnt their bridges' is common and often women have no-one to return to, this supported claims previously put forth by Hedderman and Jolliffe (2015) and Tiburcio (2008). However, other participants indicated that they had been concerned about their families during their incarceration, wanting to reconnect with them upon release and returning to live with these relatives after prison. These findings were able to support those presented by Cobbiner et al (2012) who noted that women are likely to have strong attachments in place with family members and hold these bonds throughout their incarceration and release, they also noted that such family ties are a key protective factor for women's recidivism as they care for, and are reluctant to bring shame to, their families (Cobbiner et al, 2012). Overall, the presented findings concerning women's family relationships reflect similar mixed experiences to those of prior research, indicating that relationships with family members are highly dependent upon the individual, her circumstances and her family dynamics.

When considering women's friends upon release, there was much less literature exploring the nature of these friendships, though Leverentz (2006) discussed those which do continue after prison are often of a co-dependant nature, with friends using drugs together. The findings within the current project opposed these claims to some extent however, with participants noting that there is an important difference between peers and friends. Women who have experienced this transition discussed realising after release that friends were those who were supportive of their desistance from crime, and were positive influences in their lives, whilst those whom they had taken drugs with and had been negative influences, they later referred to as peers/associates. From what the participants noted concerning peers and friendships upon release, it seems there should be more of a distinction between the two within literature, exploring friendships as protective factors and co-dependent peers as negative risky influences.

Finally, as outlined above the participants discussed being stressed and anxious upon their release when they had experienced relationship breakdowns. This suggests support for ideas theorised by Doherty et al (2014), who discussed that one of the important protective

factors for women is their perceived levels of support. Doherty et al (2014) also suggested that in such times when these protective factors are lacking, women are more likely to reoffend and return to crime. As this indicates that recidivism for the women on this transition is likely should their familial support be low, this outlines the importance for support for women in building and strengthening relationships with their families, as well as support services working towards improving their self-worth.

From these participants, especially when considered in line with previous authors reported findings, it can be seen that the quality of women's familial relationships following prison can be both a huge support and concern for women. These findings highlight an important gap within Blank-Wilson's (2013) help-seeking hierarchy in explaining women offenders' needs upon release. These findings suggest that future models of such a hierarchy in women's release could consider the addition of personal, familial and intimate relationships, as was included in Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. Similarly, Binswanger et al's (2011) model of transition experience omits a lack of support in its presentation of transitional challenges, and hence it is suggested that future models of transition experience for women also consider this lack of support as a challenge.

### **Societal Support**

From the discussion thus far, it can be seen that upon release, women offenders lose much of their stability and support, sometimes gain health problems or even substance-dependency problems, and hence leave prison in worsened situations, resulting in their return to previous behaviours and criminality. These effects of prison alone indicate that having short sentences for women is counterproductive, however, when reintegrating into communities and old social networks, women then often also meet negative societal stigma when returning to communities, not only as an offender but as women and as mothers too. Findings within the current research reported that more shame within the media and society is on a woman offender for going into prison, especially if she has children, as she is portrayed to be a bad mother, something which participants suggest is not the case for male offenders. These findings therefore support the ideas put forth by the double deviance theory, which as previously discussed, suggested that women are treated more harshly by society on account of being not only offenders, but for deviating from what is expected of the female gender (Heidensohn, 1989). Chesney-Lind (1999) developed upon these ideas set out within the double deviance theory, suggesting that the extent to which a woman will experience stigma and societal negativity, is directly related with the offence committed by the woman.

Participants experiences presented within the current research meant that findings supported Chesney-Lind's (1999) theory, as they have found societal views are worse for certain types of offences such as those who are street working or have committed violent crimes. Street working for women was listed as an example of an offence Chesney-Lind (1999) outlines as being deviant from what is expected of the female gender.

Furthermore, whilst Heidensohn (1989), noted that society is likely to make assumptions of a woman's abilities to mother her children based on her offending, the participants within the current study went elaborated that being a 'mother' is often seen as a further role in which women offenders are deviant. Development upon the double deviance theory through future research and exploration could explore the possibility of a triple deviance theory, as the current findings suggest that women are not only stigmatised for being offenders and women, but for being mothers as well. In order to investigate and develop such theory, future research could use both discourse analysis upon newspaper and media items concerning mothers who offend, coupled with interviews with offending mothers. With a grounded theory approach, future literature could indicate whether such evidence and support exists for a development on the double deviance theory, indicating mothers who offend are in fact triple deviant.

The ideas theorised previously by Tiburcio (2008), Cobbiner et al (2012) and those put forth by Doherty et al (2014) concerning stigma resulting in a lowered self-esteem which then leads to recidivism, were partially supported by the current research. Lowered societal support, low self-esteem and confidence and an almost immediate return to criminality, are all prevalent for the participants interviewed. The authors further outlined that women are more highly sensitive to such factors than their male counterparts (Doherty et al, 2014). However, whilst the findings are able to suggest that lowered societal support, is in some way influential in both a woman's self-esteem and the success of her transition from prison, further research exploring the relationship between these variables could be carried out in order to ascertain any cause and effect. It can be said though, that from these ideas, such factors are important challenges within a woman's transition experience, hence a negative response from society coupled with her low self-esteem is a further development that could be added to Binswanger et al's (2011) model should it represent women's transition experience.

Whilst most participants recalled negative societal views for women post-release, one participant did however discuss that she had experienced support from neighbours and friends on social media. This experience supports some previous findings, which reported that neighbours and colleagues were supportive of women offenders (Moran, 2012), though it remains unclear if this is due to these people knowing the offender prior to release. What the current findings were able to determine however, is that women offenders are, to some extent, affected by societal stigma and a lack of community support. These findings are therefore able to partially oppose the findings put forth by Walker (2010) and Herrschaft et al (2009), who indicated that women were more affected by support from familial relations than the wider society. Instead, the findings indicate that women's concern about societal support, and opinions of close friends and relatives, may be more equally important than the authors of this previous literature have suggested.

### **Support Services**

A large proportion of the participants interviewed within this research were staff working with, or who at some point have worked with women on their release from prison as they are reintegrating and settling back into their communities. These participants were able to offer a different insight and understanding, complementing the views of the women offenders, giving accounts of what support services are like in the area, the strains they are under, as well as what works well and what areas they felt could be improved upon. Findings in the current research initially reported that women, to a great extent, are not accessing support services upon their release, even less so following the end of their probation order. These findings were able to support prior literature review which demonstrated that the proportion of women accessing support services upon release from prison is much lower than figures suggest would benefit from such support (Broner et al, 2010 cited in Visser & Bakken, 2014; Gojkovic et al, 2011; Mallik-Kane & Visser, 2008).

These findings however, primarily supported what was already understood from the literature review at the outset of this thesis and does not present an understanding as to *why* offenders are not accessing support on release from prison, nor are able to outline/explain what barriers may be in place for women in accessing support services. Participants within the current research did discuss their experiences of barriers to engagement however, with findings reporting that women get to a point in their lives where they are ready to make changes, and until then, women will not engage fully with support offered to them, supporting those findings presented by Begun et al (2016). Further findings highlighted that



women do not attend appointments at support services due to anxieties around new workers, new services, and an overwhelming amount of different strands of support, all disjointed and disconnected from one another. Whilst this non-engagement exists, women are likely to reoffend upon release, returning to criminality and old unhealthy (and potentially dangerous) behaviours, outlining the importance of finding new innovative ways to engage women in the support available to them upon release from prison.

Recognising barriers to engagement such as these, Baroness Corston (2007) in her report on women's rehabilitation within the criminal justice system, suggested that a large gap within service provision was the lack of 'key workers' assigned to women on their release, who could assess the woman's needs, signpost them towards appropriate support services, and support them in referring to these services, so that there is a holistic approach towards women's wellbeing. However, whilst findings within the current research noted that services such as *Single Point of Access* will refer women on to other services, participants outlined that this holistic approach for women is still not in place, ten years after Corston's recommendations. Instead, participants discussed many services existing independent of one-another, with different 'rules and provisions', meaning women are accessing many strands of support from many different places. Staff participants discussed that this is one of the difficulties in keeping women engaged in their support post-release, as women are reluctant to attend appointments with many strangers. Further, participants went on to discuss that an important aspect of any support for women offenders, should it wish to keep them engaged in support, would be implementing pre-release workers who would meet the women within prison.

Corston (2007) also suggested that support services for women should be gender specific, and that female services should be staffed by women as well, specifically expressing the importance for those who have experienced domestic violence or abusive experiences from males. Whilst findings revealed that services such as these suggested by Corston are now in place, at least in the region studied, women interviewed indicated that they didn't mind the gender of the professionals, and hence partially opposed these suggestions. Conversely though, professionals interviewed indicated that the women they have worked with have reported differently, in that they would prefer female staff, and hence findings remain conflicted. However, the current findings were able to support Corston's suggestions of a need for consistent support staff, and a need for gendered support services with only

female clients were desired, and hence this is something to be considered within the future of support services.

However, other suggestions put forth by Corston (2007) have yet to be implemented. It was noted that the treatment and rehabilitation programmes in place for post-release support should be designed for women, with women in mind, something which as participants discussed, appears is still not the case, with the probation service continuing to offer services designed for white male offenders. Furthermore, Corston discussed at length a need for high staffing levels to ensure more frequent, intensive 1:1 support for women, giving them the chance to build relationships with caregivers in their support services, as well as for these professionals to be offered training in areas such as mental health and gender awareness. Professionals that discussed funding for extra workers, and their training needs, within the current research, explained that they still feel there is a shortage of staff, and that they do not feel they have enough time to work efficiently with their clients. Finally, workers also highlighted needs for training as Baroness Corston discussed herself ten years ago. However, whilst Corston recommended staff training in gender awareness, participants noted that they felt they had top up training in this area often, but went on to indicate specifically a need for training in specific areas such domestic violence, mental health (personality disorders) and substance abuse.

### **Limitations of Thesis**

Whilst important findings have arisen from this study, the current research was not without limitations and restrictions. An initial barrier that the researcher met in the data collection phase was due to restrictions put in place by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS, 2016). These restrictions meant that MSc level research could not be granted permissions for any participants that were supervised by NOMS, which included entering prisons, accessing staff/professionals working for the probation service, or any women who were still under probation supervision following their incarceration. Due to these restrictions, participants involved in the current research had been out of prison for a relatively long time, meaning that the research was not as contemporaneous as it could have been. The ex-offender's perception of their release may now differ from when they initially left prison as they are no longer in the initial release phase of their transition.

Such restrictions also resulted in only three women who had experienced resettlement and reintegration being interviewed, hence a key criticism to be considered must be that the

current research employed such a small sample size. Even considering professionals that were interviewed in addition to women offenders, the sample size is too small for any findings to be assumed to encompass the experiences of other women offenders within the UK (Willig, 2013). Furthermore, the sample was also limited in that all those who were interviewed were white British females, meaning that other ethnic minorities, genders, sexualities were not explored within the sample. This indicates that different/additional needs and issues unique to these groups may not have been raised. Whilst these limitations in the sample exist, the data that was collected was able to represent the experience and perceptions of those women who were involved within the project. Therefore, whilst a generalisation to all women offenders cannot be made, the project enabled the voices of three ex-prisoners and nine professionals to be heard.

The scope and nature of a thesis at Master's level also meant that it was not feasible to conduct longitudinal research, such as a data collection period upon the woman's release from prison, and then again over time after around one year (or prior to release and then post-release) due to the time constraints on the data collection phase of the research. However, doing so would have been beneficial in aiding understandings of changes over a woman's release long term, such as how her perspectives may change, what she may need at different points in the release transition, as well as how her engagement in support may differ straight from prison as opposed to one year later (Willig, 2013).

Finally, to ensure that interview questions were as specific as possible, and that data was collected in as much depth on the correct areas as possible, a pilot study could have been employed by conducting one interview, reviewing the interview guide, and then conducting interviews with other participants (Kim, 2010). Should a pilot study have been employed within the current research, barriers such as income, housing, healthcare and substance abuse, that were not areas set out in the research aims, would have been clear and hence allowing future interviews to focus in more depth upon areas such as personal and professional support. However, it should be recognised that the use of a pilot study was not feasible within this research due to such small participant numbers. Furthermore, a mixed-methods approach could have been utilised (by use of an initial quantitative questionnaire or similar) to guide the projects research aims and determine more specific qualitative interview questions (Malina, Nørreklit, & Selto, 2011). However, it should be noted that the use of a semi-structured interview guide within this thesis enabled more detailed questions to be asked, and further areas to be explored, during the interview process.

### **Future suggestions and implications for research, theory and practise**

From the findings of this research, and through a discussion of pre-existing theory and literature, various suggestions for future theory and research have arisen, as well as implications for practical support services and policy within the area.

Initially, the model of transition experience and health outcomes (Binswanger et al, 2011) was largely supported by the findings within the current research, as the model highlights various transition challenges for offenders on release; income, accommodation, healthcare, inability to continue medications and policies within criminal justice system such as probation orders, all of which were discussed by participants. However, societal stigma and negative responses from peers and social networks were discussed by participants and could also be considered as a transitional challenge, should the model be adapted for use with solely women offenders. Further suggested additions to the transition model, should it be specifically describing women's transitions from prison, would be an added outcome of a lowered self-worth and motivation, something which has been described as a result of the prison and transition experience. Should these additions and developments be considered, then Binswanger et al's (2011) model could be adapted to fit the transition experience of women offenders within the England and Wales criminal justice system.

A second model that has been considered throughout the current thesis is Blank-Wilson's (2013) help-seeking hierarchy, explaining offenders prioritised and perceived needs upon their release from prison. The findings from the current research largely supported the applicability of the help-seeking hierarchy towards women offenders upon release from prison in England and Wales, though one suggested addition has been discussed. The help-seeking hierarchy did not include intimate relationships and family relations as an important support need based on American offenders, but participants within this research discussed this as being an important need upon release.

A final suggestion for future theory is for the exploration of a possible triple deviance theory. Developing upon ideas put forth within the double deviance theory which suggested that women offenders are seen as being double deviant due to deviating from the female gender norms, participants within this research indicated that those women who are mothers are seen as being even more deviant. Directions for future research have been put forth for a grounded theory approach to use a combination of discourse analysis on media and

newspaper articles alongside interviews with offending mothers, in order to explore the possibility of this development of criminological theory.

Throughout this thesis, suggestions for further research within this area have been made. Initially, investigations could look to explore a cause and effect between prison-community transition and mental health in women offenders, in order to ascertain specifically what aspects of incarceration and release are so detrimental to women's wellbeing. Further, exploring whether there is a relationship between societal stigma, low self-esteem and recidivism in women was suggested, in order to aid intervention prior to women's reoffending. Research within women's release from prison could also explore the experiences of family members to gain a fuller perspective of familial support as well as investigating whether there would be any differences in experience based upon differing sentence lengths, offences or time since release.

Further, support services and their provisions within this area have been discussed, with suggested improvements in the area noted. It has been discussed that many of the suggestions put forth in the Corston (2007) report have still not been implemented into support services for women post-release, and those that have, such as assigning key workers to refer women to appropriate support, appear to still not be combatting the issue of non-engagement.

Based upon the findings put forth within this report, a more holistic support service for women is necessary to engage women in their help and support post-release. One way of combatting this absence of engagement in women, drawing from suggestions from participants, would be to introduce a further step between the woman leaving prison and the many strands of services that she needs/is expected to attend. Should such a pathway be implemented into a woman's transition; during her incarceration, probation officers would refer the woman to one key worker, who would make prison visits building up a relationship during her time in prison. Upon release, the woman would continue to have visits from this key worker, who would work with her throughout her transition from prison to community, whilst remaining in close contact with the offender's probation officer. Currently when an offender is coming towards release from incarceration, it is the role of a probation officer to make connections with support services for these women, working with them and assessing their accommodation needs, employment/income opportunities, substance misuse needs, and signposting them to the relevant services (West Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation

Company, 2016). When women fail to attend these appointments following their release, probation officers are spending an alarming amount of time following this up with professionals and with the ex-prisoners, who by this point may be difficult to get hold of (West Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company, 2016).

However, the suggested pathway indicates that this role would be instead assigned to the key worker working with that woman, freeing up time and resources for probation officers, who instead would keep in close contact with the key worker whilst they take a lead role in engaging women in varying strands of support following release. This key worker would also be trained in offering support and would be able to help in several areas, such as income, mental health, housing, and substance misuse, which would benefit these women post release by reducing the anxiety and confusion that can be triggered from having to try and access multiple scattered services. Furthermore, for issues that the woman would need support with that the key worker was unable to fulfil, the key worker would arrange appointments for the woman upon her release, as well as accompanying her on any necessary travels, that currently the offender would be expected to make her own way to. Developing on this idea, ensuring more active out-reach support work, workers would meet clients at their homes and would engage with other professionals on the woman's behalf, or with the woman where possible.

This suggestion for future support provision has been developed entirely from participant's views and needs presented within this research, as well as drawing and developing on the suggestions put forth by Baroness Corston (2007).

## **Chapter 6 - Conclusion**

At the outset of the current project, a literature review concluded that there were four clear barriers for women upon release; returning to substance misuse, accessing stable income, finding suitable accommodation and accessing appropriate physical and mental healthcare. As the literature had outlined these problematic areas of concern well and in depth, the research aim surrounding these areas was to determine whether, and how, these barriers were experienced by the participants interviewed. Furthermore, the literature suggested that a further importance to women on release was reuniting with family, and more so gaining support from others such as professional support services, though the picture remained unclear as to what circumstances women are reunited with their familial support or engage with services upon their release. Hence, from the literature review conducted, the research questions for the current project aimed to explore generally what the barriers were for women on release, asking specifically about those issues highlighted by the review. Further, to determine the way in which women reunite with family, friends, partners and children on release, and whether they engage in any support services when they leave prison.

Findings following the analysis of collected data highlighted that the findings from the current research largely supported the ideas put forth in the literature review, in that their main barriers upon release were in finding suitable accommodation, getting a stable income quickly and easily post-release, and having a need to find support for mental or physical health problems, from registering with GPs and dentists, right through to needing support with mental health problems. Further, the findings also supported the notion that women are not in prison long enough to abstain from their addictions, and that access to substances is readily available within prisons, meaning women released return almost immediately to their drug taking.

The findings from the interview data did also contribute some differing experiences from participants opposing previous findings, particularly in the lasting effects of their time in prison, where participants discussed changes in their personality, in the way they learnt to deal with anger, and even developing a reliance on drugs during their time in prison. Furthermore, women discussed reuniting with friends and family, where conflicting experiences were reported, with some participants recalling relationship breakdowns and receiving very little support from family, with others relying heavily on familial support on their release. Finally, both ex-prisoners and professionals reflected on their experiences of support services for female offenders after prison, suggesting that gendered support is largely

preferred, but that there are many areas for improvement within professional support for women.

Overall, the findings in this research came as either direct experiences from women post-release, or from professionals who work with women in their support leaving prison, and hence are able to outline these women's accounts of their release transition. As the methodology within the current project allowed the researcher to interview both women on release as well as professionals working within their support, this meant that this thesis was able to present experiences on release transition from differing perspectives. Pope, van Royen, and Baker (2002) noted that exploring what matters to both care providers as well as clients is important to gain a full picture of what is lacking in a woman's support post-release, as well as what can be done to further aid these women in their transition and reintegration. Further, using a diverse sample of participants contributed a multitude of key factors, including the support services currently available for women leaving prison, as well as the gaps and limitations within these services, providing insights that could potentially influence future developments and policies within this area of research.

However, limitations to this research have also been outlined, initially such a small sample size, especially when considering the number of women offenders interviewed. Whilst professionals were interviewed on their experiences working with women, only three women offenders were interviewed, indicating that the current research was unable to gain a full understanding of women's release from prison. What the research could ascertain however, is the way in which this transition was experienced for these women, and was able to summarise and discuss with theory and literature, their journey from prison to their communities. The current thesis also purposefully explored various areas important within a prison-community transition during the data collection phase of this research, to gain a fuller picture of the combination of challenges facing women on their release. Consequently, much of the collected data was presented in summary throughout the analysis and discussion chapters of this report, though this allowed a more thorough and detailed analysis of new and essential findings. It would be beneficial for future research to focus on more specific areas that have arisen within this project, such as support services for women on release, or familial support, where gaps in our understanding remain.

Finally, implications for future practice, research and theory have been discussed, and suggestions put forth for future progress in the field of women's criminology research. For



future practise in support for women post-release, a support service implemented prior to a woman's release from prison has been suggested, to continuously engage the woman in her own support when leaving prison. The proposed research, development to theory and support for women post-release could boost women's engagement with services when they leave prison, in the hope of reducing reoffending and improving the transition experience (and in turn a woman's wellbeing) on her journey from prison back to community.

## References

- Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency. *Criminology*, 30 (1), 47-88. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-9125.1992.tb01093.x.
- Aos, S., Miller, M., & Drake, E. (2006). Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates. *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, 19 (1), 275-290. doi: 10.1525/fsr.2007.19.4.275.
- Arditti, J.A. & Few, A.L. (2006). Mothers' Reentry into Family Life Following Incarceration. *Criminal Justice Policy Review March 2006 103-123*, 17 (1), 103-123. doi: 10.1177/0887403405282450.
- Arditti, J. & Few, A. (2008). Maternal Distress and Women's Reentry into Family and Community Life. *Family Process*, 47 (3), 303-321. doi: 10.1111/j.1545-5300.2008.00255.x.
- Armstrong, S. & Weaver, B. (2013). Persistent Punishment: User Views of Short Prison Sentences. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 52 (3), 285-305. doi: 10.1111/hojo.12015
- Atkin, C.A. & Armstrong, G.S. (2013). Does the Concentration of Parolees in a Community Impact Employer Attitudes Toward the Hiring of Ex-Offenders?. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 24 (1), 71-93. doi: 10.1177/0887403411428005.
- Bahr, S.J., Masters, A.L., & Taylor, B.M. (2012). What Works in Substance Abuse Treatment Programs for Offenders?. *The Prison Journal*, 92 (2), 155-174. doi: 10.1177/0032885512438836.
- Barlow, E. (2014). Understanding Women in Prison: A Review of Gender Specific Needs and Risk Assessments and their Policy and Research Implications (Thesis). doi: 10.15760/honors.46.
- Begun, A.L., Early, T.J., & Hodge, A. (2016). Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service Engagement by Men and Women During Community Reentry Following Incarceration. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 43 (2), 207-218. doi: 10.1007/s10488-015-0632-2.
- Benson, M.L., Alarid, L.F., Burton, V.S., & Cullen, F.T. (2011). Reintegration or stigmatization? Offenders' expectations of community re-entry. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39 (5), 385-393. doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2011.05.004.
- Berg, B.L. & Lune, H. (2014). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th International ed.). London: Pearson.
- Bevan, M. & Wehipeihana, N. (2015). *Women's Experiences of Re-Offending and Rehabilitation*. Retrieved from [http://www.corrections.govt.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/830826/Women\\_s\\_Experiences\\_of\\_Re-offending\\_and\\_Rehabilitation\\_Final.pdf](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/830826/Women_s_Experiences_of_Re-offending_and_Rehabilitation_Final.pdf)
- Binswanger, I.A., Nowels, C., Corsi, K.F., Long, J., Booth, R.E., Kutner, J., & Steiner, J.F. (2011). "From the prison door right to the sidewalk, everything went downhill," A qualitative study of the health experiences of recently released inmates. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 34 (4), 249-255. doi: 10.1016/j.ijlp.2011.07.002.

- Blank-Wilson, A. (2013). How People With Serious Mental Illness Seek Help After Leaving Jail. *Qualitative Health Research*, 23 (12), 1575-1590. doi: 10.1177/1049732313508476.
- Boer, D.P. (2013). Some Essential Environmental Ingredients for Sex Offender Reintegration. *International Journal of Behavioral consultation and Therapy*, 8(3/4), 8-11. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1644174296?pq-origsite=summon>
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.
- Broidy, L. & Agnew, R. (1997). Gender and Crime: A General Strain Theory Perspective. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 34 (3), 275-306. doi: 10.1177/0022427897034003001.
- Broome, K.M., Knight, K., Hiller, M.L., & Simpson, D.D. (1996). Drug Treatment Process Indicators for Probationers and Prediction of Recidivism. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 13 (6), 487-491. doi: 10.1016/S0740-5472(96)00097-9.
- Brown, C. (2011). Vocational Psychology and Ex-Offenders' Reintegration: A Call for Action. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 19 (3), 333-342. doi: 10.1177/10690727110395539.
- Burchfield, K.B. & Mingus, W. (2014). Sex Offender Reintegration: Consequences of the Local Neighborhood Context . *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39 (1), 109-124. doi: 10.1007/s12103-012-9195-x.
- Caddle, D. & Crisp, D. (1997). *Imprisoned women and mothers*. London: Home Office
- Campbell, C. & Deacon, H. (2006). Unravelling the contexts of stigma: from internalisation to resistance to change. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 16 (6), 411-417. doi: 10.1002/casp.901.
- Carlen, P. & Tombs, J. (2006). Reconfigurations of penalty: The ongoing case of the women's imprisonment and reintegration industries. *Theoretical Criminology*, 10 (3), 337-360. doi: 10.1177/1362480606065910.
- Carlen, P. & Worrall, A. (2004). *Analysing Women's Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan
- Carlson, B.E., Shafer, M.S., & Duffee, D.E. (2010). Traumatic Histories and Stressful Life Events of Incarcerated Parents II: Gender and Ethnic Differences in Substance Abuse and Service Needs. *The Prison Journal*, 90 (4), 494-515. doi: 10.1177/0032885510382226.
- Castillo, E.D. & Fiftal Alarid, L. (2011). Factors Associated With Recidivism Among Offenders With Mental Illness. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 55 (1), 98-117. doi: 10.1177/0306624X09359502.
- Chang, Z., Lichtenstein, P., Larsson, H., & Fazel, S. (2015a). Psychiatric disorders and violent reoffending: a national cohort study of convicted prisoners in Sweden. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 2 (1), 891-900. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366(15)00234-5

- Chang, Z., Lichtenstein, P., Larsson, H., & Fazel, S. (2015b). Substance use disorders, psychiatric disorders, and mortality after release from prison: a nationwide longitudinal cohort study. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 2 (1), 422-30. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366(15)00088-7.
- Chesney-Lind, M. (1999). Media Misogyny: Demonizing "Violent" Girls and Women. In J. Ferrell & N. Websdale (Eds.) *Making Trouble: Cultural Constructions of Crime, Deviance and Control* (pp. 115-140). New York : Transaction.
- Clarke, J.G., Rosengard, C., Rose, J.S., Hebert, M.R., Peipert, J., & Stein, M.D. (2006). Improving Birth Control Service Utilization By Offering Services Prerelease Vs Postincarceration. *American Journal of Public Health*, 96 (5), 840-845. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2005.062869.
- Cobbner, J.E., Huebner, B.M., & Berg, M.T. (2012). Men, Women, and Postrelease Offending: An Examination of the Nature of the Link Between Relational Ties and Recidivism. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58 (3), 331-361. doi: 10.1177/0011128710382348.
- Cohen, S. & Wills, T.A. (1985). Stress, Social Support, and the Buffering Hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98 (2), 310-357. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.98.2.310.
- Commission on Women Offenders (2012) Commission on Women Offenders Final Report. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government
- Coolican, H. (2009). *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology* (5th ed.). London: Hodder Education.
- Corston, J. (2007). The Corston Report. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/corston-report-march-2007.pdf>
- Curtis, M.A., Garlington, S., & Schottenfeld, L.S. (2013). Alcohol, Drug, and Criminal History Restrictions in Public Housing. *Cityscape*, 15 (3), 37-52. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1470800404/fulltext/6DEF6DF072B143B7PQ/1?accountid=11526>.
- Davis, C., Bahr, S.J., & Ward, C. (2012). The process of offender reintegration: Perceptions of what helps prisoners reenter society. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 13 (4), 446-469. doi: 10.1177/1748895812454748.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.) (2011). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B. & Crabtree, B.F. (2006). The Qualitative Research Interview. *Medical Education*, 40 (1), 314-321. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x.
- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L., Kippen, S., & Liamputtong, P. (2008). Risk to Researchers in Qualitative Research on Sensitive Topics: Issues and Strategies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 18 (1), 133-144. doi: 10.1177/1049732307309007.
- Doherty, S., Forrester, P., Brazil, A., & Matheson, F.I. (2014). Finding Their Way: Conditions for Successful Reintegration Among Women Offenders. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 53 (7), 562-586. doi: 10.1080/10509674.2014.944740.
- Dooren, K.V., Claudio, F., Kinner, S.A., & Williams, M. (2011). Beyond reintegration: a framework for understanding ex-prisoner health. *International Journal of Prisoner Health*, 7 (4), 26-36. doi: 10.1108/17449201111256880.

- Drago, F., Galbiati, R., & Vertova, P. (2009). The Deterrent Effects of Prison: Evidence from a Natural Experiment. *Journal of Political Economy*, 117 (2), 257-280. doi: 10.1086/599286.
- Dutra, L., Stathopoulou, G., Basden, S.L., Leyro, T.M., Powers, M.B., & Otto, M.W. (2008). A Meta-Analytic Review of Psychosocial Interventions for Substance Use Disorders. *Am J Psychiatry*, 165 (2), 179-187. doi: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2007.06111851.
- Edelson, M.G., Hokoda, A., & Ramos-Lira, L. (2007). Differences in Effects of Domestic Violence Between Latina and Non-Latina Women. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22 (1), 1-10. doi: 10.1007/s10896-006-9051-1.
- Eshareturi, C., Serrant-Green, L., Bayliss-Pratt, L., & Galbraith, V. (2014). The case for nurses as central providers of health and social care services for ex-offenders: a discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 70 (5), 1030-1039. doi: 10.1111/jan.12270.
- Evans, L. (2007). Locked Up, Then Locked Out. *Women and Therapy*, 29 (3-4), 205-308. doi: 10.1300/J015v29n03\_15.
- Evans, K., & Walklate, S. (2011). The Corston Report: Reading even further between the lines. *Prison Service Journal*, 194, 6-11. Retrieved from <https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/publications/psj/prison-service-journal-194>.
- Eyre, E. (2007). The skills to go straight. *Training Journal*, July (1), 9-11. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/202949969?pq-origsite=summon>.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). London: SAGE.
- Foster, H. & Hagan, J. (2007). Incarceration and Intergenerational Social Exclusion. *Social Problems*, 54 (4), 399-433. doi: 10.1525/sp.2007.54.4.399.
- Fowler, J.C., Groat, M., & Ulanday, M. (2013). Attachment Style and Treatment Completion among Psychiatric Inpatients with Substance Use Disorders. *The American Journal on Addictions*, 22 (1), 14-17. doi: 10.1111/j.1521-0391.2013.00318.x.
- Freudenberg, N., Wiliets, I., Greene, M.B., & Richie, B.E. (1998). Linking Women in Jail to Community Services: Factors Associated With Rearrest and Retention of Drug-Using Women Following Release From Jail. *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, 53 (2), 89-93. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nicholas\\_Freudenberg/publication/13688074\\_Linking\\_women\\_in\\_jail\\_to\\_community\\_services\\_factors\\_associated\\_with\\_rearrest\\_and\\_retention\\_of\\_drug-using\\_women\\_following\\_release\\_from\\_jail/links/00463520f63153ea39000000.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nicholas_Freudenberg/publication/13688074_Linking_women_in_jail_to_community_services_factors_associated_with_rearrest_and_retention_of_drug-using_women_following_release_from_jail/links/00463520f63153ea39000000.pdf)
- Galgano, S.W. (2009). Barriers to Reintegration: An Audit Study of the Impact of Race and Offender Status on Employment Opportunities for Women. *Social Thought & Research*, 30 (1), 21-37. Retrieved from <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/5699/STARV30A1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Garcia, J. (2016). Understanding the Lives of Mothers after Incarceration: Moving Beyond Socially Constructed Definitions of Motherhood. *Sociology Compass*, 10(1), 3-11. doi: 10.1111/soc4.12337.

- Gideon, L. (2009 ). What shall i do now? Released offenders' expectations for supervision upon release . *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 53 (1), 43-56. doi: 10.1177/0306624X07309753.
- Glynn, S. (Ed.) (2009). *Where the other half lives: lower income housing in a neoliberal world*. London: Pluto Press.
- Gojkovic, D., Meek, R., & Mills, A. (2011). Offender engagement with third sector organisations: a national prison-based survey. *Third Sector Research Centre*, 61(1), 1-24. Retrieved from <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tsrc/documents/tsrc/working-papers/working-paper-61.pdf>.
- Goldhill, R. (2009). The Corston Report: Reading between the lines. *The Prison Service Journal*, 184, 13-19. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rachel\\_Goldhill/publication/267748544\\_The\\_Corston\\_Report\\_-\\_Reading\\_between\\_the\\_lines\\_Towards\\_an\\_understanding\\_of\\_Government\\_policy\\_in\\_relation\\_to\\_vulnerable\\_women\\_offenders/links/5458f1c40cf2cf516483c3f6.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rachel_Goldhill/publication/267748544_The_Corston_Report_-_Reading_between_the_lines_Towards_an_understanding_of_Government_policy_in_relation_to_vulnerable_women_offenders/links/5458f1c40cf2cf516483c3f6.pdf).
- Hammett, T.M., Gaiter, J.L., & Crawford, C. (1998). Reaching seriously at risk populations: Health interventions in criminal justice settings. *Health education and behaviour*, 25 (1), 99-120. doi: 10.1177/109019819802500108.
- Hanson, R.K., Letourneau, E.J., Olver, M.E., Wilson, R.J., & Miner , M.H. (2012). Incentives for Offender Research Participation Are Both Ethical and Practical. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 39 (11), 1391-1404. doi: 10.1177/0093854812449217.
- Harman, J.J., Smith, V.E., & Egan, L.C. (2007). The Impact of Incarceration On Intimate Relationships. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34 (6), 794-815. doi: 10.1177/0093854807299543.
- Hedderman, C. & Jolliffe, D. (2015). The Impact of Prison for Women on the Edge: Paying the Price for Wrong Decisions. *Victims & Offenders*, 10 (2), 152-178. doi: 10.1080/15564886.2014.953235
- Heidensohn, F. (1989). *Crime and Society*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.
- Herrschaft, B.A., Veysey, B.M., Tubman-Carbone, H.R., & Christian, J. (2009). Gender Differences in the Transformation Narrative: Implications for Revised Reentry Strategies for Female Offenders. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 48(6), 463-482. doi: 10.1080/10509670903081250.
- HM Prison Service (2016). *HM Prison Service - About Us*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-prison-service/about>
- Holzer, H.J. (1996) *What Employers Want: Job Prospects for Less-educated Workers*, New York: Russell Sage.
- Holzer, H.J., Goldman, S.R., & Stoll, M.A. (2003). Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders. *The Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable*, 1 (1), 1-23. Retrieved from <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/410855-Employment-Barriers-Facing-Ex-Offenders.PDF>.
- Huebner, B.M., DeJong, C., & Cobbina, J. (2010). Women Coming Home: Long-Term Patterns of Recidivism. *Justice Quarterly*, 27 (2), 225-254. doi: 10.1080/07418820902870486.

- Joffe, H. (2012). Thematic Analysis. In Harper, D. & Thompson, A.R. (Eds.) *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: a guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 209-223). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kaplan, A. (1986). The 'self-in-relation': Implications for depression in women. *Psychotherapy*, 23(2), 234-242. doi:10.1037/h0085603
- Keil, J. & Samele, C. (2009). The resettlement needs of female prisoners. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 20 (1), 29-45. doi: 10.1080/14789940802710348.
- Kim, Y. (2010). The Pilot Study in Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Social Work*, 10(2), 190-206. doi: 10.1177/1473325010362001.
- Langdridge, D. & Hagger-Johnson, G. (2013). *Introduction to research methods and data analysis in psychology* (3rd ed.). Harlow: Pearson.
- Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of vocational behaviour*, 45 (1), 79-122. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gail\\_Hackett/publication/230557657\\_Toward\\_a\\_Unifying\\_Social\\_Cognitive\\_Theory\\_of\\_Career\\_and\\_Academic\\_Interest\\_Choice\\_and\\_Performance/links/558c657708aee43bf6ae2fa5.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gail_Hackett/publication/230557657_Toward_a_Unifying_Social_Cognitive_Theory_of_Career_and_Academic_Interest_Choice_and_Performance/links/558c657708aee43bf6ae2fa5.pdf)
- Leverentz, A.M. (2006). The Love of a Good Man? Romantic Relationships as a Source of Support or Hindrance for Female Ex-Offenders, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43 (4), 459-488. doi: 10.1177/0022427806293323.
- Light, M., Grant, E., & Hopkins, K. (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice
- Link, B.G. & Phelan, J.C. (2001). Conceptualizing Stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27 (1), 363-385. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363.
- Lipsey, M.W. & Cullen, F.T. (2007). The Effectiveness of Correctional Rehabilitation: A Review of Systematic Reviews. *The Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 3, 297-320. doi: 10.1146/annurev.lawsocsci.3.081806.112833.
- Lloyd, A. (1995). *Doubly Deviant, Doubly Damned: Society's Treatment of Violent Women*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lund, R., Hyde, R., Kempson, D., & Clarke, P. (2002). Women's Needs After Release From Prison to a Rural Community. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 9 (3), 271-288. doi: 10.1177/107834580200900305 .
- Malina, M.A., Nørreklit, H.S.O., & Selto, F.H. (2011). Lessons learned: advantages and disadvantages of mixed method research. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 8 (1), 59-71. doi: 10.1108/11766091111124702.
- Mallik-Kane, K. & Visser, C.A. (2008). *Health and prisoner reentry: How physical, mental, and substance abuse conditions shape the process of reintegration*. Retrieved from [http://www.lebcountry.org/LCCJAB/Documents/Articles/Prison/Substance\\_Abuse\\_and\\_Prisoner\\_Reintegration.pdf](http://www.lebcountry.org/LCCJAB/Documents/Articles/Prison/Substance_Abuse_and_Prisoner_Reintegration.pdf)
- Malloch, M. (2008). *Women, Drugs and Custody : The Experiences of Women Drug Users in Prison (1)*. Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/uoh/reader.action?docID=10696131>

- Major, B. & O'Brien, L.T. (2005). The Social Psychology of Stigma. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56 (1), 393-421. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070137.
- Martinez, D.J. (2010). Role accumulation theory and prisoner reintegration: The pursuit of transformative social roles. *The Journal of Community and Criminal Justice*, 57 (2), 139-151. doi: 10.1177/0264550510362560.
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396. doi: 10.1037/h0054346.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Personality and motivation*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Massoglia, M., Remster, B., & King, R.D. (2011). Stigma or Separation? Understanding the Incarceration-Divorce Relationship. *Social Forces*, 90 (1), 133-155. doi: 10.1093/sf/90.1.133.
- McIvor, G., Trotter, C., & Sheehan, R. (2009). Women, resettlement and desistance. *Probation Journal*, 56 (4), 347-361. doi: 10.1177/0264550509346515.
- McLeod, J. (2015). Reading qualitative research, *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling*, 17 (2), 194-205. doi: 10.1080/13642537.2015.1038729.
- Merton, R.K. (1957). *Social Theory and Social Structure* (rev ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Ministry of Justice (2011) *Adult re-convictions: results from the 2009 cohort*, London: Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Justice (2013a). *Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners*. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/220060/gender-substance-misuse-mental-health-prisoners.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220060/gender-substance-misuse-mental-health-prisoners.pdf)
- Ministry of Justice (2013b) *NOMS Offender equalities annual report 2012–13*, London: Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Justice (2013c). *Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending*. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/243718/evidence-reduce-reoffending.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243718/evidence-reduce-reoffending.pdf)
- Ministry of Justice (2015) *Justice Data Lab Re-offending Analysis: Women's Centres throughout England*, London: Ministry of Justice
- Moe, A.M. & Ferraro, K.J. (2006). Criminalized mothers: The value and devaluation of parenthood from behind bars. In E . J. Leeder (Ed.) *Inside and out: women, prison, and therapy* (pp. 135-165). USA: Taylor and Francis.
- Moran, D. (2012). Prisoner reintegration and the stigma of prison time inscribed on the body. *Punishment & Society*, 14 (5), 564-583. doi: 10.1177/1462474512464008.
- Morton, J.B. & Williams, D.M. (1998). Mother/Child Bonding. *Corrections Today*, 60(7), 98-105. Retrieved from <http://rc4ht3qs8p.search.serialssolutions.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/?genre=article&issn=01902563&title=Corrections%20Today&volume=60&issue=7&date=19981201&atitle=Mother%2FChild%20Bonding.&spage=98&pages=98->



103&sid=EBSCO:Criminal%20Justice%20Abstracts%20with%20Full%20Text&au=MORTON,%20JOANN%20B.

- NACRO. (2016). *Who we help*. Retrieved from <https://www.nacro.org.uk/housing/who-we-help/>.
- National Offender Management Service (2012). *A Distinct Approach: A guide to working with women offenders*. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/noms/2012/guide-working-with-women-offenders.pdf>
- National Offender Management Service (2016). *Research at NOMS*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service/about/research>
- O'Leary, C. (2013). The role of stable accommodation in reducing recidivism: what does the evidence tell us? *Safer Communities*, 12 (1), 5-12. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1266442835?pq-origsite=summon>.
- O'Reilly, M.F. (2014). Opening Doors or Closing Them?: The Impact of Incarceration on the Education and Employability of Ex-Offenders in Ireland. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 53 (5), 468-486. doi: 10.1111/hojo.12086.
- Pape, C.M. (2014). An exploratory analysis of ex-offender employment in a non-urban setting (Thesis). Graduate College of Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green.
- Peckover, S. (2003). Health visitors' understandings of domestic violence. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 44 (2), 200-208. doi: 10.1046/j.1365-2648.2003.02784.x.
- Pope, C., van Royen, P., & Baker, R. (2002). Qualitative methods in research on healthcare quality. *Quality & safety in health care*, 11 (2), 148-152. doi: 10.1136/qhc.11.2.148.
- Power, J., Brown, S.L., & Usher, A.M. (2013). Prevalence and Incidence of Nonsuicidal Self-Injury Among Federally Sentenced Women in Canada. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 40 (3), 302-320. doi: 10.1177/0093854812474427.
- Richardson, R.L. & Flower, S.M. (2014). How Gender of Ex-Offenders Influences Access to Employment Opportunities. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 45 (4), 35-43. Retrieved from <http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/womenandjustice/Conferences-and-Events/upload/Rebecca-Richardson-and-Shawn-Flower-How-Gender-of-Ex-Offenders-Influences-Access-to-Employment.pdf>.
- Richie, B.E. (2001). Challenges Incarcerated Women Face as They Return to Their Communities: Findings from Life History Interviews. *Crime & Delinquency*, 47 (3), 368-389. doi: 10.1177/0011128701047003005 .
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton-Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (Eds.) (2014). *Qualitative Research Practice* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Rubin, H.J. & Rubin, I.S. (2012). *Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Schaefer, G.O. & Wertheimer, A. (2011). The Right to Withdraw from Research. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 20 (4), 329-352. Retrieved from

- <http://search.proquest.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/853608719?pq-origsite=summon>.
- Shelter. (2014). *Homeless when released from prison*. Retrieved from [http://england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/homelessness/whats\\_your\\_situation/homeless\\_on\\_release\\_from\\_prison](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/homelessness/whats_your_situation/homeless_on_release_from_prison).
- Shinkfield, A.J. & Graffam, J. (2009). Community Reintegration of Ex-Prisoners: Type and Degree of Change in Variables Influencing Successful Reintegration. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 53 (1), 29-42. doi: 10.1177/0306624X07309757.
- Sieber, S.D. (1974). Toward a Theory of Role Accumulation. *American Sociological Review*, 39 (4), 567-578. Retrieved from [http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/2094422?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/2094422?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents).
- Siegel, J.A. (2011). Disrupted Childhoods: Children of Women in Prison. Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/uoh/reader.action?docID=10533622>
- Shivy, V.A., Wu, J.J., Moon, A.E., Mann, S.C., Holland, J.G., & Eacho, C. (2007). Ex-Offenders Reentering the Workforce. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54 (4), 466-473. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.54.4.466.
- Siennick, S.E., Stewart, E.A., & Staff, J. (2014). Explaining the association between incarceration and divorce. *Criminology*, 52 (3), 371-398. doi: 10.1111/1745-9125.12040.
- Snyder, Z.K. (2009). Keeping Families Together: The Importance of Maintaining Mother–Child Contact for Incarcerated Women. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 19 (1), 37-59. doi: 10.1080/08974450802586869.
- Social Exclusion Unit (2002). *Reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners*. Retrieved from <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/Reducing%20Reoffending.pdf>
- Sutherland, G., Carroll, M., Lennox, N., & Kinner, S. (2015). Prescribed contraceptives among woman after release from prison. *Health & Justice*, 3 (8), 1-4. doi: 10.1186/s40352-015-0019-1.
- Tay, L., & Diener, E. (2011). Needs and subjective well-being around the world. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(2), 354.
- Teddlie, C. & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*. London: Sage.
- Teplin, L.A., Abram, K.M., McClelland, G.M., Dulcan, M.K., & Mericle, A.A. (2002). Psychiatric Disorders in Youth in Juvenile Detention. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 59 (12), 1133-1143. doi: 10.1001/archpsyc.59.12.1133.
- The British Psychological Society (2010) *Code of Human research ethics*. Leicester: The British Psychological Society
- The British Society of Criminology (2015) *Statement of Ethics*. London: The British Society of Criminology

- Tiburcio, N.J. (2008). Long-Term Recovery from Heroin Use Among Female Ex-Offenders: Marisol's Story. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 43 (1), 1950-1970. doi: 10.1080/10826080802297369.
- Together Women Project. (2016). *Housing*. Retrieved from <http://www.togetherwomen.org/about-twp/housing>.
- Van Olphen, J., Eliason, M.J., Freudenberg, N., & Barnes, M. (2009). Nowhere to go: How stigma limits the options of female drug users after release from jail. *Substance Abuse: Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 4 (1), 10-20. doi: 10.1186/1747-597X-4-10.
- Visher, C.A. & Bakken, N.W. (2014). Reentry Challenges Facing Women with Mental Health Problems. *Women & Health*, 54 (8), 768-780. doi: 10.1080/03630242.2014.932889.
- Visher, C.A. & Travis, J. (2003). Transitions from prison to community: Understanding individual pathways. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29 (1), 89-113. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/199617093?pq-origsite=summon>.
- Walitzer, K. & Dearing, R. (2006). Gender differences in alcohol and substance misuse relapse. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 26 (1), 128-148. doi: 10.1016/j.cpr.2005.11.003.
- Walker, L. (2010). 'His mam, my dad, my girlfriend, loads of people used to bring him up': the value of social support for (ex) offender fathers. *Child & Family Social Workpages*, 15 (2), 238-247. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2206.2009.00664.x.
- Ward, T. & Stewart, C.A. (2003). The Treatment of Sex Offenders: Risk Management and Good Lives. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34 (4), 353-360. doi: 10.1037/0735-7028.34.4.353.
- West Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company. (2016). *In Prison*. Retrieved from <http://www.westyorkshirecrc.co.uk/on-probation/in-prison/>.
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S.K., & Mandle, C.L. (2001). Validity in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11 (4), 522-537. doi: 10.1177/104973201129119299.
- Williams-Queen, A. (2014). Life Challenges Among Ex-Offenders: A Needs Assessment. *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*, 19 (6), 1-68. Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=etd>.
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing Qualitative Research In Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://www-dawsonera-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/readonline/9780335244508>
- Willis, G.M. (2010). Back to Basics: Empirical Support for the Importance of Release Planning in Reducing Sex Offender Recidivism. *Sexual Abuse in Australia and New Zealand*, 2 (2), 54-57. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/openview/b1322bdf5d40f2b444c3ce502f55d26b/1?pq-origsite=gscholar>.
- Yeom, H.S. (2011). Gender Differences in Treatment Outcomes Among Participants in a Mixed-Gender Substance Abuse Aftercare Program. *Social Work in Public Health*, 26 (6), 557-576. doi: 10.1080/10911359.2011.534681.
- Yin, R.K. (2004). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd ed.). California: SAGE.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1- Participant Information Sheet - Women The Female Offender: Gendered anguish of release from prison and reintegration into the community.**

---

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

You are being invited to take part in this study, but before you decide to do so, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

#### **What is the study about?**

This study aims to explore female ex-prisoners' experiences of reintegration into society following a custodial sentence, the community and their own social networks and relationships. Furthermore, the study will aim to explore the narrative of the female offender, exploring difficulties and anguishes faced when returning to family life and, if appropriate, motherhood.

#### **Why I have been approached?**

You have been asked to participate because you have spent time in prison; your experiences and perspectives are central to this study.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form, though you have the right to withdraw your information from the research up to one month after the interview has taken place without having to give a reason. You will also be more than welcome to take breaks in the interview, or stop and resume at another time, or withdraw completely from the interview should you wish.

#### **What will I need to do?**

If you agree to take part in the research, there will be a short interview (of between 30-45 minutes), where you will be asked to discuss your experiences on release from prison concerning a variety of areas. Topics that you will be asked about include housing/settlement opportunities, health/mental health care issues, employment/education opportunities and concerns or anticipations regarding return to family relationships and social networks.

#### **Will my identity be disclosed and what will happen to my information?**

All of your details will be kept confidential, though any information disclosed concerning crimes which have not already been reported and dealt with in the criminal justice system, or information of potential harm to yourself or others, will necessitate disclosure by the researchers. Names and details will be removed and replaced with pseudonyms to ensure

anonymity, and all personal information collected in the interview will be kept securely. It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be published in a journal or report. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

**If you have been affected in any way by the topics discussed, please contact the below for support and guidance:**

- You can call Samaritans, a completely secure and confidential listening service
- for free at 116 123
- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) can offer advice and suggestions based on your current feelings or offer support on a variety of issues no matter what stage of distress you might be in.
- For more face to face support, please contact your GP, or visit our most local walk in centre which can be seen on the map overleaf.

**If you require any further information about the research, please contact me on:**

**Lauren Bradley, [Lauren.Bradley@Hud.ac.uk](mailto:Lauren.Bradley@Hud.ac.uk), 07794360495**

[Map of local walk in centre displayed here]

**Appendix 2 - Participant Information Sheet - Staff**  
**The Female Offender: Gendered anguish of release from prison and reintegration into the community.**

---

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

You are being invited to take part in this study, but before you decide to do so, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

**What is the study about?**

This study aims to explore female ex-prisoners' experiences of reintegration into society following a custodial sentence, the community and their own social networks and relationships.

**Why I have been approached?**

You have been asked to participate because of the work that you do with females that have experienced incarceration, your experiences and perspectives are able to discuss the anguishes and barriers that these women face throughout their transition.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form, though you have the right to withdraw your information from the research up to one month after the interview has taken place without having to give a reason. You will also be more than welcome to take breaks in the interview, or stop and resume at another time, or withdraw completely from the interview should you wish.

**What will I need to do?**

If you agree to take part in the research, there will be a short interview where you will be asked to discuss your experiences of working with this client group. Topics that you will be asked about include the support offered from your service and regarding challenges that face females leaving prison such as housing/settlement opportunities, health/mental health care issues, employment/education opportunities and concerns or anticipations regarding return to family relationships and social networks.

**Will my identity be disclosed and what will happen to my information?**

All of your details will be kept confidential, though any information disclosed concerning crimes which have not already been reported and dealt with in the criminal justice system, or information of potential harm to yourself or others, will necessitate disclosure by the researchers. Names and details will be removed and replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity, and all personal information collected in the interview will be kept securely. It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be published in a journal or report.

However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

**If you require any further information about the research, please contact me on:**

**Lauren Bradley, [Lauren.Bradley@Hud.ac.uk](mailto:Lauren.Bradley@Hud.ac.uk), 07794360495**

### Appendix 3 - Consent Form for Services

#### The Female Offender: Gendered anguish of release from prison and reintegration into the community.

**In order for my research to gain full ethical approval, it is first important that I ensure full permissions for my study from yourselves at \_\_\_\_\_. Alongside the letter of acceptance, I just ask that you could check and sign the below list which outlines your understanding and agreement with the present research.**

We at \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the participant information sheet and the interview guide, and any conditions or restrictions that we may have will be discussed and outlined in the acceptance letter/e-mail to be forwarded on to the Universities Ethics Panel (SREP).

☐

Similarly, any changes or concerns with the interview guide, methods of recruitment or methods of data collection, will be outlined in the acceptance letter given to the researcher.

☐

Interviews between the researcher and the clients may take place at \_\_\_\_\_ or under the supervision of \_\_\_\_\_ staff, and will be both private in order to ensure confidentiality but will also be close enough to other staff to ensure the safety of the researcher.

☐

Any known risks known to myself will be disclosed to the researcher to ensure theirs and the clients' safety.

☐

We will, to the best of our ability, ensure anyone who would be very distressed or at risk by participation in the interview be screened out for their safety.

☐

We at \_\_\_\_\_, understand that at mention of a crime not yet disclosed and dealt with by the CJS, or if there is threat to harm of themselves or anyone else, confidentiality may be breached, and the researcher would be at liberty to pass along such information.

☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





**Appendix 4 - Consent Form for Women**  
**The Female Offender: Gendered anguish of release from prison and**  
**reintegration into the community.**

**CONSENT FORM**

Please ensure that before signing this consent form, you have read and understood the participant information sheet also given to you. It is important that you then also read and understand the consent form before signing, if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further, please contact the researcher. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate.

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research. ☐

I consent to taking part in this research and to being interviewed. ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw/stop the interview at any time, and have the right to withdraw my data from the research up to one month post-interview, without having to give any reason. ☐

I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). ☐

I consent for my voice to be recorded by use of a Dictaphone at the interview, and understand this recording will be destroyed once my interview has been transcribed. ☐

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions (password/lock protection) for a period of five years at the University of Huddersfield. ☐

I understand that no person other than the researcher/s and facilitator/s will have access to the information provided except in circumstances where information is disclosed regarding potential threat to harm of myself or others, or I divulge information about any crime that has not already been dealt with by the criminal justice system. ☐

I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report. ☐

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign below.

Signature of Participant: _____ Print: _____ Date: _____	Signature of Researcher: _____ Print: _____ Date: _____
---	--

(One copy to be retained by Participant / one copy to be retained by Researcher)



**Appendix 5 - Consent Form for Staff**  
**The Female Offender: Gendered anguish of release from prison and  
reintegration into the community.**

**CONSENT FORM**

Please ensure that before signing this consent form, you have read and understood the participant information sheet also given to you. It is important that you then also read and understand the consent form before signing, if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further, please contact the researcher. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate.

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research. ☐

I consent to taking part in this research and to being interviewed. ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw/stop the interview at any time, and have the right to withdraw my data from the research up to one month post-interview, without having to give any reason. ☐

I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym). ☐

I consent for my voice to be recorded by use of a Dictaphone at the interview, and understand this recording will be destroyed once my interview has been transcribed. ☐

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions (password/lock protection) for a period of five years at the University of Huddersfield. ☐

I understand that no person other than the researcher/s and facilitator/s will have access to my details provided except in circumstances where information is disclosed regarding potential threat to harm of myself or others, or I divulge information about any crime that has not already been dealt with by the criminal justice system. ☐

I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report. ☐

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign below.

Signature of Participant: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Print: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Date: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/>	Signature of Researcher: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Print: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Date: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/>
--	---

(One copy to be retained by Participant / one copy to be retained by Researcher)

## **Appendix 6 - Interview Guide for Women**

### **Prior to release**

Q) Thinking back to when you were about to leave prison, was there anything in particular that concerned you? What sorts of things, if anything, did you think you might need or might need support with?

- Anything to ask about further – such as why, or what about certain problems worried the participant the most etc.

### **Post release issues – Only if relevant to that participant. If addiction/mental health/motherhood not applicable, question won't be asked.**

#### **Substance Abuse**

Q) Without disclosing any incriminating information, are you able to discuss whether since you have left prison, how you have found coping with your substance abuse/addiction problem?

#### **Healthcare**

Q) Since being released from prison, how have you found access to healthcare such as finding a dentist, a GP/medication?

#### **Mental Healthcare**

Q) How have you found coping with your **mental health problem** (depends on individual what illness here) since leaving prison?

Q) Would you say that your **mental health problem** has had any impact on your experience of leaving prison? Whether that be a difficulty or otherwise?

#### **Housing**

Q) Have you had any problems with finding somewhere to live since you left prison?

- If so – can you discuss what problems you encountered and how this was difficult? What for you, would be a suitable place to live?
- If not – would you say that the place you have found to live is suitable, that you are happy with this housing?

#### **Employment**

Q) Have you looked for any employment/volunteer work, or education since leaving prison? And if so would you say you have encountered any difficulties doing so?

#### **Family Life/motherhood/relationships**

Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your **family** after you left prison? How did this feel for you when you left?

Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your **children** after you left prison? How did this feel for you when you left?

Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your **friends** after you left prison? How did this feel for you when you left?

Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your **partner** after you left prison? How did this feel for you when you left?

- Not all four of the above will be applicable, but all four are included to emphasise difference between the four. Explore each in turn rather than all as one.

**Post release support**

Q) Have you had any support or help since leaving prison?

- If so – what type of support? (social networks or professional). Was this support helpful? Could this support have been improved? If so, how?

Q) Was there any support that you needed or that would have helped but wasn't there?

- If so - What things or areas of your life did you need this support for? Why do you think this support is not available?

Q) Finally, have there been any issues you have found to be of importance to you, good or bad, that we haven't already discussed?

## **Appendix 7 - Interview Guide for Staff**

### **Staff Interview Guide**

- Q) From your experience, what do women need in terms of support post-incarceration?
- Q) Have you found when working with clients that they have been able to keep their substance abuse under control post-incarceration?
- Q) Would you say that there have been any health or mental health problems within women leaving prison from your experience? If so, has there been thorough diagnosis and treatment?
- Q) How have you found the ease of finding suitable housing post-incarceration for these women? What barriers?
- Q) What are the biggest barriers for women in this position in finding suitable employment or improving their employability skills?
- Q) How do women find reuniting with their family, friends and partners after prison?
- Q) For those that have had children, would you say that this presents any problems when supporting these women after release? Such as custody issues?
- Q) What would you say is often the main priority for women post-incarceration?
- Q) Do you think that there are any differences between the way males and females prioritise or experience their release?
- Q) As staff supporting women post-incarceration, what are the most difficult things to support women with after release?
- Q) Do you feel that the service you provide as it is currently offered is adequate or specialised enough in guiding these women throughout their transition?
- Q) Do you feel that you are well enough equipped to support these women throughout their leave from prison, whether that is regarding funding or training?

#### **For gendered support services:**

- Q) Would you say that offering gendered support is something which is beneficial and preferred by your clients?
- Q) Similarly, do you think that this helps in your ability to offer support effectively?

#### **For non-gendered support services:**

- Q) How do you find offering support to both genders independently?
- Q) Would you say you alter your approach based upon gender, or moreso based upon the individual?
- Q) Finally, have there been any issues you have found to be of importance to you, good or bad, that we haven't already discussed?

**Appendix 8 - Sarah Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 12/09/2016**

**Interviewing: Sarah – Offence was GBH with Intent**

Q) Did you have any concerns about your release?

R) Erm, nope they shipped me out of the prison and put me in *[place name removed]* to do part of my sentence which was a secure unit, and I was released from there so I had so much freedom already to get used to it, so there was a bit of a transition I suppose.

Q) Thinking back to when you were in prison, what kind of things if anything did you think you might want support with on your release?

R) At the time I didn't think I'd need support, I thought it was just going to be 'in...nothing would change... and then out' but obviously I thought wrong.

Q) When you first came out prison what was your first priority?

R) Getting a job.

Q) And how did you find doing that?

R) Erm, I actually went from day release from *[place name removed]* because I had an interview and I ended up getting the job. So I worked there so it was actually easy really for me, so I came out and went straight into a job really but I was doing a course at the time so it was like training.

Q) So did you have support services help you getting that job? Or did you go and apply for it by yourself?

R) No, the prison applied. They kind of explained what was going to happen, what was the situation was and they said "if she comes down, we'll interview her, and if she does all right she should get the job", so I must have done something right!

Q) Do you mind if I ask if you have ever had any problems in terms of drugs or alcohol misuse?

R) Drugs yes

Q) Ok so when you first came out of prison how did you find dealing with those drug problems?

R) I went straight back to drugs.

Q) Do you know why that was?

R) It was my daughter's dad, he used to smoke a lot of cannabis so because me and him got back together for the second time, no for the third time, he just pulled me back into it really. Then a few weeks later I had to leave the job because I was being sexually harassed there by one of the fellas, so I went to a nursing home and got a job there in less than 3 days from leaving the other one and then I had to leave there because I found out I was pregnant. There was a lot of moving around and stuff and I just ended up back in old places really. I totally left *[place name removed]* and I had parole revoked and I went straight back in

- 38 Q) So when did the point come where you were able to get off of those drugs?
- 39 R) When I went back into prison.
- 40 Q) What was it about prison, do you know or was it just prison in general?
- 41 R) Just education really, I did a childcare and catering but yeah I think having something to  
42 focus on like. Otherwise you just take drugs in prison.
- 43 Q) Since you've been out of prison, how have you found access to healthcare?
- 44 R) Well a dentist is near enough impossible but I think that's just as it is. Doctors, I've had no  
45 problems.
- 46 Q) Have you ever suffered from any mental health problems?
- 47 R) Yeah, from a very very young age.
- 48 Q) Do you mind me asking what mental health problems?
- 49 R) Depression.
- 50 Q) How have you found coping with your depression since you came out of prison?
- 51 R) I didn't. As soon as I came out of prison I went back to my mums and I got back together  
52 with the drug dealer, so that didn't help, so it was straight back to the drugs within 2 weeks of  
53 getting out. So then that kind of impacted everything else and I ended up really down.
- 54 Q) How did you find getting diagnosis and treatment/support?
- 55 R) It wasn't diagnosed until I was 21, just before I fell pregnant with my third child and they  
56 put me on medication and they kept me on it. They gave me one that was safe for while I was  
57 pregnant and after I'd had her I ended up taking an overdose because I'd just had enough. I  
58 couldn't deal with not having the rules and not being locked away really.
- 59 Q) Did you find the medication you were given helped or kept your mental health under  
60 control?
- 61 R) It wasn't helping no. Not at all but it was the strongest one I could have at the time  
62 because I was pregnant so having babies didn't help me out with my own head did it?
- 63 Q) Since then has there been any support for mental health that you've found has helped and  
64 supported you?
- 65 R) Only up here, in *[place name removed]* they didn't have anything and they do now but that  
66 didn't start till a couple of years ago. Everyone says I was heading into a nervous breakdown,  
67 I just totally lost it. I got referred to *[service name removed]* and they put me on a group for  
68 mindfulness and that actually did help me. I'm a lot calmer now than I used to be, I promise  
69 you that! But even now I still say there's more that could be done because I still can lose it  
70 now and again.
- 71 Q) What areas would you like more support with?
- 72 R) My anger really, coping with my feelings, learning to talk because I do hold things in a  
73 lot. I just don't think there's enough out there. Like you can take one thing from one place

74 and you might get something from it but then it stops after a few week or it only takes up an  
75 hour of your week or something. If there were more places then you could just go to all of  
76 them and take from them what you need, what's right for you at that point and then maybe  
77 you'd use other things at other points. Like to start with I was awful with group stuff, it  
78 scared me in the beginning but once you've done it, it wasn't as scary as you think it is and  
79 you move on to what you're ready for

80 Q) Do you feel you've got something from the services you have had support from?

81 R) Erm yes since then anyway, I mean I'm still in touch with the girls that I was in the group  
82 with, I think that helps, keeping those contacts really. Yeah we're all still in touch and we still  
83 support each other so sometimes we'll meet up see what's new in our lives. I didn't realise, I  
84 think it's that were all were all like-minded people that way.

85 Q) When you first came out of prison how did you find some finding somewhere to live?

86 R) I moved straight in with my mum until she threw me out on the streets. I was with her for  
87 a couple of weeks, I moved in with my boyfriend and then I moved out, split up with him and  
88 moved in with my mum. Me and my mum got into a massive argument and then she threw  
89 me and my daughter out when she was 6 months, so I went to my Grandmother's and my  
90 grandmother phoned social services and explained the situation, and so they put me in a  
91 children's home, it was like a training flat for you to get used to living alone

92 Q) Was it like a mother and baby unit?

93 R) No, it was a proper children's home but I mean in the one in *[place name removed]* at the  
94 time they had two flats, one for the boys and one for the girls, so when you were ready for  
95 leaving care they would put you in that flat so that you had to do everything yourself, from  
96 cooking to cleaning, it got you use to it. So they put me in one of them to see how I would  
97 deal with being on my own and then I met my first husband so I moved in with him and then  
98 me and him moved in with his dad and then we went and got our own place.

99 Q) How did you feel when your Grandma called social services about your situation?

100 R) I mean I was scared at the time wasn't I, I mean I wasn't happy and I probably kicked off  
101 then but she did what she had to do, I couldn't stay with her for long and me and mum had  
102 fallen out so I needed to do what she told me to really.

103 Q) How did you find getting somewhere stable?

104 R) I enjoyed it! Yeah I didn't have any problems finding it. Well, saying that, it was a  
105 struggle to get it off the council because they didn't want to give me a house, so I had to take  
106 the first thing that they offered which was a two-bedroom flat and I had to go to set up the  
107 stairs with a pram with my daughter which was a killer so...

108 Q) what would you see as a stable suitable place to live?

109 R) I would have liked ground floor I think if you've got a kid and you're coming out of prison  
110 with your child then they should just give you a house because that child needs somewhere to  
111 play, a place where they have space. If you're coming out and it's just you, you've got no  
112 responsibilities, a flat that is alright but it changes everything when you've got a child and  
113 that that should change in their eyes but it doesn't seem to do.



- 114 Q) Now that you do have a house, are you happy with this accommodation?
- 115 R) I'm not happy with this area anymore, when I go over to my partner's in *[place name*  
 116 *removed]* I feel a lot more settled over there, I prefer it over there they keep their nose out of  
 117 your business. Around here they don't, the other week there were gunshots just down there,  
 118 just a few doors down from here so that's put me a bit on edge.
- 119 Q) So would you be looking at moving out of this area at some point?
- 120 R) Erm I am showing more interest now in *[place name removed]* so that can't come soon  
 121 enough really. \*Support worker present at interview comments that this will mean leaving the  
 122 support service that she is currently accessing if she was to move\* Yeah that's the worst bit,  
 123 I'll miss you if I leave!
- 124 Q) You mentioned your education and things while you were in prison and since you left,  
 125 how have you found these?
- 126 R) I'm a qualified nail technician. I qualified last May.
- 127 Q) How did you get access to that course then?
- 128 R) This girl, I mean she calls me Mum, we see each other as adopted mother and daughter.  
 129 She started doing nails and just got in to doing mine and she noticed I was watching very  
 130 closely what she was doing so she started teaching me and so I looked to see if there's  
 131 anything to do with nails and I found one, so me and her went on doing it together, we were  
 132 both giving each other that kick up the backside.
- 133 Q) How did that work with funding then, did you have any problems finding funds to do that  
 134 course?
- 135 R) I saved up for my kit myself, and the uniform, I paid for those myself but the course was  
 136 funded for me by the college because I was on JSA.
- 137 Q) In terms of employment or education were there any areas you might have needed more  
 138 support in?
- 139 R) Like what?
- 140 Q) Like maybe CV writing skills or Interview help that kind of thing, or maybe help in  
 141 applying for jobs in the first place or finding the vacancies to start with?
- 142 R) I haven't got a clue with interviews and my CV is so confusing for me. I'd like to go in and  
 143 do business, I'd like to do a business course but I have to see what that entails first because I  
 144 do actually want to start my own business. I want to go back and finish my hairdressing  
 145 because I did the first 12 months of that so that's for the qualifications for that but I need to  
 146 go back and do that
- 147 Q) So when you came out of prison how was your relationship with your family?
- 148 R) It was bad. It was bad before I went in but it was worse when I came out.
- 149 Q) Do you know why that was? Or what caused that divide?

150 R) My attitude really, I totally changed after prison. Before I went in I was quiet, I was  
151 pleasant but when I came out I was just a complete psycho, there was no fear of danger and  
152 I'd do something just for the sake of doing it.

153 Q) Did you notice when this change happened? Or maybe what kinds of things caused this  
154 change in you?

155 R) I learnt a lot of new skills when I was in prison, how to get off with things. I started  
156 putting them into a practise, I didn't even think about my daughter at the time because I knew  
157 she was being looked after by my mum, but when I offered the money for her over to my  
158 mum, my mum refused because she wanted to give me that responsibility and even though I  
159 didn't have her in my care, I'd have to go over to my mum's every week go to town with her,  
160 buy her clothes, buy her food, and I wouldn't have done that if my mum hadn't forced me to.  
161 I mean yeah I'd do that everyday, I'd spend 5-6 hours a day with her but she was still at my  
162 mum's at the end of the day you know, then I'd go back home. My mum didn't really like me  
163 going there because I was drugged up to the eyeballs so we'd fight a lot but she wanted me to  
164 take responsibility over my own kid. I was a rebel without a clue.

165 Q) Is that where the problems came in with your mum then, because of the drugs?

166 R) That's why they escalated yeah, when me and my drug dealer boyfriend at the time split  
167 up, my mum was quite happy about that, she knew then that there'd be no more drugs. Well,  
168 so she thought, it didn't really turn out like that but after about two weeks of me living back  
169 with her, she got really fed up of it and stopped me from going out unless I was with her. I  
170 had to be supervised.

171 Q) How did you react to that?

172 R) I'd kick-off because it was like prison to prison in my eyes, even that had an effect on me  
173 to the point where now I won't go out if I'm not with anyone. Right now whilst Rob isn't  
174 here, I won't go out here until I see my mum outside then I'll go out.

175 Q) Do you think if you'd have had more freedom when you first came out of prison that you  
176 would be less anxious now?

177 R) I don't think so, I think its been locked away for so long does it to you. I mean mum just  
178 carried that on so I was like this after when I came to live on my own, but if id come straight  
179 out of prison I think it'd have been the same but I mean it was the drugs really that did that,  
180 you know that crazy, it took me out.

181 Q) So you mentioned a little bit about reuniting with the children, how did this feel when you  
182 first left prison?

183 R) It didn't feel normal with them at all at the time because I'd handed my daughter out when  
184 she was 3 months old, I'd had a total of 3 months with her and so going back it was like "ah  
185 my mum can babysit no matter what" that was my attitude. I was 18 at the time as well so I  
186 wanted to, as my mum said to me, "all you wanted was your cake and eat it", so I had to learn  
187 the hard way which is what she always said, I mean she does it now you know if I'm doing  
188 something wrong she'll say you'll learn the hard way.

189 Q) How did you find building that relationship with your children?

190 R) It was easier than I expected actually because as soon as I got out the gate my mum was  
 191 there with her and I was upset because she'd got fat and she was bald, so I was not impressed.  
 192 I don't want a fat baby, I blamed my mum for that, for everything even though I know really  
 193 it was my own fault for landing myself inside and that my mum had to look after her. My  
 194 other one, I mean he is the devil's child, he's scruffy, he's dirty, he doesn't want to get a  
 195 shower or look after himself, he's got long hair and he doesn't brush it.

196 Q) How is your relationship with them now?

197 R) Our Kerry I couldn't give a damn about to be honest with you even though she's my first  
 198 born, no matter what I did to help her she'd throw it back in my face, she tried sleeping with  
 199 my partner and thought she could get away with it and it backfired. Josh, we do get on to an  
 200 extent, but Jake was the one that didn't like how he was brought up, he hated me, he hated his  
 201 dad because we weren't there, because they were all in foster care. Over the past few weeks  
 202 we're slowly starting to get on, and then everything kicked off yesterday with the police and  
 203 everything, so I had about 2 hours sleep all night it was 5 o'clock last time I looked at my  
 204 phone. He's in *[place name removed]* at the minute but I'm hoping he's been in and out of  
 205 court, I'm waiting for the solicitor to phone me up now.

206 Q) Is your partner a big support to you then?

207 R) Yeah, when Ryan found me I was in a very very dark place, I was constantly self-harming  
 208 which started because of prison, I was constantly self-harming, I was in a mentally abusive  
 209 relationship. I've just come out of a mentally abusive relationship, 12 months ago my partner  
 210 now decided to get rid of my ex-partner out the house and he just lives just up there which is  
 211 awful, he's just up the road you know, I was told he had moved out but because I didn't report  
 212 him the housing people just put you where they can, so I moved in only to find that he's still  
 213 living here. He is leaving me alone, so I'm alright, the only time I go up to where he is, is  
 214 when I'm going to the shops. So that compared to where I am now, it's my partner that's  
 215 giving me a kick up the backside, when he met me I had no self-pride, nothing, no  
 216 confidence, I wouldn't even wear something like I'm wearing now because I was too  
 217 embarrassed because my ex used to call me fat. You know, my current partner called me fat  
 218 once because he wanted to see my reaction after he'd built me up all this time, I just looked at  
 219 him and he got a right mouthful, so I mean I reacted completely different way I think it's  
 220 giving me too much strength now \*laughs\*. No matter what I've done to him, when we've  
 221 had disagreements, he is always phoning me that same night to see if I'm alright and I'll say  
 222 "no I'm not talking to you", you know, I might be on the phone for an hour without talking to  
 223 him but he seems to be the only one who can calm me down when something's going on.  
 224 There was one day when he didn't because I totally smashed everything up and completely  
 225 lost it and at the time, 3 of my kids were here but I don't even remember what caused it my  
 226 mind is just blank and I went after him with a knife and I found out hours later, because he  
 227 took me over to his to get me away from the kids, it wasn't until the day after a few hours  
 228 after I'd kicked off it was about 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning that I found out that when I've  
 229 been pinned up I had to push the knife into him no he didn't know about it and I don't think he  
 230 knows about it now because he's never mentioned it to me but I saw it and I was like oh s\*\*\*  
 231 because if he'd seen that, I'd have been straight back in prison. If he'd have seen it, he just  
 232 hasn't mentioned it to me. Even after that, he's still took me to his and kept me there, he took  
 233 me out on that Wednesday, we went out around a few pubs in *[place name removed]* and

234 everything was alright as if nothing had happened. In the beginning we weren't fully talking,  
235 but I was going to walk out on him and he wouldn't let me, he knew what was going to  
236 happen because if I'd have left, I wouldn't have come back.

237 About once a month, I will text him and I'll just say "thank you" and he'll say "for what" and  
238 I'll say "for helping me, you've made me happy". Just stupid, little, tiny things, I mean I did it  
239 last night he said something and I said "thank you", and he said "what for", and I said "for  
240 being there for me, you've made me happy you've changed my life" and he just said "you're  
241 being silly", he knows what he is going to get when he tells me I'm being silly!

242 Q) So when you came out of prison, how did you find reuniting with your friends?

243 R) All of my friends stood by me and they said that the girl that I stabbed deserved it because  
244 of how she spoke to me, she was a bully. She accused my stepfather of indecent assault on  
245 me, which never ever happened, if he'd have tried I'd have kicked him in the knackers  
246 anyway. She was in school with me so we've grown up together and she knew I was a bit of a  
247 tear away, I still am.

248 Q) I'm just wondering about something you mentioned before, because you said that you self-  
249 harmed and that started in prison, do you know what it was about prison that made you feel  
250 so low?

251 R) So I was attacked by 6 lesbians when I was 16, I was 16 going into prison, that's why they  
252 shipped me out in the end and I just couldn't deal with that really. What happened was I met  
253 up with this girl, a lovely young girl but she was a self-harmer and I asked her why she did it  
254 and she said it helped her helped her take her anger out, rather than taking it out on someone  
255 else she took it out on herself, so I tried it and that's how it started. I found it helps and that's  
256 why it started.

257 Q) Ok so you mentioned your current partner at the moment, but the other partners you had  
258 when you were coming out of prison, how did you find reuniting with them, going back to  
259 relationships?

260 R) With Kerry's dad it was easy, because he's known me since I was 10 weeks old, he's  
261 known me all my life so as long as I stuck by him, you know, it was alright. It was like I was  
262 relying on him to give me my life back, but it didn't work, I fell pregnant, I went back into  
263 prison and he just buggered off with another woman. 2 years ago we did try and get back  
264 together but then when Ryan came into my life, things started changing and it was a case of  
265 'you know what, you're going to get the same treatment as what you gave me' so I just got  
266 with Ryan without telling him. Funnily enough, the other night he actually had the balls to  
267 phone me, he goes "you and me need to talk about our daughter", she moved in with her  
268 father 3 weeks ago, I mean he wants to kill the guy she's with but I've told him that I've  
269 learnt the best thing is just to wash your hands sometimes, ask for the keys and give her her  
270 stuff and stay out of it. Its better if you want any kind of relationship with her.

271 Q) Have you had any support in terms of services or professionals since leaving prison?

272 R) No.

273 Q) What would you have liked in terms of support that you did not receive?

274 R) There's nowhere to get experience, I mean everywhere wants it don't they but there's no  
 275 places to get experience apart from volunteering in shops, so more of that where I could  
 276 volunteer in the job I want to do before I do it properly so I could get experience. Apart from  
 277 that, really just getting used to being back on the outside having the confidence to go out on  
 278 my own, something that would have helped me get used to being back on the outside, I mean  
 279 even now even to this day, sure I'm alright during the day with having the door closed, but  
 280 when it comes to going to bed at night, I've still got that fear of having my bedroom door  
 281 closed, the only time that my bedroom door is closed is when my partner's here with me. I  
 282 always always have my front door wide open, I've also got a habit of sitting with my keys,  
 283 you know sat making noise, I think it's a comfort thing having that jingling of my keys, but  
 284 I've got quite a few key rings on now, but I think I do everyone's head in with them!

285 Q) Is that an anxious thing?

286 R) No, no, it's just, you know I adapt very easily to the situation and I've always been the one  
 287 that likes noise, I think it's just comfort, I mean unfortunately for my mother I've always liked  
 288 things that make a noise and at the moment I'm getting my step daughter into that, you know  
 289 she's only two. It's just I suppose even now that keys reminds me of prison, I still find I like  
 290 that jingling noise, I think it's probably because it's familiar to me.

291 Q) You mentioned you would have liked to support getting used to the outside again, is there  
 292 anything in particular that you noticed when you come out that you didn't know how to do or  
 293 had problems with?

294 R) No not really, everything I needed to know, I had learnt before I went in. I was self-reliant  
 295 from the age of 12, at 10 years of age I was washing my own clothes, I used to cook meals  
 296 for the family that kind of thing. I was used to that when I came out, I mean even now it  
 297 comes naturally, I mean I don't always eat now, I just can't be bothered sometimes. I think I  
 298 go a few days without it, and I might go get a takeaway instead but I'm more motivated to  
 299 when Ryan is round as I've got someone to cook for other than just myself. I can afford to do  
 300 that kind of thing more now too, now that my ESA is coming through. [*Service name*  
 301 *omitted*] is really helps get my benefits in order and have really help to get my bills sorted  
 302 and everything like that. When I first got with Ryan, about an hour before I went to bed I'd  
 303 go and put my pyjamas on in the bathroom, he wasn't even allowed to come near the  
 304 bathroom door but he caught me out one day and he just moved the shower curtain, I  
 305 screamed, I hated it you know I used to just... I just wasn't comfortable around him. It's  
 306 taken about 8 months, well best part of the year, to stop being shy and embarrassed and to be  
 307 comfortable around him. I'm so self-conscious after my ex-husband and how he used to speak  
 308 to me and that kind of thing

309 Q) Have you had any experiences of stigma at all?

310 R) I mean I think I bring it all on myself because if someone annoys me I'll tell them "I'll  
 311 stick a knife in" them so I'll tell them "I've not been to prison for no reason mate" that's all  
 312 they get off me so people around here are quite wary of me because of the extent of the  
 313 offence. I stabbed a girl here \*points to heart\* and it was like 2 centimetres away from the  
 314 heart so I was looking at attempted murder, but instead because I was a juvenile, I had to go  
 315 under a section 53 which is a detainee summary offence was GBH with intent, so that they  
 316 were going to put it down as GBH with intent to kill. I was that close to it being pushed up to

317 manslaughter, the girl that I stabbed, she happens to be a nurse, he was my best friend at  
 318 school and everyone said to me if you can stab your best friend, god knows what you could do  
 319 to your enemies. I turned around and said "you would not like to know because I will not stop  
 320 if you're an enemy, I won't stop until you've taken your last breath". I know that, so I try not  
 321 to get into fights, you know I'll try to walk away because I know once I start, I won't stop.  
 322 That's the time when I really cop it though, because people think I'm backing down, they  
 323 don't know the extent of what I could do, they don't know the full extent that I will go to.  
 324 Ryan's been in prison because somebody was being racist towards his youngest brother in  
 325 Southend, so he got a prison sentence for GBH because he kneecapped a biker with a Jack.

326 Q) Can I ask how many times you've been in prison and for how long for?

327 R) Well I've only been in once, well I've been in twice but the second time it was only  
 328 because my parole was revoked, but I've been really close three times so one of the times, I  
 329 was lucky to get off with a caution because my ex-husband went to hit me so I turned around  
 330 and I slapped him and I knocked him to the floor in 1 slap and he reported me and said I  
 331 scratched him but when they checked my nails they said it was physically impossible because  
 332 at the time I was biting my nails so they were really low down, you know I didn't have these  
 333 claws then \*laughter\*. So I got off with a caution because they found out that he was lying  
 334 about that. The time after that was with my ex-partner, he got me involved with fraud, one of  
 335 his mates would do a shop from Tesco's and get it delivered to your house but we'd go pick it  
 336 up, so I got done for that. There was no way I was going to take the rap for that but then there  
 337 was also no way I was going to tell the cops who it was! Me and Eric had had an argument  
 338 and his mate turned against me, so I did actually phone crime stoppers and I gave them all the  
 339 information, what happened at what house, and then this guy got raided and he was up on  
 340 charges and in that time because I was still on bail but because I had done that, they dropped  
 341 the charges on me. I did it anonymously but obviously the police must have looked into it and  
 342 dropped the charges against me because I told them who had done it so I don't know what  
 343 happened with that but from what I do know he's still doing it now. I just try now to keep out  
 344 of the situation, I can't afford to go back down that road I'm in a good place. So my when I  
 345 was with my ex-partner, we went halves on an Xbox, he knew it was stolen but I didn't  
 346 know... I still got done for handling stolen goods so that was a £450 fine which I'm still  
 347 paying off. So there's been a few times I've nearly landed myself back in prison.

348 Q) Do you have any preference over male or female professionals?

349 R) I'm not bothered as long as they know their job and as long as they don't keep switching  
 350 and changing around. I had to see so many different people and that was a bit much at the  
 351 time, I didn't know how to go from prison to all that. But no, I'd have a preference if it was  
 352 driving though I think I'd rather have a male driving instructor I'm not sure why but yeah.

353 Q) Have there been any other issues have been important to you to do with your release from  
 354 prison whether it is positive or negative but we haven't already talked about?

355 R) It's made me more wary of people, I have learnt not to judge people, it's like with my son  
 356 now he's up on charges, he's been accused of child molesting. Now at one time if somebody  
 357 told me that, I'd have just said I don't want to know them, I wouldn't entertain them, but  
 358 saying that I don't know if it's because it's my son, or if it's because from the age of 13 my  
 359 step dad was wrongly accused of it with his step children, because the children he raised were

360 not his, he couldn't have children. I don't know why I'm like that but I've stood by Jake and  
361 have supported him and I've always said to him since he's moved up here, even yesterday  
362 before I left I gave him a hug and he phoned me at 2:05 this morning to let me know what  
363 was going on, so I don't know if that's just the fact that I've grown up with somebody who's  
364 been wrongfully accused but I've learnt not to judge people, just because somebody has said  
365 that someone else has done XYZ, it doesn't mean that they've done it so I will I will stay with  
366 him till the end and I won't judge a person.

**Appendix 9 - Chloe Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 08/08/16**

**Interviewing: Chloe – Drugs/Alcohol offences.**

Q) Thinking back to before you left prison, was there anything in particular that concerned you, were there any kind of worries you had as you were coming out of prison?

R) I was worried about if things would get back to normal with my family because my time in prison at the beginning affected my family greatly, I was more worried about them than I was myself.

Q) How were things difficult with your family when you went into prison then?

R) My mum suffered badly with her nerves, this was before I had my daughter, she was bad with her nerves but she tried to help me by telling me not to do stuff and react to people, but I ignored her and in the end she suffered because of it and I was more worried more about her than I was myself.

Q) So when you were about to come out of prison then your main worries were about your family would you say? Was there anything else you were worried about?

R) My accommodation, sometimes in prison they can make it a condition of your release that you can't go back to your home address, it depends what kind of offences they are. So my accommodation and just getting back to normality really.

Q) Have you had any problems with substance abuse at all?

R) Yeah.

Q) So when you left prison how did you find coping with that problem? Did you find it was easy to stay off of drugs or alcohol?

R) I used the same day that I came out of prison.

Q) So that was really hard for you?

R) Yeah. I have an addictive personality, I have attention deficit disorder and I suffer, I have always suffered from anxiety, so I have always looked for something there to take that away.

Q) Would you say that's been a bit of a coping mechanism for you then with your anxiety, when you start to feel anxious?

R) At first, but then it had the opposite effect, you know it makes it worse and not better.

Q) Why do you think that it was so difficult to stay off of when you came out of prison?

R) When I came out I wasn't trying to come off. I was in prison a couple of times before I got on drugs, I used to look at people in prison withdrawing and I was like oh my god I can't believe you would let yourself get that way, and then one time when I was in prison I went to court and I met a guy in the court cells and I ended up getting with him when we both ended up getting out of jail and we both got on the drugs, and everything just escalated from there, it was an awful time. He was my daughter's dad, my mum hates him.

Q) Do you have a relationship with him now at all?



38 R) No, I have got a restraining order against him. I made a conscious effort to come off the  
39 drugs, I was on methadone, I had completely stopped using at that time (I did start using  
40 again but you know) and the doctor had put me on medication to help me sleep because my  
41 sleep was the worst thing. He (daughter's dad) was still using and he didn't like the fact that I  
42 had stopped using and that I wasn't wanting to spend my money on it.

43 Q) That must have been really hard for you though if you were trying to make a conscious  
44 effort and you have got somebody else next to you who is wanting you to use.

45 R) Yeah, my family, my mum will tell you herself she has done a lot for him and he is still  
46 using to this day and he is 41 nearly. He walked upstairs and I was in bed, I was asleep for  
47 the first time in years and because I wouldn't wake up he smashed my face, he hit me, he was  
48 just continuously punching me in the face and that's why I've got this (shows damage to  
49 face). I phoned my mum, I managed to grab my phone and text my mum and say "Mum he's  
50 hurting me, phone the police" and my mum got the police and he got arrested, he only got 18  
51 months' probation. We have always had a really fiery relationship, he went to prison just this  
52 December for trying to head-butt me in the street, I was violent as well I'll admit that, I can  
53 sit there on my lonesome and then all of a sudden I'll explode. A couple of years back when  
54 he did that to me in my house I was like "I'm not having this".

55 Q) In terms of healthcare, since you were released from prison how did you find getting  
56 access to healthcare?

57 R) Really really good, I mean just across there at the doctor is a doctors called [*service name*  
58 *removed*], it's a GP service.

59 Q) So does it just specialise in drugs and alcohol then?

60 R) It's like a GP for homeless people, people with issues and stuff like that, and obviously I  
61 had slept on the streets and stuff like that for a long time and that really affected my mum you  
62 know because when I was in my drug use I wouldn't listen to nobody, I wouldn't listen to  
63 nobody and my mum was lying awake at night wondering where her daughter is and what she  
64 is doing, is she (mum) going to get that phone call. Then a fantastic guy that my mum knows  
65 from there called Mike, I ended up getting on a prescription for methadone and then I ended  
66 up getting a house and obviously my ex-partner came and stayed with me for a while, and  
67 then I just couldn't cope with him, you can't be in a relationship where one of them is not  
68 using but the other one is still, so I kicked him out and I have done really really well since.  
69 Then obviously I wasn't using, and if I got myself into stressful situations I had nothing to  
70 cope so I started drinking and drinking. The only thing I can say about being addicted to  
71 alcohol is it's cheaper, so I started doing that instead and that became a whole other problem  
72 really, it took over. With heroin we only used to do like a bag of heroin and then somehow  
73 crack cocaine was rife, and so it's like £10-£15 for a bag of heroin, £10-£15 for a bag of  
74 crack, and we used to mix it together and inject it at the same time.

75 Q) Continuing from healthcare, were there any physical or mental health problems that you  
76 suffered from? This might include contraception or anything like that.

77 R) I had the implant, I did it more as a precaution because I was a prostitute, so I did that as a  
78 precaution. Health wise I suffered scarring due to tissue damage from injecting, they gave me  
79 anti-biotics but it took a long time to heal but I did get given them. Now I've had a tattoo

80 that's infected but I've just called the GP and they've got me in this morning after I've seen  
81 you so hopefully I'll get that sorted.

82 Q) Have you suffered from any mental health problems at all?

83 R) Depression, Anxiety, I have got ADHD.

84 Q) How have you found coping with that mental health since leaving prison?

85 R) I still struggle to this day. Some days are really hard, some days I don't want to get out of  
86 bed. Last year I went to a detox just up in *[place name removed]* for alcohol, and I met a 21-  
87 year-old guy there, and obviously getting attention off of somebody that young you know, it  
88 wasn't a relationship it was more friends with benefits and he had a girlfriend as well. I'm  
89 really sensitive as well, and I get stressed because then every time I knew he left my house I  
90 knew he was going around to her, I would get stressed out and I would go to the shop and  
91 drink myself to sleep. I get anxious a lot and like I said that's where the drugs started from  
92 really but in the end it made it worse.

93 Q) Did you get a thorough diagnosis from of your doctor for your anxiety and your  
94 depression?

95 R) Anxiety and ADHD I did, but depression is just one of those things I've had said to me  
96 because I'd get quite low a lot.

97 Q) Did the doctor talk you through it when he diagnosed you with your anxiety and ADHD?  
98 You know, explain what they were and how it happens and affects you?

99 R) Well no because I knew what they were though, so it was just like 'it's this, here's some  
100 tablets for anxiety'.

101 Q) So you are getting treatment as well then?

102 R) Yeah, I am on some tablets called mirtazapine for my anxiety. I did get treatment for my  
103 ADHD but then when I went to prison, this is the funny thing, well not funny, I was on  
104 Ritalin for years for my ADHD, then when I went to prison, now Ritalin is a controlled form  
105 of amphetamine, it stimulates the brain to help higher your concentration and that, and then  
106 when I went to prison the doctor turned around and said I'm not prescribing you in prison, so  
107 he made me go cold turkey.

108 Q) So he didn't like wean you off it or anything?

109 R) No no no, cold turkey, and then somebody that I was padded up in a cell with tried me on  
110 some of this and that's how it all started.

111 Q) So that's how you got on the drugs?

112 R) Yeah.

113 Q) Would you say that having the mental health has made the process more difficult for you?

114 R) Oh god yeah but like it's got worse as I've gone along.

115 Q) How did you find finding housing and somewhere to live when you left prison?

116 R) The last time I was in I went to stay with a friend until I got my housing sorted out and my  
117 friend was a user so it just started again. I was in denial, I thought yeah I've been in prison,  
118 I've detoxed and all of that, I told myself that I didn't have a problem.

119 Q) In terms of getting that housing, you said you were homeless for a while.

120 R) A long time.

121 Q) Was that because you weren't looking for somewhere or was that because you couldn't  
122 find anywhere?

123 R) I wasn't looking for somewhere, I wasn't looking after myself, I was so off my face I  
124 didn't know what I was doing.

125 Q) So what would you class as being a suitable place to live? When you were looking for  
126 somewhere what were you looking for, was it just the bare bones with a roof?

127 R) A roof over my head, when you've been on the streets and lived the life I have, just a roof  
128 over your head is so much more comforting, you can't be picky, you have got to appreciate  
129 things.

130 Q) Would you say that the place you have found is suitable? Are you happy with the housing  
131 you are in now?

132 R) Yeah, it's got a lot of work to do with it, it's a bit of a mess because like I said I left rehab  
133 last year for drinking that lad was coming down to my house we were drinking, I wasn't  
134 looking after my house, it got a bit of a mess, I ended up going back on detox again a few  
135 week ago, I have not seen him since, since then I have just been raring to go and get my  
136 house sorted and stuff.

137 Q) So it still needs things doing to it but it's generally alright, you are happy with it? Are you  
138 happy with the location?

139 R) My mam though, she says "Errrr! Tidy your house it's a f\*\*king mess!" like that and I am  
140 like "Oh shut up!".

141 Q) Are you happy with where it is situated as well?

142 R) Yeah, it's close in town, so there's shops, *Morrisons*, *Sainsburys*, supermarkets yeah, and  
143 obviously my mum can come straight into town and park at mine you know.

144 Q) Have you looked for any employment, volunteer work, or education, since you left  
145 prison?

146 R) Yes, I have done two courses at *[service name removed]* last year. In 1997 I did an NVQ  
147 in IT and an NVQ in business admin, and I was sat in the job centre last year and I was like I  
148 need to get out and I need to do something so they sent me on these courses, basically just  
149 brushing up on my IT skills because obviously 1997 is quite a while ago now you know and  
150 I've got the certificates. So I did that every Monday.

151 Q) So have you ever tried looking for a job at all?

152 R) Yeah I have, but with me I see jobs and I think oh I would like to do something like that  
153 but then I think nah I would get laughed at, I think it's a confidence thing with me. I mean my

154 mum would tell you herself, I am very loud and very brass, but sometime even the loudest  
155 and brass people put on a front.

156 Q) So why did you think you would get laughed at?

157 R) Because of my bad history and stuff.

158 Q) So family and motherhood, can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your family  
159 when you left prison?

160 R) A few times that I went in it was because of stuff to do with my mum's neighbour, and I  
161 went back home to my mums, but when I met my daughter's dad I started taking drugs, and I  
162 stole off of my mum, and then that's when my stepdad said enough's enough you are not  
163 coming home, you are 19-20 you stand on your own two feet. Then I got pregnant as soon as  
164 I got out of prison last September, I got pregnant with my daughter, and because I had never  
165 really had any sense of responsibility before that I just wasn't bothered about looking for a  
166 job or somewhere to live, I just wanted to be looked after. At the time I told myself my  
167 daughters dad is looking after me and I couldn't go home, you know puppy dog eyes and all  
168 that.

169 Q) How have you found your relationship with your daughter?

170 R) It's the best I can hope for, it's difficult, it's difficult, we don't get along a lot of the time  
171 because she is 15 years old, she's got a gob on her. She has some medical thing and she turns  
172 around to me and says "If it wasn't for you I wouldn't have this, if it wasn't for you taking  
173 drugs while you were pregnant I wouldn't have this" and some of the stuff she comes out  
174 with to me I would be raging because if it was anybody else saying it to me like my  
175 daughter's dad I would... you know. My mum has had to stand between us before don't get  
176 me wrong.

177 Q) Can you discuss a bit about reuniting with your friends when you left prison?

178 R) I went straight back to my ex-partner. My support worker picked me up from prison and  
179 dropped me off in *[place name removed]*, and my ex-partner was begging at the time because  
180 obviously I wasn't there, so the thing is I knew where he would be, I knew exactly where he  
181 would be and I just whistled, because we always used to whistle each other, and I knew  
182 where he would be and that was it, I just went straight to him.

183 Q) You've already mentioned about your partner and how that was difficult with him taking  
184 drugs, what about friends, did you have any friends that were taking drugs?

185 R) All of them were. I go to church on a Sunday, I have a couple of good friends, friends who  
186 I grew up with who were friends with my mum as well and they have always supported me.  
187 When Emily was a baby and I was in prison they used to fetch Emily up to see me in prison,  
188 but thankfully she was a baby, she wasn't even a year old so she didn't really know. I am still  
189 friends with them to this day, they are the ones that are not taking drugs.

190 Q) So what kind of support or help have you had since leaving prison?

191 R) I have had support and help with my housing through housing associations, I have had  
192 support from drug and alcohol projects, and my mum and my family. I don't know if you

193 have ever met my stepdad, he's mad, my mum bought him the latest *PlayStation* just so he  
194 would go upstairs and get out of the way!

195 Q) Would you say that the support you received was helpful?

196 R) Yeah because I am still to this day clean of class A drugs and blah blah blah. I feel, I don't  
197 know, I feel humbled by the amount of support, I don't know, it's like, I owe a lot to those  
198 people who stuck by me even though I was an awful person, I owe my life to them, it's like  
199 the saying goes, I owe my loyalty to those who never made me question theirs. You see what  
200 I mean?

201 Q) What are your opinions or thoughts on gendered support, so having female staff vs male  
202 staff, or support services being all-female environments?

203 R) Not bothered really, I've always got on well with guys and girls so it's not something I'd  
204 have noticed either way.

205 Q) Has there ever been any areas that you could have used more help with, or areas that could  
206 have been improved?

207 R) Things to do during the day, because what it was this year with the drug and alcohol  
208 service, the issue with the drug and alcohol services is that there are loads of different ones,  
209 and they are all very scattered, they all have their own different rules about getting  
210 medication, and then the council to make cuts got all these services to merge together, and it  
211 was really really really scatty, they didn't know one group from another, it was just really  
212 scatty. I mean I have been through like AA meetings at the church alcoholics anonymous,  
213 and it's like when you hear other people sharing their stories it's like listening to yourself you  
214 know, and that really helps. But the thing with me is that some of the meetings are long and I  
215 have not got the attention, that's probably the ADHD, I don't have the attention span and  
216 concentration, I do go for as long as I can, and that is still showing my support. I like talking  
217 to you now, I like doing things like this, I've made a DVD for the NHS at the doctors for  
218 when I was still using, a see me now to see me then. I have done it a few times because I will  
219 always be an addict; you are never cured but yeah.

220 Q) So was there any support that you would have needed that wasn't there at all?

221 R) I would have liked more support in my anxiety. Like I say since the council merged all the  
222 drug and alcohol services together, obviously it was a new service coming out called [*service*  
223 *name removed*] it's called now and it was very scatty. I personally think I have an addictive  
224 personality obviously, but I think I have a bit of OCD, because another thing that triggers my  
225 stress is my routine, even now I like to shut myself away at home, I like coming out and  
226 doing things like this that's good for me but sometimes if my mum rings and is like "right I  
227 am coming over this morning" my hands start getting sweaty and I panic because it's  
228 different and it's not in my routine, and I never really had support for that. I'm going to speak  
229 to the GP this morning anyway. My mum has anxiety and a lot of my mum's anxiety is  
230 because of me.

231 Q) Would you say yours is social anxiety?

232 R) The guy I was seeing last year from rehab, he had a girlfriend, but by the time I found out  
233 I had gotten in a bit too deep, I felt more than he did, even now I am constantly thinking

234 about him, anxious about him, worrying about him. He is nearly 22, he has got liver disease  
 235 and he is drinking vodka every day and I get myself worked up because my daughter's dad,  
 236 three of his brothers have died from alcohol, and I get scared because obviously this guy is  
 237 somebody that I care a lot about. I work myself up into a frenzy, and my mum will tell you.  
 238 When she finds out I am arguing with somebody on *Facebook* she goes mad, she's like  
 239 "Chloe shut-up!". The daft thing is as well, speaking to my friends on *Facebook*, I get  
 240 comfort from speaking to them, because I am on my own and I know it sounds bad and I  
 241 know some people will deny it but *Facebook* is addictive as well, as soon as you wake up on  
 242 a morning everybody reaches for their phone.

243 Q) Have you experienced anything, positive or negative, from the community? Like society  
 244 wise, so maybe neighbours or people you have come across.

245 R) Neighbours have helped me out with food and money if I have been a bit short of money.

246 Q) So you have had a positive response in that sense then?

247 R) Yeah and like I put on *Facebook* this morning, and obviously I didn't put your name or  
 248 anything, I put that I was meeting somebody that was doing a bit of research into my  
 249 background blah blah blah and everybody has commented on it saying "Good on you  
 250 Chloe!". Like I say, if I can stop one person from going through what I'm going through then  
 251 it would be worth it.

252 \*Interviewer describes more about the study and what it aims to achieve\*

253 R) I think the problem with housing is that it's not fast enough. That is the problem, because  
 254 a lot of girls that I see and that I know, they don't have anywhere to go, they don't have  
 255 anywhere. Even knowing that somebody is there for you when you are out, that means more,  
 256 and when you are in prison letters put a smile on anybody's face.

257 Q) When you were coming out of prison do you get, benefits wise, do you get any sort of  
 258 lump sum?

259 R) No you have to make a fresh claim and you don't get any money until you do. When you  
 260 are released from prison you get a discharge grant which is about £45-£50, and that is  
 261 supposed to last you until you make a claim for benefits. It's all done online now, and when  
 262 it's online you have got to wait for a date to go into the job centre and then do your claim  
 263 process, and it can be literally like 2-3 weeks before you get your money when you get out.

264 Q) Are there any other issues throughout the process of leaving prison, good or bad, that we  
 265 haven't already talked about?

266 R) I wish there was more to try and rehabilitate offenders with their children.

267 Q) More support reconnecting you or like family therapy kind of thing where you work  
 268 together?

269 R) Yeah because me and my daughter argue more like sisters, she gets very nasty sometimes,  
 270 I feel sad for her because of her mum and her dad you know, she didn't ask to be brought into  
 271 this situation in a world like this. So yeah I definitely think more help with offenders and  
 272 their young children that's important. Parenting. Therapy like you said definitely.

273 Q) Did you have any problems getting all your old possessions back? What happens with  
274 them?

275 R) Your possessions get locked away, anything that I have with me when I go to prison or  
276 when I am arrested goes to court, house keys phone stuff like that, but where I am now, if I  
277 got locked up now I still have my tenancy so I know that would be looked after and obviously  
278 they would keep an eye on my possessions in the house, but anything that I have physically  
279 on me goes to prison with me.

280 Q) What about all the clothes at your house for instance and other things?

281 R) They would stay at my house wherever they were when I went. Some will get thrown  
282 away.

283 Q) I was going to say do you ever lose anything like that?

284 R) Clothes, photographs, cards. I have lost loads of photographs of my daughter.

**Appendix 10 - Janine Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and Transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 15/06/16**

**Interviewing: Janine – Offences were drugs/alcohol and robbery.**

Q) Thinking back to when you were about to leave prison, what would you say were your main priorities/main worries?

R) So I've done 26 jail sentences and I suppose when I first went to jail, it was where I was going to live. That's the first part of my jail sentences, middle part of my jail sentences I wasn't really bothered, it was about where I was going to get money from to get drugs, and then at the back end of my using when I kind of thought I need to change something, it was gonna be, how am I gonna do this? How am I gonna live life on life's terms? How do I do that? Yeah, I suppose addressing your drug issue came in the last two sentences that I did, but it was always where I was gonna live, that and my children. It's really bizarre because its three years since I did a jail sentence, which isn't very long but it is for me, because I went to jail when I was 18 and I'm 49 now d'you know. I became institutionalised really, and the state took care of me, I just drifted along, my priority was drugs.

Q) What would you have liked or what did you expect in terms of support?

R) I was very demanding! So I was on a methadone script, up until like four and a half years ago, all through my sentences, when they first started doing it, so it was always making sure my script was ok, is somebody going to pick me up at the gate from services? Which didn't happen very often, but sometimes it did, and then once you're released your first port of call is always, if you're on license or tag or whatever then its probation and then drug services for my prescription.

Q) When you were released, how did you find coping with your substance abuse/addiction problem?

R) As in what do prison offer?

Q) As in when you came out, having been in prison, was it easy enough to stay off the drugs?

R) No, no, no, all prison does is remove you from society, that's all it does, it doesn't tackle any problems, they'll tell you that they do, but they don't, they offer no support, they have absolutely no understanding of what's going on, and we're seen as been quite, not only are we criminals, but we're drug addicts as well, and on top of that we're women - we're seen as quite, as the dregs of life. I suppose. But you'll get people who are working in prison, you'll get a small part of them that actually do wanna do good but have no understanding of what addiction is really about. So all you've done is, you've been to prison with a drug habit and you can probably keep that going in jail if you're clever enough, I did, many a time, and then you're put back into society with the same problem, nothing is solved. So to answer your question, no it wasn't easy, I never did it until that last time.

Q) What about the last time you came out of prison?

R) Cool so, I've always had loads of support, and Ruth will tell you, I was very very chaotic, I mean the person you see today, isn't the person I was, I'm completely different. I mean I always had a bit of a nice nature, bit of a blagger, so I got charged with, it started in 2010 and I got charged with a serious robbery charge, and a probation officer came up to do yet another



pre-sentence report, and she made a massive difference to my life, and I was really rude to her, when I first met her I just said to her “why are you here? I don’t even know who you are, I want somebody who knows me”, and she was really patient and she just said look Janine, what I’ve read about you on paper, is horrendous, but I’m going to forget all that and I’m going to treat it as like I don’t know anything. So and she said I’m going to forget all that and she said the robbery charge you are on, because I was looking at 4/5 years, I don’t think you deserve that, and I’m going to help you, I didn’t hear anything else except that she might get me out of jail, because that’s what I wanted, I wanted out of jail. And that’s what happened – I got 18 month, she got me out on the tag and I went to see her, and as part of my tag and part of the conditions that were attached to it, she said I had to engage in drug services, not just turn up, I had to engage. The first condition she put on it, was that I attended one appointment every fortnight at a time and I did it, and then I breached it, because it was slowly do it, I mean I had 30 years of chaos to sort out and then from there I went back to prison and she came up to see me and she just said, you need to go to the basement, she said you need to live a live abstinent, I said what you talking about, she said you need nothing in your system what so ever, I said “well what will I do! What no drinking or nothing whatsoever?” And she said “no”. And I couldn’t actually see it, and then I went to *[service name removed]* and they taught me everything I needed to know and that’s where the help came in.

Q) Since being released from prison, how have you found access to healthcare such as finding a dentist, a GP/medication?

R) Being clean headed, and not being defensive, and not being arrogant and not being aggressive – Yeah its ok! But along with addiction, comes all those behaviours and that’s where the barrier is when you need your health sorting, and with getting your benefits and stuff like that, I’ve done lots of talks about it because actually were not that bad people, we’re just really unwell. We have this thing in our head where, in our brain where there’s no cut off point regardless of the consequences, you know I lost my children, I was a working girl in and out of jail, digging my body all over, in hospitals nearly dying, and I still didn’t stop because I didn’t know how to.

Q) How have you found coping with your mental health since reintegrating and release from prison?

R) Yeah... I’m not clinically depressed, I don’t have mental health issues, but if you looked at the behaviour that I did you’d say that’s quite mental, so if you look at where I work now, I see people coming in here who have dual diagnosis who have clearly got mental health Issues, I didn’t have that.

Q) Have you met any difficulties with finding suitable housing post release?

R) I’ve been homeless loads of times, I’ve lived on the streets and all sorts, and if they did find you somewhere, it was always..... well d’you know what actually, I’ve had some bad housing, but because I was quite good at talking to support workers, I could get round them, they did look after me really, when I look back I’ve had new apartments and I was in the *[service name removed]* project, I mean I abused it all...coming into recovery, what now three years, I had my own house then but I’ve been supported with it really the most of the time I suppose yeah.

Q) What would you look for then?

85 R) I didn't do anything, everyone did it for me.

86 Q) if you were to then what would you have wanted?

87 R) I suppose, at the time when I was using and just out of prison, I suppose you would take  
88 almost anything, but there is a cut-off point, there is areas and I wouldn't have gone there, I'd  
89 have rather stayed on the street, so mainly the area I suppose and where it was more  
90 important.

91 Q) How easy would you say finding employment was when you left prison?

92 R) No, coming out of prison with a record? No. you don't get a job, not with an addiction. It  
93 wasn't even mentioned to me, I never thought I'd get a job, I thought I was just going to be  
94 an addict in jail all my life. Never no, that's only come since coming into recovery from the  
95 drugs and stuff, where I've sorted my own education out and going and doing courses and  
96 doing voluntary work, and that was down to me. That was down to the basement telling me  
97 and encouraging me and telling me I was worth something.

98 Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your family? How this has felt for you  
99 after coming out of prison?

100 R) I didn't speak to my mum for 12 years. We speak now and we get on now.

101 Q) When did you start speaking again then was that recently?

102 R) Yeah that was after my last sentence once I got my head sorted and everything.

103 Q) and how did you find that? Seeing your mum again?

104 R) Yeah, we missed out on a lot of years together didn't we but I have an understanding of  
105 how she must have felt now, because I didn't, I blamed her. And like I have a healthy  
106 relationship with my three girls now but I have a son though who is 12 and he was taken off  
107 me when he was 2, my sister took him, and I still don't speak to her, that hasn't been  
108 rekindled yet. I don't know what's going to happen with that. I have faith it'll work out. We  
109 will sort it out somehow.

110 Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your children? How this has felt for you  
111 after coming out of prison?

112 R) Yeah good, the girls, my middle girl cleared off to Australia, because she just couldn't  
113 watch me destroy myself, she came back this year with my grandson and I met him for the  
114 first time, he's four, d'you know I could get really emotional about this. My eldest one, she's  
115 in the *[service name removed – substance misuse support]* project, she's alright is Becky but  
116 she's very much a product of my behaviour totally but we have a good relationship, and my  
117 youngest yeah we're great, she's off on Monday for two and a half years travelling. But I'm  
118 solid as a mum, I'm solid as a mum, and even though I was crazy in my addiction, they've  
119 always said they knew I loved them. And I took them on some mad adventures as I'm sure  
120 you can imagine!

121 Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your friends? How this has felt for you  
122 after coming out of prison?

123 R) So I have two friends that I've had since we were kids and I took a different road to them,  
124 they didn't go down the road I went to, and we've always kept in touch. I never had any

125 friends in addiction, they were always associates, I had boyfriends and drama drama drama  
126 but no it was always associates, and I always kinda went back to them and avoided anybody  
127 that... I couldn't look anybody in the eye. I just felt so ashamed.

128 Q) do you think at the time you would have called them associates or friends?

129 R) Id have called them associates then too, yeah yeah.

130 Q) Can you discuss a little bit about reuniting with your partner? How this has felt for you  
131 after coming out of prison?

132 R) Same, I was married for a good number of years and he did prison before me, it's never, I  
133 mean I know now I'm in a healthy relationship now with somebody and even though I was  
134 married for so long and we had children and everything like that, the thing that glued us was  
135 drugs and the lifestyle we lead. When that broke down I went with somebody else, and the  
136 same happened again, I mean I actually did care very deeply for him and I loved him at the  
137 time but now I know it was all based on... there was no foundation. Whereas if I look at who  
138 I'm with now, we're both in recovery, I stayed away from men for two and a half years to get  
139 to know who I was and the guy that I'm with now it's so different, I mean we love... I think  
140 we love each other! ....Hahaha I think so!

141 Q) Would you say then that it wasn't until that relationship had broken down that you were  
142 able to get off drugs? Do you think that was detrimental to your drug taking?

143 R) I think with addicts, it was very co-dependent yeah, and I think that if we can get  
144 somebody to countersign our behaviour, and visa versa, if I countersigned their behaviour, it  
145 kind of makes it alright because you're not on your own, because someone else is behaving  
146 the same way as you. We call it denial now. But I think it's easier, my personal view, and I  
147 tell this to girls and boys here, it's easier to remain abstinent if.... I mean we have a rule here  
148 that you don't get into new relationships, but I stress in any group I do is just find out who  
149 you are first because one thing that will always take you back is a relationship, back out the  
150 door that is, back using and back to jail, is a relationship or a resentment against somebody.  
151 Those two factors. I watch it all the time and I've been that way myself I have so much  
152 experience around it myself.

153 Q) What do you mean by resentment against somebody then?

154 R) So when I stopped using, I was in utter shock for two years of facing life, and I mean  
155 shock, I just couldn't face life, if I wasn't talking about drugs prison or swearing I didn't have  
156 very much to say, and then I would look at other people's lives and I would start casting them  
157 out and pulling them down due to resentment against what they had that I didn't or their  
158 behaviour because they thought they were superior, it's all just mad but people, addicts  
159 especially, cot for resentment and don't know how do let go of it and before you know it they  
160 are back out.

161 Q) How satisfied have you been with the support in place for all of these areas since you left  
162 prison? For example, has there been any support in place that you have felt has been really  
163 helpful in your transition, or any in place that has been less helpful, or even absent?

164 R) Since leaving, if we go back on my last sentence where I was ready to receive the support,  
165 I had *DISC* which was Michelle, she was my prescriber, well she didn't prescribe but she was

my key worker who got my methodone prescription and stuff like that, but when I came off methodone four and a half years ago, I still went to prison after and she always continued to support me because she knew me and we had built up a friendship. Probation, Jill the girl that I told you about, I wasn't even on probation and she still carried on supporting me. *[service name removed]* project, Ruth supported me in her own little way, she didn't know it but she did, and I cause them problems, you know I was nuts, so I caused quite a few problems, but they never gave up on me.

Q) How would you say the support you had through them services could have been improved? (For women coming out of prison)

R) I think, and this is the work that I want to do eventually, I think doing outside support is great, if people will engage, but you are not going to get it, it's very very rare, maybe, but if we go into jail and start supporting them in jail, because the thing is in jail you're in a cell, and like I said you move from society and there's not much support and then you are released, so if you have built up no relationships with anybody, so you are going to go to your old associates and your old thing that you know because that's where you feel supported, that's where you fit in, whereas if you can go into jail and start supporting them in jail ready to be released and build up a relationship I think you will catch people. Its needed much earlier in the process.

Q) Finally, have there been any issues you have found to be of importance to you, good or bad, that we haven't already discussed?

R) Coming out of jail, more support is needed, because especially with women you know they go in and prison can become almost like a family, and it can always become like a home to these girls that haven't gotten out yet, and there is so much emotional stuff with women. So a woman and a man have children, and they both get charged with the same charge, and they both get the same jail sentence, the shame is on the woman for losing the children, always is. The man might get mentioned, and this has happened to me, 'mother of three gets jail sentence' and I got the same sentence as Andy (partner), but the shame was on me. So you have got that, then you have got child abuse, which men probably suffer as well, but we are on about females, then you have got rape issues, then you have got addiction, and prostitution, they have really really really damaged women.

Q) What's your opinion then on gendered support?

R) I think it's important, I worked for *[service name removed]* before I came here, because I worked for probation believe it or not and they gave me a job, so I worked in probation for seven months but I wanted to come and work in recovery. I feel, and I will say this about even here as well, we didn't have enough females, I have been a big advocate of females, we have got female housing we have been running and I feel that men are supported more by men so why should women be different.

I think with a man, and I say it a lot, I am quite vocal around here, feed them, carry them, and tell them where to go and they will do it. Women not so much, we are emotional characters, so I think it goes back to cavemen, like men are cavemen aren't they, they will just revert back to their cave, whereas women will scream, as long as men have got their basic needs. Whereas females are so emotional, we think with our hearts, men think with their heads or their dick. So a man looks at a woman to plant a seed, to grow a baby, women have to carry

209    them children in and have all them emotional hormones, so women are difficult, so people  
210    tend to pull away, but actually, honestly, my experience, especially with working with  
211    women which is what I am doing now, is you get some where you just read them what's  
212    going on and pick up on one of their assets and feed into that asset, forget the negative, feed  
213    their asset and they will bloom.

**Appendix 11 - Ruth Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 13/06/16**

**Interviewing: Ruth – works with Males and Females on rehousing and practical issues.**

Q) As staff supporting women post-incarceration, what are the most difficult things to support women with after release?

R) I think they find it quite difficult coming out of prison and not having anywhere to live and accessing accommodation is quite difficult for women, especially if they have drugs or alcohol problems, there's not many places that you know like hostels and that that if you have to meet a criteria and sometimes if a person is drinking or if they are a drug user they might not meet the criteria so it's quite difficult for women that's been in prison, to come out and get housing, housing is quite a big thing.

Q) What would you say is often the main priority for women post-incarceration?

R) I think that the first thing that they want to get sorted out is their benefits, an income, because obviously if they haven't got an income, they can't actually move forward anywhere or, they need their income obviously to survive basically, but they might not think it's their main priority.

Q) What would you say they see as being their main priority as being then?

R) It depends on their frame of mind when they're coming out of prison, if someone has a drug or alcohol problem then it will be to seek out old friends and it will be to either score or buy alcohol.

Q) Do you think that there are any differences between the way males and females prioritise getting things sorted when they're released?

R) Not really no, because you find that with the lads as well, sometimes their benefits are not the first thing they actually think of, because when they first come out of prison they'll have a small amount of money, so until that runs out they don't actually think about their benefits and it also depends what frame of mind they're in – if someone's been given the chance in prison to access housing before they come out they're usually in quite a good frame of mind, the person will be in a... because if they know if in prison you know that you've actually accessed somewhere to stay, when you're coming out on the day I think your priorities are a little bit different, because you know that you're going to have a roof over your head whereas if you haven't, then your priorities change a little bit.

Mind you, seeing their kids is something they always want but I think from my experience, the people I've usually worked with, their children have either been looked after by someone else and there hasn't actually been any contacts, as much as it's what they want, I mean it does come into the support elements of a person who has come out of prison but usually but not initially because initially its putting a roof over someone's head, getting some benefits in place, if they have a roof over their head they need gas and electric, they'll need food, they'll need a food hamper and things like that so I think children might be a priority more for someone who is coming out and going back home to their children where they would be providing for their children or where they're back into a family home, whereas the people we usually work with, they won't have access to their children and that their children will have

either been fostered or looked after by family relatives and things like that and some will say that, that is their main priority and for some it will be that but again depending on if they've got alcohol or drug misuse issues, the children usually come a bit further down the line. And I know that sounds awful but that is the reality, we can't help with that straight away. That's not for everybody obviously, everyone is different, because you will get the odd one where their family will give them a lot of support and already have that in place so for those it isn't something that needs help or support and where someone's got a lot of support already in their family, they don't have as many needs as someone who is gonna be totally homeless where they don't actually have anyone.

Q) Have you noticed then any differences between males and females in the way they experience their resettlement, so maybe their feelings, the way they come across to you?

R) I think when someone's been released from prison if they're coming into our service and they know they've got a roof over their head then they will tell you that they're very motivated, they want to sort themselves out, they want to go to *[service name removed]*, they don't want to use again, but the reality of that sometimes is that they will say all those things and once they've met up with an old acquaintance or something like that, then that can quickly quickly change. So and I think that's the same for women, women seem to be more, I don't know how to put this, women seem to be more homely, rather than the men, they want to, you'll find the women do sort of settle, some of them settle better than the men, because they've got that roof and they want to sort of make it theirs but again it depends on what life they've lead up to going to prison and obviously what their intentions are. Some of them seem to keep going around and around in a circle, they'll go to prison, come out of prison, go back to prison, come out of prison, and they don't seem to be able to break that cycle, and that's quite sad to see really and we say "it's not their time at the moment", and also the reality is that when someone comes out of prison, when they do put in for their benefits, they have a waiting time and that waiting time can be quite a long time and if a woman is a street worker it is very easy to go and earn some money and if someone doesn't want to do that then our job is to make sure that they have food and gas and electric and things like that because we don't want them going back street working. We get them registered with *[service name removed]* so that they have support around that because if you haven't got any money, like our clients, they're gonna do what they know best and they're going to go out shoplifting so then they're back in court in a few weeks and then the cycle starts again.

Q) Do you feel that the service you provide as it is currently offered is adequate or specialised enough in guiding these women throughout their transition?

R) Yeah, we feel confident. There's a lot of other services out there that complement our service, and what happens is that when we first take a client on we might see that client every single day and I say that the first two months are absolutely crucial and it's about getting that client accessing places, some work with street workers, some with women, some work with families and things like that so if you get a client in those services really really quickly you've got a better chance of them staying out of prison and doing well so it's not just about our service it's about other services and the connections that you have and putting in the legwork with that person, obviously all our clients are adults they're not babies, but it is a little bit like holding their hands at first and that's okay because they're very vulnerable when they come out of prison, especially some women depending on the experiences that they've

had like obviously if someone has been to prison a lot, loads and loads of times then they'll be used to that, and some of them will tell you that prison doesn't bother them but other people obviously it does bother them, but yeah for some of them it becomes a way of life doesn't it. If someone hasn't got a home and they're sofa surfing with friends and things like that and they haven't got any stability in their life and they're either a drinker or a drug user then actually going back to prison can be a rest for them and a lot of clients tell you that they will go back to prison as a way of having some rest and so that they can actually detox.

Q) Do you feel that you are well enough equipped to support these women throughout their leave from prison, whether that is regarding funding or training?

R) We get by, I mean training yeah but funding we could always use more of, the more we have the more we can house people so really that's not something we'd ever have enough of!

Q) From your experiences, what would you say that women need in terms of support post-release?

They need support with housing, they need support with *[service name removed]* connections, if they've been a street worker they need support accessing specialised groups, that are purely just for women, if you've experienced domestic violence or things like that then it would be the *[service name removed]* and there's *[service name removed]* as well who deal with those who have experienced domestic violence and it's about getting everybody to work together for these women and that is usually what happens because we are only a very small service and we usually work very closely with like the probation so if someone is on license and they miss an appointment they get breached, so it's about making sure they can get to their appointments as well as when they first come out they only have a small amount of money and they can't even afford the bus fare – they might have their appointment in *[area name removed]*, they might have their appointment in *[area name removed]*, if they have 5 appointments with 5 strangers, it's just not realistic, they won't end up going, it's all the tiny things like those that make a big difference, and if somebody has got that support, then they will feel more equipped to move forward, whereas if they haven't got that support then they're going to feel more down and more depressed and they're just going to go back to their old life that they knew.

Q) You mentioned then about services like the *[service name removed]*, would you say then that you feel that having gender specific female services like that to signpost to helps?

R) Yeah definitely, yeah yeah yeah.

Q) How do you find offering support to both genders independently?

R) I would say that we all find it quite easy to work with men or women. We have had an issue where we have had neighbour complaints that have been about males and that neighbour did ask that we don't put females in a house but the thing is some females can be worse than males. So I don't think that there's any difference, they can all be nuisance neighbours, they can all end up disengaging in support, anyone can end up relapsing with drugs and drink whether they're male or female, so I don't think it really makes any difference, the services that are out there are there for male and female so to us I don't think it really matters, it's not an issue really. It is quite nice to get women clients sometimes because we do get a lot of men, so when we do get girls it is really nice for the service because we



128 don't get many really, we've never had half and half, we usually get I would say at the most  
129 30% female to 70% males but that's at the most, usually it's at 10% or 20% females.

130 Q) Would you say you alter your support and approach to clients based on their gender or is it  
131 more individual specific?

132 R) I think because it's an individual support, so no, it's about that person, and what their  
133 needs are at that time, It's not about whether a person is male or female, it is about their  
134 needs and their individual circumstances and its totally about that, so when we're moving  
135 someone in there's just certain things that I would do like the tenancy agreement and housing  
136 benefit, after those it's about that individual and its based around that and what they want and  
137 their needs, and that is it.

138 Q) Have you found when working with clients that they have been able to keep their  
139 substance abuse under control post-incarceration?

140 R) Not when they go and go back to their old relationships and just start it all back up again  
141 no, but then I think that's where it is totally about where a person is at in their life, some  
142 people you will see and they'll tell you that yes they're at *[service name removed]* and stuff  
143 like that and that they're not using but If someone's had a relapse, it becomes quite apparent  
144 that they've had a relapse because they'll become chaotic, they won't want to see you or  
145 anything like that and again this comes down to the individual person as to whether they can  
146 keep that under control, and that's about them not about who they have associated with, I'll  
147 give you an example, one girl once said to me 'this is the first time I've come out of prison  
148 and actually wanted to sort my life out, usually the first thing I wanna do is go score'', so it is  
149 about the person, and where they are in their life, some people you can see that it's the right  
150 time and then other people you can see that it's not and then there's another sort of people  
151 that might be on a script but they will use on paydays, and only paydays, and so they won't,  
152 even though they're on a prescription and things like that, and they call it a treat, and so on  
153 paydays they might go out and get drunk for a couple of days or they might use drugs and it  
154 is totally about the person. But that person who uses on paydays, some can usually for the  
155 other few weeks keep things totally under control, some will be totally broke then for the rest  
156 of the month and so they end up going back into old habits for money, thieving, street  
157 working and what have you, so it is about the person.

158 Q) Would you say that there have been any health or mental health problems within women  
159 leaving prison from your experience?

160 R) I think that for women, they probably seek more help when they have anxiety and  
161 depression, where men they don't probably seek the help, yet you can see that the problem is  
162 actually there, and so for some people it'll be that you encourage that support for them, and  
163 then there's another group of people who have come out of prison that they will all say the  
164 same thing, that they suffer from anxiety they suffer from depression and they're on lots of  
165 different medications for depression and things like that or for like pain relief, nerve damage  
166 or stuff like that and they'll come out of prison and they're on medicines that are really...  
167 they're not actually on heroine... but like prescribed medication and they'll be abusing it.  
168 That impacts on a lot of stuff because you've got like a group and its like they've been in  
169 prison that long they come out saying the same thing but then you've got another group  
170 where you've got to identify if they have any mental health problems or things like that and  
171 then you've got another group that will actively seek that out and are aware of that and they

172 know themselves better do you know what I mean. I think that probably because we've  
173 worked with more men, I'm probably going to say that most men have got depression and  
174 stuff like that but don't go and seek out help and support if we had 50/50 then I think it's  
175 probably equal between them. I think depression and anxiety and things like that would be  
176 equal. Some people will go to the doctor and tell them that... one lad went to the doctor and  
177 said he was epileptic and got some prescription drugs but he abused them, some people will  
178 misuse prescription drugs and they will do anything to seek them out and do anything to con  
179 the doctor and things like that do you know what I mean?

180 Q) From that then, how easy do you think it is for these people coming out of prison to seek  
181 healthcare?

182 R) I think if they know where to go for it then it is quite easy because there is, obviously if  
183 they're coming to our service then the first thing that we do is get them a GP, that is the first  
184 thing, it's about being signposted to that, but obviously if someone comes out and they  
185 haven't got anywhere, they're not going to register with a GP, but if they access *[service*  
186 *name removed]*, *[service name removed]* or the probation, and probation will tell them that  
187 there's a Whitehouse in town, and they'll probably go and register there. So I would say that  
188 most people know that, and in some services they'll have a nurse that comes in once a week  
189 to deal with any complaints or anything that anyone's got.

190 Q) So is that to do with the accommodation that they're placed in, the nurse or is that to do  
191 with the individual and their probation and things?

192 R) If you go to, like our homeless shelter down in *[place name removed]*, we have a nurse  
193 comes every week, so that anyone with any health problems can go see the nurse, so they can  
194 access the nurse and I'm sure that the has something the same, and probation and *[service*  
195 *name removed]*, they are really good actually because obviously they have on-site GP's that  
196 prescribe at *[service name removed]* and down at the probation they've got a mental health  
197 worker as well so if anyone is going to go through these services then their health will be  
198 picked up somewhere unless you are properly street homeless and you don't actually access  
199 anywhere. There is a lot of services out there but it is totally about the person accessing it.

200 Q) How have you found the ease of finding suitable housing post-incarceration for these  
201 women? Would you say that finding housing presents barriers?

202 R) It does present barriers yeah because, when they're filling in a form for like a housing  
203 association and things like that then you have to declare your criminal record, and if anyone  
204 has got anything really bad like arson or anything like that then it's not easy to access  
205 housing and also if you've been a tenant of a local housing authority, then you can go to the  
206 *[service name removed]* bond bank but they've changed their criteria so that now you've got  
207 to declare all your convictions to them as well and then again that does pose some sort of  
208 barrier yes. For example I had one young man and he had broken into a shed, well he had  
209 gone into the shed to sleep the night because his girlfriend had thrown him out so the police  
210 were doing him for breaking into the shed and he had gone to *[service name removed]*  
211 housing for a bond and at first they said they would do him a bond but then because it came  
212 back on his police check that there was a court hearing pending for criminal damage because  
213 he had broken in, they actually did refuse him so yeah, that would be the same for women in  
214 the same circumstances it obviously poses a barrier for them.

215 Q) What are the biggest barriers for women in this position in finding suitable employment or  
216 improving their employability skills?

217 R) I think for a lot of our clients, it's probably confidence. People don't have, I mean if  
218 someone hasn't worked for a long time, they haven't got a lot of confidence and some people  
219 feel that because they're either, they've been a drinker or they've been a drug user, I think  
220 they think that they're not employable or that nobody wants them and I think that comes  
221 down to there being a stigma there around us. That isn't for everyone, there is a lot of people  
222 who do go on to get full time employment and flourish but for some people, often more so  
223 with the women actually, they do think that it is a barrier for them getting employment.

224 Q) What about in terms of employability skills? Do you think there is enough employability  
225 skills when they come out of prison?

226 R) I think so yes, I mean there are quite a lot of places that they can access to go do like CV  
227 writing and things like that and the council have like, you know like in like towns like  
228 Honley, they'll have like drop-ins where you can go and get support with like CV writing or  
229 you know job hunting and things like that but it's about the clients knowing that that's there  
230 for them to access, but it's also about them being at a stage in their lives where they're ready  
231 to access that because a lot of our clients aren't ready to access work, not that they haven't  
232 done because they do, but often its after they've left us that they actually get the employment.

233 Q) How do women find reuniting with their family, friends and partners after prison?

234 R) Quite difficult actually because I think there is a lot of guilt, our clients carry a lot of guilt  
235 and I think for a woman to go to prison, I believe that especially because if you've got  
236 children then there's a lot more guilt there, men can be seen to be sometimes a step more  
237 removed or they might not see their children or being in their children's life where a mother  
238 has been in their children's life there can be quite a bit of guilt there so they sometimes want  
239 to go straight to their families but its sometimes where they'll say "can you help me and tell  
240 them I'm getting myself sorted" so they want us to kind of mediate I suppose and I think  
241 that's because they don't know what to expect I suppose.

242 Q) For those that have had children, would you say that this presents any problems when  
243 supporting these women after release? Such as custody issues?

244 R) No because we do actually support people with that, some people we will support them to  
245 have contact with their children or if there's social services involvement and we go to core  
246 groups and things like that and some of the work we do can impact on whether a person can  
247 have contact. Well we've done it a few times, you know where someone isn't having contact  
248 but they want contact with their children and we've been to the West Yorkshire Mediation  
249 Service, that's one of the first points to see if you can mediate between child and parent and  
250 getting some sort of plan in place. The next step is court, we've been to court with people and  
251 sometimes it works out nice and people do get access and in other cases they don't, it  
252 depends because it also depends on the client's behaviour because and their past behaviour  
253 and things like that like their criminal record because a criminal record can massively impact  
254 whether or not a person is able to see their children.

255 Q) Do you think then that they're more likely to receive access if they're receiving support  
256 from services like yourselves?

R) Yes, yes definitely because when you do an assessment, you'll know that they have children and one of the questions on that form will be "do you need support to reunite with family or friends", and at that point they might say no, but once they're in support and they have a roof over their head and things start settling down then they might say to you "well actually I haven't seen my daughter in 6 months" and they say they think they'd like to see them and that's when you'd start to help them to make that contact but that depends if there's social services involvement because if there is you have to go through social services and it becomes very complex and everybody's different. We have people where their own family looks after the children and they won't let them see them, we have people where their own family looks after them and are quite happy to let them see them, we have people that their children have been adopted, that's not very nice obviously because when a child's adopted you're not going to see them or have contact obviously. We have people where their children are in foster care, and they have one visit a month so there are lots of different scenarios. I mean sometimes when children are looked after by their grandparents, the grandparents are reluctant to let the offenders see their children but that's because they know it can end up with them back in prison and that isn't always good for the children, so the families have the children's best interests at heart but it means broken down relationships between the offenders and their parents as well as with their children so you end up with these people coming out of prison and having no one which is even worse.

Q) What about in terms of reuniting with partners?

R) Yeah I mean sometimes people can reunite with partners and it becomes massively detrimental to them and others where they can sort themselves out together, we've had women where there's been domestic violence and for some reason they will actually still have that relationship and will still go back to it, it is detrimental because if one person has gone to prison and come out and their clean and the other person's not, then if they're going to reunite then that person's got less chance of remaining abstinent because of the influence of the other person and that can be vice versa, it can be either way. Again it depends, it is about the people, it's about the person, in my experience of working with substance misusers and drug users, they go through the system quite a lot of times and then there comes a time where if someone says they're tired, they're tired of this and they've been doing it for 15 years and they really do want to change because they wake up every morning and they've got to go out obviously stealing and grafting you know for their next fix and stuff like that and when someone says that they're tired of it it's usually then that you know they are actually tired of it and usually I find that it seems to be often people who are over 30 that have been abusing a long time that actually want to get sorted. That's my personal experience though that might not be someone else's but that's what I find, that usually that if they're over 30 then it seems that they want it more because they're just so fed up of their lifestyle, it's lost them everything, they've got nothing, they've lost their partners their families, their children and they've just got nothing and they really do want to change.

Q) Finally, have there been any issues, good or bad, that we haven't already discussed?

R) I mean because obviously housing has changed, for women, I mean if people split up then for women it's usually them that stay in their marital home and stuff like that and there's not as many places to support women like hostels and stuff, there's not the same support out there for women as what there is men, but then you do seem to get more men, but then is that

301 because they're the ones who leave rather than stay? It seems that there is a lot more  
302 homeless men than there are homeless women, often that the man leaves and so the woman  
303 stays and has the children to look after, so whilst a lot have already got a home, they have  
304 children and things. So because there's not a lot of places out there that do support women,  
305 when it comes to accommodation and hostels, the women who need that do find it more  
306 difficult to find somewhere than men.

**Appendix 12 - Naomi Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 11/08/16**

**Interviewing: Naomi – Works with female street workers.**

Q) As staff supporting women post incarceration, what are the biggest barriers and difficulties that you face when trying to support those women?

R) For a start, once the women are in prison they are sort of a captive audience if you like, because they are there so they are not going anywhere, so they can't really say well actually you know "go away", although they can refuse to see you but they are actually very captive. The biggest barrier is housing I would say, that's one of the most difficult things. Quite a lot of the women I work with have just burnt every single bridge known to woman basically as regards to housing, they have got massive arrears, we are talking like £5000+ arrears, so the housing department won't touch them unless they sort of make an agreement to pay so much of the arrears, which has got to be a continuous ongoing thing for like twelve consecutive payments, so that's a huge barrier. It's very rare for women to have accommodation when they actually go into prison, I find that so rare, I don't think I've worked with anybody who has had a rented property and then gone into prison, they have just had nowhere basically, so that is a huge thing. Also the benefits situation as well, because what tends to happen is they might not have even been on benefits, although there are workers in prison from jobcentre plus who can help set benefits for you coming out of prison, it doesn't always happen. So what are they going to do to get money? I mean I work with sex workers at the end of the day, they are just going to go back to sex work. Quite a lot of them, when I have sort of spoken to them about their drugs issues because that's another big barrier, the first thing they want to do is go out and use, they dream about it. I had a lady in who was in for about two years and she was still wanting crack, and that was going to be the first thing she was going to do over everything else, that was her main priority, she was dreaming about it, so that's a barrier as well, getting back into those old circles. I've also arranged with other departments to meet women at the gates, just so we can get them and take them to housing or wherever they need to be, to appointments. We have done that so many times for one particular woman I can think of and she sees us but she walks past and gets into somebody else's car who has also come to pick her up. So we have done that so many times and I think on the last occasion I said "I can't do this anymore" because obviously it's a big drain on the resources isn't it? Us going up and sitting outside, so yeah that's a barrier as well.

Q) Can you meet with the women before they come out of prison?

R) Yeah, I go up to the drop-in in Newhall which has a really good set up because it allows you then to sort of build up a relationship with that woman, so we are trying to put things in place for her before she actually steps over the threshold. But the problem is, if we could actually go into the prison and collect them on the day of release and take them out the door that would be better, but we are not allowed to do that, because they don't know what time they are going to get released and all this that the other, so they just float out the door with everybody else, so it's potluck then if they choose to get in your car.

Q) When you mentioned that you do sometimes can go into the drop-ins, do you find that the women you've spoken to at the drop-ins are more likely to engage with you when they come out of prison? Do you think that that helps once you have built up that relationship a bit?

44 R) Yeah, what they do at Newhall is it's a drop-in, but they have to make an appointment to  
 45 come into the drop-in, you know they have to fill in an application to come to it, so yes it  
 46 does help because you know you are sort of building up a bit of a relationship with them and  
 47 they think "Ooo well actually you know, I do need that support and yes I will seek it out".  
 48 Sometimes it doesn't because some women are on this revolving door where they are in one  
 49 week and they are out the next and then they are back in again, there are so many like that.  
 50 Until they decide one day "Ooo do you know, I can't do this anymore" then that's the case.  
 51 But we just keep chipping away, that's the most important thing.

52 Q) What would you say is the main priority for these women?

53 R) Well the women I work with, their first priority is the drugs in a lot of cases, which is  
 54 unfortunate, but I would hope that their priority would be their housing and their benefits, and  
 55 going to the drugs agency to get their appointments because if they are on a methadone  
 56 switch in prison it's all set up for when they come out, so they have got to go to the nearest  
 57 agency like *[service name removed]* and get that sorted out. That doesn't always happen  
 58 though because sometimes it's easier for a woman not to be scripted, because if she is on like  
 59 daily pick up she's not going to go, do you know what I mean? There's all these little barriers  
 60 you know; I mean I think sex workers are just one of the most chaotic bunch of women. For  
 61 the women I work with I think they've burnt most of the bridges with their family by the time  
 62 they come out. I've had a couple who have sort of been in quite long term and they have  
 63 received visits from their parents, but not really anything significant really, and any children  
 64 they have had are gone anyway.

65 Q) In care or with other family members?

66 R) A bit of both. One of my long termers, her little boy was with her mum, she's adopted  
 67 him, and when I was bringing her back with me in the car that was one of her priorities, to  
 68 ring her little boy and say that 'mummies now out of prison' sort of thing.

69 Q) So is that OK to do that?

70 R) Yeah, I gave her the phone to do that so she did that, but no sort of proper contact or  
 71 access.

72 Q) Am I right in thinking then that you only solely work with females?

73 R) We will work with males if we see any male sex workers but it's very very rare.

74 Q) Do you see a difference in the way that males and females experience this transition out of  
 75 prison?

76 R) I couldn't answer that one I'm afraid.

77 Q) Do you feel that the service you provide, as it's currently offered, is adequate enough in  
 78 guiding these women through that transition?

79 R) I think we have got resource issues here, we have just got two members of staff so that's a  
 80 big resource issue. If we had more people available, we might be able to do more than what  
 81 we do really, because I think a lot of women need that hand-holding initially, they need that  
 82 time devoting to them.

Q) Do you think you are well enough equipped to support these women in terms of funding and training? Funding you have mentioned in terms of lack of staff, but what about training?

R) I think there is always need isn't there for training and updating your skills, but again we have got like a resource issue. We have just come out of the council, we work for locale community partnerships now, which is up in the air at the moment, we are not really sure where we are in that organisation. I think as much training as you can do in regards to mental health and personality disorders and drugs and alcohol, I think it all adds, anything you can get, not that it's available to me but yeah. I mean our funding more often than not goes on practically helping clients so training isn't always there for us, I think there is lots out there but there's a cost isn't there, there's a cost implication with it as there is with everything.

Q) Since you work mainly with women, would you say that offering support to mainly one gender is beneficial and preferred by clients?

R) I do yeah, because I think they create quite a safe space here for women, although if somebody's got a partner then we wouldn't ignore them, although we wouldn't sort of say "Ooo bring them in at every opportunity" because we do know that some of these relationships are not great, and some of the partners are quite controlling. I think for a woman to get out of that space and come be somewhere where there are no partners then that's great, but if somebody is quite embroiled with their partner and you are trying to get them on the straight and narrow like for example a script and their partner is a raging drug user then it's not going to work is it? So sometimes you have got work with both of them, although it's quite rare, but I think there is a need to work with both parties on certain issues.

Q) As a female member of staff, do you think that that helps you build a relationship with female clients?

R) I think in this sort of line of work I think yes we are all females, but we have had males come into the project, students for instance who have got placements here, and the women have just taken to them like they would do us really. I think we thought "Ooo we can't really have a male student you know, what's going to happen?" but they were just so accepting, they are a very accepting bunch of people you know what I mean? And it didn't seem to make a difference really. Some things yes, because obviously we do deal with things like serious sexual assaults and things like that, and I think as a woman you want to discuss that with a woman don't you, I personally wouldn't want to discuss a sexual assault with a male. We have had male workers come out with us on *Outreach* you know and give out condoms and safety advice and things, plus it's also seeing a man as a good role model, because a lot of our women, a lot of their men are not very good role models, so if you get men that sort of show that they are a good role model then I think that's all good.

Q) Have you found that when substance misuse is an issue for that individual, that this is something that clients are able to keep under control when released from prison?

R) No, because what happens is in prison they are sort of medicated with methadone and the alcohol substance misuse is treat with Librium or something to sort of contain it. So what tends to happen then is that the tolerance to that drug has sort of gone down a bit, so then when they come out of prison the tolerance is not there anymore, so then they have got a real danger of overdosing and that's very dangerous, especially if they have been on a 40mg methadone prescription and then they come out and buy something, you don't know who you



126 are buying it off or what they have put with it or the strength of it or anything, and you can  
 127 soon end up overdosing. A lot of women want to go into prison to get clean, they just sort of  
 128 say "Just take me, I just want to go and sort myself out" really, they see it as a sort of rest bite  
 129 I suppose. They are just in and out on this little revolving door but I mean when I first started  
 130 here ten years ago it was very rare for women to go to prison, they just didn't go, it was  
 131 unheard of really, unless it was something mega serious. But now it's not like that, they tend  
 132 to give them sentences in prison, you know like short sharp shocks, which is perhaps not long  
 133 enough to get somebody sorted out in terms of drug issues. I know prison is not the place to  
 134 be treat like a rehab or anything but it has its purpose.

135 Q) What healthcare and mental healthcare problems have you come across in these women?

136 R) I have come across schizophrenia, quite severe, no medication. Personality disorders,  
 137 depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, the full thing.

138 Q) In terms of the mental health ones, would you say there has been a treatment and  
 139 diagnosis for that?

140 R) Our relationship with mental health services is not brilliant really, it's quite hard to get  
 141 somebody referred in and then when you do they can't usually work with that person because  
 142 of the drugs and alcohol issues, so it clouds any mental health, like dual diagnosis. I have  
 143 taken women to mental health services and they have said "You are just going to have to go  
 144 away, come off the drugs and stay off the alcohol and then we can deal with it", so they are  
 145 on like a no win situation really. I think I have got one person who has got a CPN and she has  
 146 been drug free for five years and she sees a psychiatrist as well, but that's because of the fact  
 147 she has been drug free, whereas anybody else you haven't got a cat in hell's chance. You  
 148 might get some anti-depressants or something like that but that's about it really. Not really  
 149 good experiences to be honest, in fact we sort of set up our own little case management where  
 150 invited the police to it and various other organisations and we wanted to get mental health on  
 151 board, because we have got loads of women wandering around sort of undiagnosed with all  
 152 these health issues and nobody can do anything to help them, we have sort of made some  
 153 referrals in but it's not easy.

154 Q) In terms of physical health, what are the issues you have come across in that sense?

155 R) We have got injection sites which have gone quite septic and nasty, sort of weeping and  
 156 oozing. We have got people trekking around with sexually transmitted infections which are  
 157 not treated. We even had somebody who had bowel cancer, and she had a bad case of  
 158 something down there and that's how they discovered the bowel cancer. Women are not  
 159 keeping up to smear tests or screenings, it's just a nightmare really.

160 Q) Do you think that's an issue with their motivation to go sort those sort of things or do you  
 161 think it's an issue with the healthcare system?

162 R) I think it's probably a bit of both (the client's motivation and with our healthcare system),  
 163 I think the women just don't take any responsibility whatsoever for their health. I mean some  
 164 of the women I see I just think "Oh my god", if I was in their position I wouldn't be here, I  
 165 would be dead, I just don't know how some of them survive really.

166 Q) How easy do you think it is for them to find a GP or a dentist for example?

167 R) I think a dentist is quite hard to find. We have a GP, we have got [service name removed],  
 168 it's not a walk-in centre exactly but we have an agreement with them that sort of sex workers  
 169 can access it because they were not taking any new patients on whatsoever, and I think we  
 170 had an agreement with them that if there were any sex workers we could register them with  
 171 that practice. The only problem is you go register with them and then you have got to go back  
 172 within a fortnight to get your appointment, so you will go trekking up there with your woman  
 173 who's been really hard to pin down, and then you fill a form in and they say well come back  
 174 in a fortnight and you just think "Arrgh we just want it now!", this is the problem. It's like the  
 175 sexual health services, bring it down here, because they will not go up to *Princess Royal*, they  
 176 just won't go.

177 Q) How easy would you say it is for women leaving prison to find suitable housing?

178 R) I wouldn't say it's easy at all, it's nigh on impossible.

179 Q) And what are the barriers to that?

180 R) The barriers are the lack of any sort of suitable housing. Social housing, private rented.  
 181 What I usually do is I work quite closely with [service name removed] so if I have got  
 182 anybody inside, if they can they will go out and see them and do an assessment, and then they  
 183 will work with that woman on the outside and look at private rented, or if she has got any  
 184 arrears help her sort her arrears out and things. This is the problem, you know, if everybody  
 185 sort of came out and they settled, but even then some just don't want to be settled. We have  
 186 pulled out the stops with some and we really have worked quite hard with other agencies and  
 187 we have got them accommodation, and they have either sub-letted it, not lived in it, bypassed  
 188 the electrics, so somebody has come in and bypassed the electric and it's just turned into like  
 189 some sort of crack house and they have got evicted.

190 Q) So if they had done this would all this show on a record somewhere and make it more  
 191 difficult to find housing in the future?

192 R) Yeah.

193 Q) And does having a criminal record affect your application for housing at all?

194 R) It shouldn't do, it depends what it is. I mean if it is arson or something like that then that  
 195 does, but you would like to think that with the rehabilitation of offenders that it doesn't go  
 196 against them, it used to be one of the housing criteria's, I don't think it is now. If you have  
 197 been in prison like twelve months or longer I don't think that is because they probably have  
 198 got no duty of care whatsoever because it has got really really tight now hasn't it the  
 199 accommodation side. So yeah it's a massive stumbling block and I know I go to the drop-in  
 200 and I know that there is other agencies that go there who specifically do like housing, and  
 201 they are good they do sort of go that extra mile and eventually they will find somewhere.

202 Q) What are the biggest barriers for women in this position in finding suitable employment or  
 203 improving their employability skills?

204 R) Well some of them have never really sort of worked ever. I know in Newhall they have  
 205 got a little system set up, but it's only the top well behaved prisoners if you like who are  
 206 going to succeed that they actually focus on. They have got a little *Max Spielmann* photo  
 207 shop in there, which just looks like the *Max Spielmann* in town, and they sort of work in that

208 shop and then hopefully when they get outside they will offer them a job (The *Max*  
209 *Spielmann* shops). In men's prisons it's *Timpsons* the lock cutters and shoe repairers, so it's  
210 odds on that if you ever go to *Timpsons* it's probably an ex-offender that's doing your shoes.  
211 These are great because they can learn the skill prior to coming out and then they have a job  
212 set up but they are few and far between but a lot of women that I have worked with have  
213 never ever worked in their life, so it's building up a CV isn't it, but what do you build a CV  
214 up for if there is nothing?

215 Q) Do they always want employment?

216 R) No.

217 Q) Do they always want education?

218 R) No.

219 Q) Do you know why that is?

220 R) Lack of motivation, lack of confidence, and they have got a drug habit as well to feed  
221 haven't they, if you are a raging heroin addict you couldn't go plonk yourself in *Sainsbury's*  
222 on the till could you? Because you would have to keep dashing off to have your fix. I did  
223 have one woman who was in Newhall and she did really really well, she did an NVQ 2  
224 Hairdressing, from Newhall. I just couldn't believe it because I had seen her out here and I  
225 saw her in there and she was just totally different. The sad thing about her is when it was  
226 coming up for release, because obviously she had been in quite a while she got very anxious  
227 about her accommodation and where she was going to go, and we arranged to pick her up and  
228 take her to wherever but on the day when she came out she skipped off. She had done all that  
229 work with the NVQ, she got the qualification, she was going to go back to college and do  
230 NVQ 3 on the outside. It was all set up for her to do that but she just couldn't do it, and if you  
231 saw her now...

232 Q) Do you know what the main reasons for that were at all?

233 R) I think it was the anxieties about where on Earth was she going to live, that was one of the  
234 main things was the housing. "Where am I going to go? Because what's going to happen is  
235 I'm going to come out and I'm going to be homeless and what am I going to do?" you know  
236 you are just going to go back to what you know, and she did, very quickly. She has been in  
237 and out so many times.

238 Q) From your experiences, can you discuss the process of reuniting with family for these  
239 women after prison?

240 R) As I say, I have got quite limited knowledge on that, because I haven't really. Apart from  
241 the woman who rang her son from my car, I don't think she got any big plans for a big family  
242 gathering or that kind of thing. They don't all meet them at the gates with flags and what not,  
243 it just doesn't happen. Some of them don't even get a visit from a family member.

244 Q) So they come out and they are completely on their own?

245 R) Yeah.

246 Q) What about friends and partners?

247 R) Yeah, there will probably be a partner waiting for them, who has probably been in to see  
 248 them and done post lauders and that type of thing. The friends are probably the wrong sort of  
 249 friends, but when you say friends it's not like us having a friend, they might be a friend for a  
 250 particular reason you know, "What am I getting out of this?" blahdy blah that type of thing.

251 Q) For those that have had children, how difficult would you say the process is to get  
 252 childcare back again?

253 R) I don't work with any women that have got their children to be honest, a lot get removed  
 254 at birth. I haven't got anybody who has got their child with them, they have long gone. The  
 255 lucky ones are the ones who have got them with family members, but those are few and far  
 256 between, it's very very lucky. But no, not for sex workers unfortunately, or fortunately,  
 257 however you look at it.

258 Q) What has been your experience of the stigma for these women from society?

259 R) Yeah, I think there is a lot of stigma. For me, I just see them as a woman and whatever  
 260 they do is not an issue to me, but for some people I know it is, I know it makes their skin go  
 261 "Eugh!" you know, but for me it doesn't. I have just been watching some CCTV now, and the  
 262 guy who is operating the CCTV says "Eugh look look there's a prostitute", well we don't use  
 263 that word, we say sex worker, I just don't like that word. At the end of the day they still  
 264 deserve a service like you or I, they are very vulnerable, so if I am working with somebody I  
 265 sort of make sure that they get a service I would expect a service. I mean things have  
 266 improved tremendously from when I first started, because when I first started I felt  
 267 stigmatised as well because of the nature of the work.

268 Q) By that do you mean because of you working with sex workers or do you mean because of  
 269 working with offenders in general?

270 R) No because of working with sex workers. I think people think "Ooo what's your  
 271 involvement? How have you got into this sort of thing?"

272 Q) Do you think there's any difference in terms of that stigma for men and women?

273 R) Yeah I think there is actually, it's just not expected of women is it, there aren't many of  
 274 them so it's less heard of. I think women, compared to men, I think they get quite a raw deal,  
 275 the women. Especially since there is a lot of stuff on the internet about women's experiences  
 276 in prison and men's experiences in prison and they seem totally different. Even the sort of  
 277 culture inside the prison is very different as well. I mean I worked with a prison officer,  
 278 who's retired and was working where I worked, he worked at Armley and he also worked at  
 279 Newhall, and I said to him "Which did you prefer?", and he said the men's prison was far  
 280 easier to work in than the women's, the women's was very complex.

281 Q) Has there been any other issues that we haven't already discussed?

282 R) Well I think it's just, you know there's lots and lots of services out there who are there to  
 283 help women, you know I mean I know it's a choice at the end of the day but for some people  
 284 there are choices aren't there, there are people out there that if you want to do it, they're there  
 285 and they'll help you do it, but quite a lot don't take that choice.

286 Q) In terms of the work you do, how do you find that it is for women accessing  
287 contraception? Do they? Do they not? Can they if they want to? And what about sex  
288 education and that kind of thing?

289 R) Right well, obviously we do outreach here and we have condoms on display anyway  
290 which we give out like they're going out of fashion. A lot of our women are very educated in  
291 that they will never ever you know, do anything without a condom and we hope that that's  
292 what they do, so I can't say that any of my English ones are on any contraception other than  
293 condoms, whereas the foreign ones, they're not in it for drugs, they're in it for economic  
294 reasons, you know, to pay rent, send money back home to family so there's definitely a  
295 cultural divide there, they're very on the ball, they all want implants, they want to go for  
296 testing on a regular basis, they want their hep B jabs, so that's a different kettle of fish with  
297 them.

298 Q) So that's the foreign ones?

299 R) Yes, that's the Romanian and the Hungarian ones, but they've got... the difference is  
300 there's no drug issues with them, whereas our women are sort of very embroiled in very  
301 expensive heroin and crack cocaine which clouds everybody's judgements of reality. So I  
302 would say it's just condoms for them whereas the foreigners tend to want implants and  
303 regular screenings as well.

304 Q) With you saying that there are a lot of your clients that are Romanian and Hungarian, is  
305 language an issue in accessing support services?

306 R) Well, when they arrive they sometimes don't speak no English whatsoever and then after a  
307 couple of months of being here, their English really improves, they seem to understand basic  
308 things like condoms and things like that. We know some quite well, and then others they're  
309 here one week and they're gone the next, it's like that literally so we're not too sure about  
310 human trafficking and things like that, but the ones I do see tend to be here of their own free  
311 will. I wouldn't say anyone is coming to the car window having that worrying look on their  
312 face, you know as if to say 'help' sort of thing because you never know where that man is, he  
313 could be just over the wall or something, you know, listening to everything that we say. So I  
314 don't think we've cracked it yet with them but there are some that have been here a long time  
315 and we know them really well. It's just so difficult for them because there's just no chance of  
316 them getting on our benefit system whatsoever.

317 Q) Is that because they're not on records in the first place or...?

318 R) No no, I've actually taken people to go get national insurance numbers, gone through the  
319 benefits process, then they do a... it's a test... a habitual residency test which is a series of  
320 questions really, just asking them what their plans are you know to find work and how are  
321 they going about it, I mean you know like if we wanted to go through the benefits process  
322 we'd have to jump through hoops, well so do they. Yeah I've had quite a few being turned  
323 down so we decided that as a project we wouldn't push the benefits to the foreign women  
324 because we felt as if it was giving them false hope because we were taking them off, getting  
325 them national insurance numbers, coming back and having a series of benefits appointments  
326 and then they just weren't getting anywhere with it. As a worker and as a client, it was awful  
327 you know, so we said if they want to get their benefits then we will refer them to somewhere  
328 else who could dedicate a bit more time to it because we're not experts in the benefits system.

**Appendix 13- Kate Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 13/07/16**

**Interviewing: Kate – works with women coming out of prison.**

Q) In general, from your experience, what do women need in terms of support post-incarceration?

A) Support around accommodation. Support around getting their benefits in to place, as quick as possible, and something to do with their time, meaningful use of their time.

Q) When you have worked with women that have been in prison, have you found that for those that have had substance abuse problems, have you found that they have been able to keep that under control when they have come out of prison?

A) Not always, not at all, I would say more than 50% resume their drug taking or alcohol abuse unfortunately. They go back into the same circles after prison and the thing is women aren't in prison long enough to get off the stuff properly anyway.

Q) And do you think that there are services in place to support that?

A) Yes.

Q) And that's still just not effective?

A) Yeah, they don't want the help getting off it because they don't see it as a problem so there's only so much we can do for those on drugs and things like that.

Q) Would you say then that there have been any health or mental health problems within these women from your experience, and if so what have they been?

A) We work with a lot of women with personality disorders, we have a specialist team that's NOMS funded that deals with these women that are more high risk, so it's not general offenders it's prolific offenders who have had more serious crimes, but definitely women with personality disorders. As for physical health problems, the usual really. Although actually, there's quite a high proportion of women who offend who have children... a lot of children... so you could maybe look into whether they have enough education or contraception advice, but then it might be that they are aware of everything and just choose to have a lot of children.

Q) Have there been thorough diagnosis and treatment for those do you think?

A) Yes they have usually been diagnosed, I think it's the anxiety and the depression that seems to go undiagnosed and slips through the net ... I mean probably because depression is so common in prisons.

Q) How have you found the ease of finding suitable housing for these women? And what barriers are there to finding them housing?

A) Bonds always, trying to get a bond for anybody- it's ridiculous. What we normally do is get them into the system and that will often mean having to start off at [service name removed], being homeless and being a female you are more vulnerable than men. Then they will move from [service name removed] into Oakdale or Female Provision and then from

39 there they will start bidding for properties, so they can be there for quite a while but definitely  
40 financial, they can't get private rented because they don't have a bond and if they do get  
41 offered private rented, it tends to be real bottom end of the market that nobody will touch  
42 with a barge pole so that's sad.

43 Q) It's not always suitable housing?

44 A) No, no.

45 Q) What are the biggest barriers, for women in this position, in finding suitable employment  
46 or improving employability skills?

47 A) Criminal record, people say they don't judge and they are not supposed to judge but I  
48 believe they still do judge and a lot of females, dependent on their offence, we have a lot of  
49 women that previously worked in care, if they have got any sort of violent offence, if it's a  
50 fray which could be an argument in the street and in court it comes out as a fray then that will  
51 be on their record unfortunately and will go against them, but generally we do have women  
52 that will persist and persist, we advise them that they have to disclose their offence, not all do  
53 but we can't help that, you know.

54 Q) What about employability skills then? Do you think there are enough courses and support  
55 out there for CV writing, job applications and things like that?

56 A) No, we used to do basic maths and English here and then that got pulled from the college  
57 so that's unfortunate.

58 Q) Is that who offered it then?

59 A) Yeah, the college came out and delivered it here, you just do an assessment and then slot  
60 in at any level but most of the women we work with don't have basic qualifications in maths  
61 and English and that's big if you are doing a CV, it's a basic requirement so you know they  
62 really do struggle with that.

63 Q) How do you think that women find reuniting with family, friends, and partners, after  
64 prison?

65 A) Turning it around on the other side, I do understand that families get to the stage where  
66 enough's enough and may have to give hard love. Often in prison, a lot of the women have no  
67 family or friend visitors, so it's really difficult when they come out into society and try to  
68 reintegrate because everybody needs somebody so they tend to latch up with bad partners.

69 Q) Do you think that happens often then? Like you say with partners where it has not been  
70 the greatest relationship before prison and they attempt to rekindle that when they come out.

71 A) Yeah, and that need to belong that human beings have they will belong to anybody as long  
72 as you belong to somebody, it's really really sad, but I do get it from the other perspective  
73 that families have, like if it's somebody who is continually offending, especially if it's things  
74 like burglary or street robbery or taking stuff from their family, they have to say no and I do  
75 understand that, but I also understand how difficult it is for the women who have nobody and  
76 I think that until I did this job I didn't appreciate that people could have nobody, "who's your  
77 next of kin? Can I put you down?", I think that says it all.

78 Q) For those that have had children would you say that this presents problems, when  
79 supporting these women after release, such as custody issues?

80 A) Without a doubt. We do cover this in groups, say you're a single parent and you are going  
81 into prison and you have got children, they will initially look at immediate family but if there  
82 is nobody suitable in the family from a temporary care holder your child will go into care and  
83 women assume that when they come out of prison they will get their child back, but no, if  
84 they have been in prison more than thirteen weeks they have lost their accommodation, so  
85 first they have to come out of prison and get proper accommodation and then work towards  
86 getting their child back, so it's horrific, absolutely horrific. If a woman goes into prison and  
87 her partner is left with the children, he will have an assessment done, if he is a substance  
88 misuser, if he has got any serious offences then social care will become involved.

89 Q) Do you think that's sometimes a shock for them when they come out of prison, that they  
90 won't have their children there?

91 A) I think by the time they come out of prison they have learnt from other women that it  
92 won't happen, I think that when they go into prison they believe that it will happen, but in  
93 prison I'm sure they learn that's not the case.

94 Q) So after all those issues we have just discussed, what would you say is the main priority  
95 for these women when they come out of prison? What's the first thing that they want to get  
96 sorted?

97 A) It blows my head off how benefits can't be sorted, I know they have DWP workers in  
98 prison but I don't understand enough possibly about the process, they should have benefits  
99 when they come out of prison. If they have been in so long they get a prison discharge grant  
100 which I think is around £45 at the moment, so you come out of prison and make a benefits  
101 claim on the day you are released which very few people actually do, it can be two weeks, or  
102 three weeks, four weeks, before you are getting benefits back in place and that is a difficult  
103 period because you have got to live, you have got to survive, so if you are not getting any  
104 money, people will go out and shoplift, it's really really frustrating.

105 Q) You might not be able to answer this one as you only work with women of course, but do  
106 you think there is any differences between the way males and females prioritise when they  
107 come out of prison?

108 A) I have found, and I can only really say from a female perspective, but I have found when  
109 people do come out of prison they can often be quite hyper, "I'm gunna do this and I'm  
110 gunna do this!" and "the world is your oyster!" and "the sky is your limit!" etcetera, you see  
111 them the following week and they are rock bottom because all their hopes and dreams and  
112 aspirations have all gone away because it's hard surviving on nothing.

113 Q) As staff supporting women post-incarceration, what are the most difficult things for you to  
114 support them with? From getting sorted from your side, what do you think is the most  
115 difficult?

116 A) I think their finances and their accommodation, every time there's not enough  
117 accommodation, we have a female bail hostel, but we also have a homeless section for  
118 women and they are not the nicest of places if you have to live there. The first stop or the last  
119 stop would be The [service name removed], it's shared accommodation with homeless men,



120 long term homeless men and yet they put females in this building, I mean they do have their  
121 own bedrooms but I don't know how safe I would feel sleeping in there, so it's just a  
122 nightmare for them.

123 Q) Do you think that's unsafe as a woman? Is that the issue?

124 A) I would certainly feel unsafe as a woman, yeah.

125 Q) Do you think the service you provide, as it is currently offered, is specialised enough in  
126 guiding these women through their transition?

127 A) More staff are needed, so you can do more hands on and you can do more practical things.  
128 Our contract at the moment is that we do group work and that's not negotiated by us that's  
129 negotiated by the people up above, but we still will see women and we will still support them  
130 to get their benefits, do advocacy. For some of them, depending on their temperament, we  
131 will phone for them, we help with housing, we help them to get furniture for their  
132 accommodation etcetera etcetera, but it's so difficult coming out of prison.

133 Q) Do you feel well enough equipped then, in terms of funding and training, to be able to  
134 offer women support?

135 A) Training-wise I have always done gender specific work for twenty years so training wise  
136 yeah, but we do like top up training all the time. Funding wise, that's quite dire for everybody  
137 at the moment and I think we are lucky to still be functioning as we are, I do appreciate that,  
138 it would be good to have a couple more workers but I understand the difficulties.

139 Q) Would you say that offering gendered support is something that is beneficial and preferred  
140 by clients?

141 A) Yes. As you know probation is split, so the two main offices are male and female, this is  
142 female only and women are asked in court if they want a female centre and the vast majority  
143 say yes. A lot have been through domestic violence, sexual abuse, and they choose to come to  
144 a women's centre and I think it's very beneficial.

145 Q) What about in terms of staff, do you think that it's preferred to have female staff for  
146 female clients?

147 A) Yes I think they would prefer that, some would say not but it is female staff, you are a  
148 female yourself you are aware of female issues so I think it is better to have female staff.

149 Q) Do you think then that having a gendered support service helps in your ability to offer  
150 support effectively? Do you think it helps focusing on one gender rather than if you were  
151 having to support men and women independently?

152 A) I choose to work in a gender specific place and I do believe that it works, I definitely do. I  
153 think working with women alone, you get to know more about what women want and learn  
154 the approaches to take. I think that can be different to each individual but I think my approach  
155 is more similar with all my women than it would be if we had men too.

156 Q) Aside from the issues we have discussed, have there been any other issues that you have  
157 found to be of importance, good or bad, to these women coming out of prison?

158 A) We do a lot of work in this centre around domestic violence and I deliver sessions on it  
159 and I always say to women “You may come in here and say “oh I have done this before I  
160 don’t need this”, if you don’t need it you are very lucky but if you sit and listen in this session  
161 I guarantee that you will learn something new “ that’s the first thing I always say, “and you  
162 can leave here and then you can advise people, so if your friends, your family, your  
163 neighbour, your mum, say to you something’s going off or you know something is going off  
164 then you can then advise them and tell them where they can go”, so I suppose educating these  
165 women on things they’ve missed, the education that they might need elsewhere in life really,  
166 life knowledge education I suppose.

**Appendix 14 - Laura Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 20/08/16**

**Interviewing: Laura – Did work for probation offering rehabilitation, and currently works for a charity supporting women reuniting with their children.**

Q) When supporting women post incarceration, what are the biggest barriers you face when working with a client?

R) Just that there's a lack of support in terms of services and interventions, and because of that it's difficult to engage with the women, it's really hard. My experience is that women, after they have been in prison, they have got a lot of needs, and there isn't many resources or agencies. Even ones that you would think, like for example the probation service, there is very minimal resources that are given to women, just for women and their offending. My view of that is because fewer women commit crimes so therefore there isn't the money that goes into things. So it's really difficult then to engage them because they are so chaotic and you can't signpost them to places because there really isn't anywhere. That was my experience.

Q) Are there services out there that can do that signposting?

R) Yeah so there is like IAPT and single point of access and that kind of thing but they assess and refer, they don't always take women on to the support agencies or interact. They're just passed on aren't they and that's going to make it more difficult to engage women.

Q) Whilst I am on this question can you just mention a little bit about the lack of rehabilitation and programs for women as you had just been telling me about before we started the interview? Mainly when they come out of prison but also maybe when they are in prison?

R) Yeah so when I worked for the probation service, I was trained to deliver programs, and they were accredited programs that were designed by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). All the programs, and they say this in the manuals, are designed and researched and their participant group is white men, and that's a real issue because that means that we were offering programs to men and women on the same groups, but the programs and the design of them, the structure, the content, the length of them, were designed with men in mind, and actually what research says is that women's needs are different to that of the men's. So they couldn't often relate, or they weren't able to attend because of some of the barriers that were there for them, I mean they had children to look after in some cases, sometimes they have other commitments, they have appointments to make when they get out of prison and all that.

Q) When women are released from prison, what would you say is the main priority for them?

R) I think that's difficult, because obviously each woman would be different. From my experience, sadly it's mainly drugs, because often the women's offending is linked to drug taking. So usually they are in a relationship, they get onto drugs, they are then offending to find money in order to buy more drugs, which is causing them to offend. They are then going into prisons, but they are having really short sentences and because of that as well there's no interventions really put in place for those women and they can't attend the ones that exist because they might only be in prison for like six weeks, which don't get me wrong, they

shouldn't be in prison for longer than that, or even be there in the first place, but the other side of that is because they are not there for a long time is that there are no interventions or support really put in place so it's more of a punishment. Drugs are available in prisons and then because those issues haven't been addressed, all that happens is that they come out and they are back into trying to find their latest fix, or whatever they need to do to buy drugs.

Q) Have you noticed any differences between the way males and females experience this transition or prioritise when they are released?

R) I think, again I can only base this on my experience of working with women who have committed crimes whilst I worked for the probation service, I think that women who commit crimes are generally discriminated against more than the men who commit crimes. What I was told by the men that I used to work with was that they would often be able to go back into their relationships, or into their families, so I think that was usually their priority, although if they were drug taking it would be that as well. But I think for the women it all depended on what offence they had committed, whether their family was still supportive of them, whether they had lost their children as well, so they might have wanted the same, you know, to go back to families but it wasn't always the case with women, family disputes seem to arise and when children are involved these women end up losing their family relations over arguments about the kids. So I think for women they had a harder time in my experience, because of just the fact that they were women who committed crimes.

Q) So in terms of the work that you have done with these women, do you feel that the service you provide is adequate in guiding these women through this transition?

R) No, because it's complex and it's not just about one thing or one strand, and that means that there needs to be a lot of support and it needs to be quite long-term. In my view you need a holistic approach, a collaborative approach, and there are services, there is some fantastic services and interventions for women once they are released from prison but there aren't enough and they aren't for long, therefore that can be quite difficult in terms of even just attending these services for the required amount of sessions to be accredited, or like for optional support services if they aren't there for long enough then by the time the women have sorted themselves out for all of their issues, the support services are kind of letting them go, discharging them or whatever. They tend to be funded to focus on one particular strand, so it could be housing or it could be looking at their alcohol and drug intake, and really that should just be part of it, that should be part of the jigsaw really as well as something else, because if you just focus on one then the likelihood, from my experience, is that other areas are being neglected and they will eventually probably lead them back into their lifestyle they had before. Like, there isn't enough focus on the risk factors around offending, and working on the actual offence after prison, it's all housing and practical issues, I mean that's great but a woman can be in a house and might be reunited back with her children but she might still reoffend if there's been no work on that. Even the practical issues, women don't turn up to all their appointments do they, so it's like, having more outreach, and probably just one support worker that they know really well who maybe has met them before their release, who can help with all of those strands; mental health, housing, income, alcohol and drugs and so on, even if that support worker can't do everything, they would do the liaising on behalf of the woman for her because otherwise it's just too overwhelming for them. It's difficult, because

86 that would be a big resource, however if it's not addressed then I think it's quite short term,  
87 it's short sighted because it just means that you will get repeat offending.

88 Q) What do women need in terms of services and what could be changed in the services that  
89 exist to tailor for these women?

90 R) I think that having services that maybe focus on things like... I suppose like a counselling  
91 service as well, a group work service, where women are there to look at building self-esteem  
92 and confidence. That could be done in a one-to-one setting or a group setting, there's benefits  
93 of both, but those kind of services. I don't really see many of those, I think there are services  
94 that do that in a workshop, or in a course of maybe six weeks, but if you are looking at the  
95 vulnerabilities of these women and if you think about people in general, if you have got low  
96 self-esteem that takes a long time to build up, so in terms of what I think would be great to  
97 see is more services that focus on those things.

98 Q) Do you feel you were well enough equipped to support these women throughout their  
99 leave from prison, whether that is regarding funding or training?

100 R) No not really, because like I said the training is usually addressed as generic for men and  
101 women. In certain settings that I worked with women in offending, I was primarily working  
102 with men because that's who you came across, so the training had that edge to it. It was only  
103 because I was questioning it, and I felt that there was a gap, that I went and did my own  
104 training.

105 Q) Outside of the probation? So separate from probation training?

106 R) Yeah absolutely. That wasn't provided in the roles where I was meant to be working to be  
107 able to work with those women, if you see what I mean, so it wasn't sufficient for me to do  
108 that and I'd say for a lot of the staff as well. It was only because I went outside and  
109 researched and spoke to other people in other agencies, that I have learnt how to work with  
110 women, and then that is how my experience built up, but did I get that for my job role? No I  
111 didn't.

112 Q) How have you found working with males and females independently?

113 R) It's really difficult, and again my understanding from research as well is that they should  
114 be separated. The reason for that is that again, we have talked about this already, their needs  
115 are different, so their priorities are different. There is some crossover, of course there is,  
116 however you are putting vulnerable people into the same group. Often the men who are on  
117 probation, or the men that I have come across who have offended and the women who have  
118 offended, to put them together can be quite risky, especially if the men have violence and  
119 domestic abuse issues and we are putting them in the same setting as women who may have  
120 been victims of such abuse. So it is not just a case of 'I think they should be separate because  
121 they have different needs', even though there is some crossover I get that, but there is a risk  
122 factor, for me, in that we are potentially putting two vulnerable groups into the same setting  
123 and colluding with that process. I've actually seen that, especially in groups that look at  
124 drugs and alcohol, I have seen grooming, so it is potentially very dangerous.

125 Q) What about in terms of learning styles so when you've got males and females in the same  
126 groups do you think the males and females learn differently and could you tell me how on the  
127 general do you think there is any differences?

R) Yeah, well I mean it's not specific, we've all got different learning styles, so really any intervention, whether it's one to one or a group work program, should consider different learning styles. Mainly the women when they are in female groups, I would say they prefer more reflective exercises with some active exercises, whereas in the male groups it was the other way round, their preferred learning styles seem to be more activist, whereas reflective seemed quite difficult at times. So yeah, so I think that's why it's quite a big job to separate the interventions for men and women, because you're not just looking at content, you have to think about all of those other dynamics like structure and learning styles, in order to engage them and be responsive to them. I mean they're really anxious about group work sometimes and it takes a lot to get something out of them... I guess working with them on this beforehand and building up that confidence really so that they'll do the whole course.

Q) Would you say you alter your approach and support based on the client's gender?

R) Yes. I think when I have worked with women that I work much more therapeutically with them, it's really really important obviously not to judge but to be mindful that their self-esteem is really really low, that you are really really careful and cautious, and also giving them praise as well, that's something I really thought about when I was writing the woman's program, it was to focus on 'let's have a look at your strengths', not to ignore or not look at any risk factors because of course you have to, but not to focus on that, to think about how to encourage and to motivate the women so that they feel good enough. So that's a very gentle approach, patience, and really looking for the positives when they can't see any.

I think one of the barriers and one of the things that I always found interesting was that obviously some women who have been in prison and are on release, they come across like some would say assertive, some would say aggressive, some would say chaotic, and what I often found is a real lack of understanding in why that woman is relating in the way the way that she is. So when I used to say "I don't think it's right that we have put this female or these two females in this group with eight males", what I would often get back was "Oh they will be okay, they are tougher than the guys that are in the group" or "they are more vocal" or "she would knock them out", those kind of comments, and I was like right ok have you ever thought why those women are presenting in the way that they are, they are masked. I mean if you do that as well for certain groups, you're asking for women to be difficult to engage in future services if they're expecting that again, we don't have time to work on it, we have to get it right the first time to encourage them to come back and do other programmes. So I always used to find that, but I guess if you are only looking at it quite simplistically you might say "well I work with men and women the same because some of the women I work with are just as hard as the men" and It's just like "ok but again where's the evidence for that, and also what do we know about women who have committed crime, what might be the reasons why this woman is presenting that way", well because she's had to all of her life probably.

Q) Have you found that when substance abuse is an issue this is something that clients are able to keep under control post incarceration?

R) No! \*laughs\* For the reasons that I've said, for the things I said earlier in this interview, it's that most of the women that I have worked with, that I know of, their offending started because of their drug use and that they then started committing crimes to fund that drug use so that's not really addressed. They're going into prisons, they're on short sentences and then

172 that's not really addressed there, there is a problem in prisons where drugs are very easily  
173 available I have worked in prisons I know this, and then they come out and anybody who is  
174 trying to come off a substance and has an addiction they need so much support no matter who  
175 they are. So if you've got that lifestyle and you have not had any of that in place it's likely that  
176 the same issues are still going to be there and I have even had women say to me who have  
177 worked with, that as soon as they have left prison their drug dealers are waiting outside for  
178 them.

179 Q) What would you say the main issues are with healthcare and mental healthcare that are  
180 prevalent in these women?

181 R) I think there's a lot of mental health issues for women, not just in terms of anxiety and  
182 depression but there's quite a lot of research that suggests that women have personality  
183 disorders and again that's something that's not really considered at all in terms of being  
184 mindful of that as an assessment tool and then how it that might impact on interventions. I  
185 think there needs to be a lot more work done on the link between offending behaviour and  
186 personality disorders.

187 Q) What do you think the main barriers are some women in finding suitable healthcare after  
188 prison do you think there's any problems in that area?

189 R) From the women... from the experience that I have had its mixed, most of them have a GP  
190 or they are registered with a GP in terms of accessing support, in terms of mental health, I  
191 think that's quite poor again unless they have the financial means, they can't... it's unlikely  
192 they would be able to access that themselves - waiting lists are really really long so they are  
193 not accessing the support they need so they are often self-medicating to deal with it, which  
194 just keeps them in this cycle. Interestingly, I used to work with a lot of women who really  
195 struggled to... not necessarily like physical health... but their dental health as well, was  
196 always an issue because they couldn't get registered with a GP, I remember one lady coming  
197 in and she'd pulled the tooth out because she was in so much agony, I have known one  
198 woman who has taken heroin because the pain was so painful. So that's a real issue.

199 Q) How easy would you say it is for women leaving prison to find suitable housing?

200 R) I think it depends on whether they have children, so if the children are still with them  
201 which in a lot of cases they're not because they are at that stage where social services are  
202 involved so the children might be removed into foster care or adoption by that point. If they  
203 are with their children, then I think that from what I've been told, that for women it's easier to  
204 get into housing but if not then it's really difficult and really challenging for them. Often I  
205 have heard that they are living they are going back... well I think a lot of the women that I  
206 used to work with we're just staying on Friends sofas or would going back to places where  
207 they took drugs.

208 Q) What is it that makes this difficult for these individuals?

209 R) I think it's just in general, I think housing is an issue anyway if anybody who's on benefits,  
210 I guess the problem I would imagine is it's harder for those that have offending history  
211 because I suppose from a housing perspective they're thinking about this person reoffending  
212 and they're going to go back into prison, they're thinking "what do I do with this house" and  
213 all those kind of things so I think unless they have got children they're not going to be the

214 priority and often I think that, especially if they are involved in drugs, their life is so chaotic  
215 then they may have even been offered housing but they've not been able to keep up to it or  
216 there has been complaints from other people.

217 Q) What are the biggest barriers for women in this position in finding suitable employment or  
218 improving employability skills?

219 R) It's a double edged sword really, because there's loads of strands to that one, you  
220 obviously have to disclose your offences, so that's always going to be tricky, there's not many  
221 employees that will take people on, there are some and that's great but there's not that many.  
222 Again in some prisons, and I say prisons where they are in for a long time like more than a  
223 year, then they can access courses, so this is men and women, and that can help towards  
224 getting a job when they're coming out but if they are only there for a short period of time  
225 they are not accessing those services and they're not able to have those things that may help  
226 them. Their self-esteem or confidence is really low so they don't even think they can get a job  
227 which is something that I have thought about in the women program, especially in the 'goal  
228 setting' and some of those women went on to voluntary work that then lead them on to get a  
229 job and also then there's childcare. Volunteer work is great and looks good and what not, but  
230 in the meantime it is awkward for getting them benefits as they can only do so many hours.  
231 There's so many different obstacles in the way for them that make it very difficult I think.

232 Q) Do you think there is enough education programs out there?

233 R) When I worked at probation we had a team which I thought was really good, I can't  
234 remember what it was called it might have been called DISC but that was their role, it was to  
235 help with that kind of transition and looking at agencies and approaching them, helping those  
236 who had committed offences to write CVs, to practice their interview skills, how to disclose  
237 in a way that won't go against you, that sort of thing. Yeah how to disclose in a way that  
238 won't immediately close the door and them saying "no thank you", it's something again that  
239 that could be what is needed in terms of service provision as well, which is practical work-  
240 wise things. I think what you find is that sex offenders get a lot of provision on their  
241 disclosure to partners and what not, that's my experience and also in terms of domestic abuse  
242 it feels like there is a hierarchy, and obviously sex offending and sex crimes are very severe  
243 and should be taken seriously in that way and it's really good that those resources are there  
244 but sometimes the others are neglected, they're kind of damned in terms of what they need to  
245 do to get that support. It's ironic isn't it, that they haven't committed what we would classed  
246 as a serious crime but rather disproportionately they are going to prison. That again is  
247 because there aren't the resources is out there for women that have committed crimes, it feels  
248 very...we're not looking at the bigger picture. We could reduce the women going in if we did  
249 some earlier intervention to support them in staying away from those sort of lifestyle choices.

250 Q) So how difficult do you think it is on a practical or emotional level for women reuniting  
251 with their family when they come out of prison?

252 R) It can be really difficult for them because it depends on the offence, and I think it depends  
253 on whether they have got children, and whether those children have been removed as well.  
254 Often, the women lose their family, especially if the woman is in a domestic abusive  
255 relationship, which is often the case. The family understandably don't want them to be with  
256 this partner because of what they are doing, but the woman feels that's what she deserves or



257 doesn't have anything else and her self-esteem is so low and what they see is that she chooses  
 258 him over them so what often can happen is they say "well if you go back to this person then  
 259 we don't want anything to do with you". I have come across that a lot where their children  
 260 have been removed from them and been put into foster care, that means that not only they are  
 261 bad women for what they have done, it also means that they are bad mum's. That's probably  
 262 the worst label you could give any woman and then that isolates the woman and then that  
 263 often means that they are then directed more towards the risk factors that lead them into  
 264 prison when really what they need is their family and friends and things because they are the  
 265 protective factors that could help them.

266 Q) I know we have mentioned about partners being detrimental to the substance abuse side of  
 267 things, would you say the same for friendships?

268 R) Yeah of course it's both I think, it's very much sort of social thing; addiction. At the  
 269 beginning let's just say the woman starts using drugs recreationally, she may have a variety of  
 270 people in her life like healthy people and those that are not so healthy, and as that becomes  
 271 more of an addiction and dependency, she is more likely to lose the healthy ones because  
 272 they don't want to see it and are fed up of it, which you know is understandable. Then, that  
 273 woman is then drawn into a group which accept her because they are all doing the same thing  
 274 because even as an outsider you can think this is toxic, but if you look at it as what they will  
 275 gain from it, that they're been included and that's a nice feeling isn't it even if it's a toxic  
 276 environment if that's all that's on offer.

277 Q) How difficult is it for women that want to gain access to their children, how easy is it  
 278 when they come out of prison?

279 R) No, not if it's got to a point of them being in prison because often that means that social  
 280 services are involved, it depends if the family are supportive and the family are there, then  
 281 they the children might live with them but they will still be assessed as to whether that can  
 282 happen or not because if the wider family are chaotic and have problems as well, so then if  
 283 the assessment comes out and it's not a good one then they won't consider that so the children  
 284 will be removed from the family into foster care.

285 Q) If the children stay with grandparents, are there any rules around whether the woman can  
 286 see their child if it is staying with family? Can they just have free access as much as they  
 287 want? Or is there a lot of restriction on that from probation?

288 R) It's not restriction from probation, it would be a restriction through social services so what  
 289 can sometimes happen is... so there's fostering and there's adoption, but there's also  
 290 something called a special guardianship order and what that means is, families like the sister  
 291 or the grandparents can apply for a special guardianship which means that the child stays in  
 292 the family, and I think that's... I've been told that if you can do that that's the best thing to do  
 293 first. However, there will be restrictions on that, so it might be that when the woman was  
 294 released they may only be able to have supervised access, or can only see them once in six  
 295 months, or something like that I mean it's very hard to manage that but there are... it depends  
 296 on the offence, it depends on how many times this offending behaviour, how often they have  
 297 been in and out of prison because obviously the more you have, the more restrictions and the  
 298 more likelihood that they will lose the child. I would say that given my other job at the  
 299 moment, the fact that we have a designated officer from the charity PAC (works with women

300 who have had children taken off of them) in a prison tells me that's a real issue, women losing  
301 their children or not having access to them, because if it was just 5% it wouldn't be a resource  
302 that they would pay for, so the government are obviously funding that so they must see it as  
303 there being an issue.

304 Q) Are there any other issues that are important to this transition for these women that we  
305 haven't already discussed?

306 R) Just... not necessarily issues, but to keep it live, like the research and the work that you're  
307 doing and it needs to be continuous because is never going to be the same level of women  
308 who commit crime as men who commit crime, so it's really important just to keep... like I  
309 just said looking at what needs to be done, developing services and it just being a continuous  
310 process rather than "alright we've done this now, what's next".

**Appendix 15 - Elaine Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 28/06/2016**

**Interviewing: Elaine**

Q) As staff supporting women post-incarceration, what are the most difficult things to support women with after release?

R) I'd say the main issue is housing, that is the main issue, around housing, and that's mainly because, a lot of the women that I work with have had a lot of properties in the past, an example of that is if they've had properties with the council, the local authority, and they've maybe built up substantial arrears, or there's been damage to the property when they've left, say we've maybe found that they've maybe had 2 or 3 tenancies like that and we've had some women who've had damage and arrears of in excess of ten thousand pounds, so you can imagine how difficult it is to then present that woman's case, to the local authority where she's going to be homeless because they don't always have a duty to rehouse if someone's homeless, they might depending on the circumstances they might look at bed and breakfast, and typically because the women are in a cycle of offending and substance misuse and mental health, it's very difficult to enable and support a woman to repay that amount and erm sometimes the women don't want to address it because it's just too overwhelming and so I'd say housing is the main issue.

Q) What would you say is often the main priority for women post-incarceration?

R) They'll say housing, which most of them say if they haven't got their own tenancy before they had gone into prison, but there's quite a lot of them that are sofa surfing so a lot of them just want to get out and see their peers, they want to know where their stuff is that they've left, they obviously want quick access to money, so they need to get in to see the GP, sign on to get a sick note, and then reapply for benefits, that's kind of a big one, some women are very good at doing that and they'll go and do it straight away but some other women who perhaps come out and they don't have that type of support mechanism normally will ask for help and say you know, "will you be able to come to the GP with me?", "would you be able to help me make the call to benefits so that I can sign on again?", absolutely, or some just want to come out and party because they've been in prison for quite a long time. And also I think that there is some anxiety with some of the women when they've come out, an example of that is a woman who I had last Friday, who had served a 2 year sentence, and was coming out to no property, no GP, but she had to attend a GP obviously to get her sick note to enable her to get her benefits, she had to turn up to the probation service because she had an appointment there, she had to turn up to substance misuse service so that she could carry on getting her methadone, she then had to go up to the council offices housing solutions on a Friday which is notorious when you can be sitting there between 2-4 hours so the anxiety levels you can imagine, "I've been released, I've not been out for two years, I've got these masses of appointments", so anxiety sets in then, "I'm not going to be able to get to them, which is what I need to do", so a lot of the time, It's all the appointments as well, that they're going to need to do. So there's quite a lot going on for them really.

Q) Do you think that there are any differences between the way males and females prioritise or experience their release?

43 R) Well because I've not worked on the adult offenders, and I've not worked with males now  
44 for about 8 years, I suppose on reflection it's quite difficult for me to, yeah that's a difficult  
45 question for me to answer, so I'm maybe going to have to sit on that one.

46 Q) That's fine no worries, do you feel the service as it is currently offered is adequate enough  
47 in guiding these women?

48 R) I'd say yes it's specialised enough, my background – I've been in housing now for 15  
49 years, and I've been in a social care world for about 25 years, my qualifications are in  
50 counselling and therapeutic intervention, and my colleague is a social worker, so where it  
51 falls down is that there's only two of us that run the women's scheme, so in terms of  
52 resources and staff, it is very difficult because we're funded to take on so many women,  
53 because it is quite a specialised area, so we that some of the more complex issues with  
54 women, perhaps around children, safeguarding, substance misuse issues, homelessness,  
55 offending, risk, and you've got someone who on top of that maybe their mental health issues  
56 are not being addressed, or maybe they've not had an appropriate diagnosis and they've just  
57 kind of floated about, places and tenancies and different GP's, we find that that's a massive  
58 commitment in terms of time and resources, I mean as you can imagine say for example  
59 we're funded to work with 14 and we're 2 part-time workers, but what we normally find is  
60 that if there are all of those complex issues, you need a lot of time for it. So in terms of the  
61 specialism, I would say that if we can't support the person with those specific issues because  
62 we're not psychiatric nurses and we're not doctors, then we've enough in the community to  
63 signpost, and a lot of the work that we do anyway is that we will work alongside social  
64 services, the probation, the police, safeguarding police, the list goes on and on and on. So it's  
65 the connections, if we can't help, we can signpost.

66 Q) What do you think that these women need in terms of support post-release?

67 R) Post- release, well probably even pre-release needs a lot more work done around housing,  
68 to see locally where they're being released in, what is available, now we can try and offer a  
69 tiny bit of pre-tenancy work but again the time and resources part of it, we just don't have the  
70 time to support the people we're supporting who are already out and the referrals we get from  
71 prison and probation and the police, so I would say pre-tenancy there needs to be a bit more  
72 work about what provision is done instead of perhaps a referral coming a week before a lady  
73 is going to be released and then we've to think oh my goodness y'know.

74 Q) What timescale would you say would be good then?

75 R) I would say probably at least maybe 4 weeks is a bit more realistic and at least then you  
76 can get in and see the women and get them to do a signed consent so that we can get on to the  
77 local authority and say "right we've got this lady's signed consent, can you look at what  
78 tenancies she's had previously?", so then I can feedback to the women "right well the council  
79 said you've got 7 and a half thousand pounds worth of arrears, we can put an application in to  
80 the housing for you but you'll probably get a very low priority banding yeah". Then another  
81 example is, we do have a couple of hostels in the area, now a lot of the women I work with  
82 have accessed those hostels in the past, now the women when they're being assessed or when  
83 you ask the question "have you ever been evicted? Have you ever had any issues with  
84 anywhere you've lived before?" they're not always most forthcoming with the truth around  
85 the circumstances on why they had to leave the property, so the consent that we get before

they leave, an example is this, I rang the *Wish* hostel and I said “look this lady is coming out...”, straight away, “No. She’s been with us before, she’s abandoned, she doesn’t engage, this lady would not be on our priority”. So that just gives us a chance then to say to this lady “right I’ve rang this this this” before she’s released, so you’re being totally upfront with this person, “this is what I’ve tried”. By the time they’re coming out and we’ve to make all those phone calls, they’ve already got enough to deal with when they’re released from prison, and again the chronic lack of housing shortage and these ladies, sadly, are not going to be a priority. Sometimes they are put in bed and breakfast, or temporary accommodation, but again that depends on certain circumstances, an example of that could be domestic violence, it could be that before the women had gone into prison, there were issues with domestic violence, safeguarding issues, the person could have been subject to MARAC the multi-agency risk assessment committee from high profile cases of DV, now the council housing sit in on that procedure and it could be that the council are already aware of this lady and the risks that’s posed to her so they may, MAY, then step in and say “we can offer this lady temporary accommodation because there is a direct threat to life, or children”, so quite complex but If the evidence is there with housing, historically issues to do with her tenancy because of her partner or a parent or a brother then at least housing know. So sometimes that can be of benefit if housing are aware of the case.

Q) Would you say that you offer support differently based on a client’s gender?

R) I think, I mean obviously we’re a women specialist service, that’s what were set up to do, so because its run by women for women, obviously there’s an element of being very aware that its female, and I think obviously you are aware of that, I’m just trying to think of when I used to work with sort of high risk male, because obviously there’s a gender difference there with violence, and when you’re working with someone who has offended against women, then I am very aware of how I present what I’m saying and the spoken word, my body language and how I’m coming across, then I’m more acutely aware of being a woman when I’m working with a male. I think as well for women who have children, I mean it’s a fact isn’t it that women are the main carers for the children, so I think there’s that dynamic when you’re working with someone as well, and I think, as well, being quite sensitive to the fact that it is mainly women who are the victims of domestic abuse, so there’s always that sensitivity with women as well.

Q) Do you think that you being female helps with that? With building relationships?

R) It’s not always the case, because there are several women that I’ve worked with that have actually responded more positively, in their words, with a male worker. I think, one of them explained that to me because of the poor female role models that were in her family, and she felt more comfortable with male workers, but that was very much one individual. But yes, I do think it helps that I’m older, and that I’m female, and it’s also quite interesting to note as well that my nationality sometimes helps me as well because I’ve had quite a lot of feedback about the way I speak and the tone of my voice and I’ve had several women feedback that they’ve felt comfortable with me because of my accent so that’s a very interesting one.

Q) Have you found when working with clients that they have been able to keep their substance abuse under control post-incarceration?

R) If, in my experience, if a woman has had a longer jail term sentence, then because they've done a lot of their recovery and detox in prison, I'm just thinking of an example like that lady who was released last Friday, she'd been in for two years so she had obviously had two years' worth of detox, she's on a methadone programme, she's accessed work, she's accessed education, she's accessed counselling, so she felt that she was more prepared, whereas some of the women on shorter sentences who might get a 12 week sentence only serve 6 weeks, my experience is that when they come out of a shorter prison sentence then they normally will return to alcohol and drugs a lot quicker than the ladies who have had longer sentences because they've had that time and space and that more support to address... yeah... 6 weeks isn't.... You tend to find that a lot of women who have long term prolific substance misuse issues, dual diagnosis, if they go in for 6 weeks and then come out then they automatically go back to scoring.

Q) Would you say that there have been any health or mental health problems within women leaving prison from your experience? If so, has there been thorough diagnosis and treatment?

R) I would say there's more and more mental health issues, I've noticed more I would say in the past five years and I feel that that's because services, psychiatric services, community services are squeezed, and what we've noticed is that a lot of the women who have got prolific substance misuse issues and mental health issues that services like *Single Point of Access* etcetera are not equipped to deal with the women because of all the substance misuse issues and that presents a massive barrier to healthcare. You find that services may or may not come out and do an assessment and when they know there's been a long history and they still have current issues which can affect their mental health and can impact their mental health, they can't do like a pure assessment of needs around mental health in terms of like diagnosis, because the women are presented under the influence they normally say if someone has say a 6 month time frame to access services, if they can perhaps be abstinent then they can access services. Well for some women who've got a 30 year history of drug and alcohol addiction, that's a very very difficult thing.

Q) Would you say there has been thorough diagnosis and treatment for people?

R) No, I think it's very difficult and I think it's difficult for services because of the enormous pressure on them and they've obviously had their budgets cut as well so social services who are working with a client group, I think that's why a lot of them are calling on services like ourselves to just try to maintain things around housing benefit, making sure someone's taking their medication but again if someone maybe does have a diagnosis, this is the flip side of it, and who is taking some quite serious medication and is using or drinking on top of it then you've got that dynamic as well on top of it.

Q) How have you found the ease of finding suitable housing post-incarceration for these women? What barriers?

R) Extremely difficult, extremely difficult, again because local housing, it's quite a tight criteria to access the housing, so what the women have to do is put their information into what's called a housing plan, which all their previous information is given about their backgrounds, previous tenancies, debt issues, recharges, what services they're involved with, that's then assessed by the local authority and they're given a banding, so normally the women that I work with, unless there's been issues raised before like MARAC or threats to life or where women have been reporting to the police where there's significant police

evidence to say this woman needs to be housed in such and such an area, but if you haven't got that information then more often than not the women are awarded a band E which could be that they could be on the waiting list for up to 2 years for a property. Once you start getting into private rented housing, we used to have quite a lot of landlord contacts that because they were quite sensitive to the needs of a particular customer group, who are willing to waiver fees etc., then *[service name removed]* might manage the tenancy on their behalf, but that's becoming less and less because of changes to benefits, the government want peoples benefits to be paid directly to them and not to the landlord so landlords are worried "ah we've got this person who has substance misuse issues, all my rent is going to them" so they're panicking thinking I'm not going to see my rent, so more and more landlords are requiring a bond, they're requiring advanced rent, there's not many women who have got £800 in their pocket, there are some provisions locally that they can tap into but again there's some very tight criteria for that, housing associations in the area, some of them have two year waiting lists so as a worker what you have to do, to me the more agencies involved in a woman's case the better because then we can tap into those agencies, get them to write letters of support to say this woman's mental health is going to be impacted if she's homeless or sofa surfing and a lot of women that we work with are sex workers as well so there's also vulnerability and risk there as well, they might already be known to safeguarding police and we might also have a statement off the police so you can see how one issue becomes 20.

Q) Would you say that offering gendered support is something which is beneficial and preferred by your clients?

R) I think maybe women using the service for the first time or finding out about the service are really pleased, it's that thing I said earlier, there are a minority that prefer to work with males but we work very closely with the *[service name removed]* next door and *[service name removed]* which is a female specialist probation officer role so they work alongside women service, so I think for a lot of women who especially experience domestic violence and a lot of the sex workers are pleased that there is that specific service there for women that men are not accessing so you've got that on that level whereas I think maybe some of the more well-known women to services are just pleased that there's a service there for them actually because what you find with a lot of generic housing support services is that the risk is too high for them to work with the women again or they'd say "no we don't want to work with that person again" so more often than not sadly there's more closed doors than there are open, it's just good that there's a service.

Q) What are the biggest barriers for women in this position in finding suitable employment or improving their employability skills?

R) I would say lack of experience with a job, lack of experience with training and we have a lot of women who can't read or write, we have a couple of women from the travelling community as well who just haven't worked because of the cultural circumstances that they've been raised in is very much the home maker, I'm trying to think what else, the offending, that can be a barrier especially for women with violent offences, and it's a shame really because a lot of women who are maybe in recovery or have had their children removed and there's been violence on their records, who maybe poses a high risk, there could be a MAPPA where they've been subject to multi agency public protection, and they might come to us and say "I really want to work with kids, I really want to work. I want a job like yours"

216 and again then we have to inform the women what they can disclose, what they don't need to  
 217 disclose, and for a lot of women it's really sad because for a lot of them the barrier is  
 218 themselves because they maybe don't realise that they have got a lot of skills you know  
 219 things like that, or their self-esteem is just so low or they haven't had experience, I mean I  
 220 know of another lady who's got a lot of old style tattoos and she's also self-harmed a lot so  
 221 she's very very conscious of how she's going to be judged because of her specific experience  
 222 she just feels that as soon as someone hears that she's been in prison or she rolls up her  
 223 sleeves and they see her self-harming that she's immediately going to be judged and that  
 224 she's not going to be good enough for that role so a lot of the stuff that we offer yes its  
 225 practical but there's also a lot of stuff around trying to build confidence and self-esteem.  
 226 *[Service name removed]* itself, we do drop-in things and we do a lot of stuff around  
 227 confidence but it's very very difficult when you've got a woman in her forties and she's spent  
 228 the last thirty years not feeling very good about herself. We have had some women who have  
 229 accessed employment and we've also got a volunteer coordinator post now here so we've got  
 230 an ex-customer from our scheme who does some voluntary work so we're trying more and  
 231 more to have co-production here so that at least the women can come and access here a role  
 232 that will then enable them to go out and say right I've done a bit of voluntary work, I've done  
 233 a couple of courses, and things like that so we're doing quite a lot of work.

234 Q) Do you think enough of those courses are offered? CV skills, job applications, things like  
 235 that.

236 R) Hmmm, I know the job centre will offer some of that but I sometimes think if women  
 237 aren't already in services they aren't going to find out about it so it's kind of signposting,  
 238 there's a lot of stuff in the community at the moment, I don't know if you've heard of  
 239 *[service name removed]*? And *[service name removed]*, I refer over to *[service name removed]*  
 240 before and I've co-worked with *[service name removed]* before, and there's other  
 241 things like *[service name removed]*, that's based in Mirfield, and that's purely for people in  
 242 the community who have substance misuse issues and recovery mental health issues who  
 243 have maybe been into prison, there is, I mean provision is getting better, it's just accessing it.

244 Q) How do women find reuniting with their family, friends and partners after prison?

245 R) Erm, I always think that's a difficult one because most of the women that our service  
 246 works with, the children have already been removed, so some have grandparents, parents that  
 247 have got paternal rights and have their children so there might have supervised access or it  
 248 could be that they're not allowed to see their children because their children have been  
 249 adopted so I think there's only two women that I'm working with at the moment that are low  
 250 level offending but they haven't been to prison but they do have access to their children. I've  
 251 got a couple of women who have got children in need status so there's social services  
 252 involvement but I'd say most of the women who have been in and out of prison no longer  
 253 have access to their children and sadly for the prolific, I hate putting categories and names  
 254 and labels but it's just a way of presenting the information, so for more of the prolific female  
 255 offenders you'll actually find that the family, for obvious reasons, have cut ties so they don't  
 256 actually have that family support and their peer group is normally the people that are in the  
 257 same circumstances so that can be detrimental and what you find quite often is that yes there  
 258 is an element of support there, they can sleep on their couch for three nights that kind of  
 259 thing, but it's not necessarily the best and then we're starting to go into co-dependency and a



260 whole different ball game but yeah I'd say for the women we predominantly work with, the  
261 children are not with them anymore so it's not... well it is an issue because when you're  
262 doing work with a woman there's obviously, the women still miss their children and there's a  
263 lot of issues associated with bereavement, anger, there's all them things that kind of don't go  
264 away, the women kind of puts them in a box and locks them away.

265 Q) For those that have had children, would you say that this presents any problems when  
266 supporting these women after release? Such as custody issues?

267 R) We normally if maybe we're doing some co-working with social services, there's  
268 obviously the women centre next door and they have specific specialised workers around, it's  
269 called *Mothers Apart*? I don't know if you've heard of that? So they work with women who  
270 are estranged from their children and when they no longer have access so there's support  
271 around that and they've also got a counselling service as well. In terms of women who have  
272 access to supervised contact, we'll try and facilitate that by maybe trying to build a  
273 relationship with either social services or the family member, that's only if the woman wants  
274 to because I think when the women are getting access and they're really trying very hard to  
275 go into recovery they really want you to speak on their behalf to the families to say "look  
276 they're really trying, this is the kind of work that we're doing", because a lot of families  
277 they've heard a lot before and we do hear that a lot from families saying well look we've  
278 been here 100 times before, this is what happens and then they don't turn up for supervised  
279 contact, so from us it's just about being open and facilitating that contact really, even If it  
280 means, if I've got time and someone's got to go to [place name removed] for a supervised  
281 contact, I'll try to work that in and I'll try to do a session in the car with that woman and then  
282 just drop her off, or if its locally I can do the session with her and then drop her off, again  
283 you're not setting someone up so that they're gonna become dependent on you for that lift but  
284 I just think sometimes if someone's in a bit of dire straits and they've got a lot of  
285 appointments and they're struggling a bit then if I've got time then I'll just say look we'll do  
286 a session in the car and then ill drop you off, and then again if we're working alongside  
287 probation, you have multiagency meetings, you have what's gonna be the best outcome for  
288 the child really.

289 Q) Finally, have there been any issues you have found to be of importance to you, good or  
290 bad, that we haven't already discussed?

291 R) Ermmmm, domestic violence is an issue, so ill normally signpost into other agencies, the  
292 more high-profile cases are quite difficult to work with and obviously my specialism is in  
293 domestic violence, I mean we all have training but there are specialist services in the  
294 community but yes I always find that's a difficulty sometimes, to try to access the right  
295 service because again, a woman's got to want to engage with the process.

296 Q) When you say accessing services and signposting for DV, is that for counselling for  
297 previous relationships or is that in terms of going back to violent relationships?

298 R) No, going back to the relationship, surviving in the relationship, or erm there's quite a few  
299 schemes now called *IDVA, the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate* - Now these women  
300 will support women who have to go to court for domestic violence and they also support  
301 women who won't report the violence and that's very hard for the women and for the services

302 because the services can't really do a lot of work with the woman if she's not reporting and  
 303 also if there's children in the relationship then there's obviously the safeguarding becomes  
 304 priority for the women and for the children and so it could be that the police could be called  
 305 and under these new laws and everything the police could pursue a charge without the  
 306 woman so there's all that.

307 I suppose apart from that its all the stuff around... I mean our service is only open Monday to  
 308 Friday 9-5, so I would say that another issue is that predominantly services are 9-5 and you  
 309 know people's lives don't operate on a 9-5 do they, and what you find is that a lot of issues,  
 310 incidents and where the support is really required is over the weekend, on an evening, things  
 311 like that so it might be the police dealing with it, it might not be the right service, so it might  
 312 be one of those yeah just the timings of services, I mean the support is out there like the  
 313 Samaritans but it's not practical help with issues is it, its emotional support. Practical support  
 314 is a 9-5 service operation.

315 I'm just trying to think of what else... housing.. benefits, oh and debt is what's else! That's a  
 316 massive barrier because a lot of women who have had a trail of debt with utilities and  
 317 whatever else, some women tend to just brush it under the carpet and not want to, which  
 318 again is a barrier for a lot of things, you know bad credit, going for loans. I can't really think  
 319 what else...

320 There's another service is *[service name removed]*, they work with street workers, they do  
 321 outreach a couple of nights a week with street workers and now of course there is the human  
 322 trafficking element and there's quite a lot of girls from overseas that are not engaging with  
 323 services and there's often that language barrier there. There's little services here, little private  
 324 self-funded services for women, there's one called talk through, and another called *Auntie*  
 325 *Pams* so they're quite good so there are services available for women.

**Appendix 16 - Helen Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 25/07/2016**

**Interviewing: Helen**

Q) From your experience, what do women need in terms of support post-incarceration?

R) Ok so common issues are homelessness, housing, support for substance misuse, support for benefits, and any other kind of financial thing. Support with their mental health and support reuniting with their families.

Q) Have you found when working with clients that they have been able to keep their substance abuse under control post-incarceration?

R) So I think that it can go both ways, so women that are being released that go into a hostel, a bail hostel environment, tend to be exposed again to substance misuse because they're mixing with the peers that they knew before prison, we had one woman who came out, she was literally out for two weeks, and she said that because she had a TV but no TV license or digibox, she was so bored that she literally went out met up with her peers, scored heroin and subsequently went stealing so went back to prison within two weeks. I think the more organised women will be supported by *[service name removed]*, so they'd have an appointment at *[service name removed]* to sort out their script and they'd be supported by *[service name removed]* so they can maintain that script

Q) Would you say that there have been any health or mental health problems within women leaving prison from your experience?

R) Erm, post-traumatic-stress-syndrome, personality disorders, depression, anxiety, I think that's all of them really.

Q) Has there been thorough diagnosis and treatment?

R) No. I think it's because women get short term sentences, the mental health support that they get within the prison environment is... limited, because of the short term sentences.

Q) How have you found the ease of finding suitable housing post-incarceration for these women? What barriers have there been to this?

R) Right okay, I think there's far too many women being released with no fixed abode, I do think that the hostel environment doesn't support them to rehabilitate, I think that there needs to be a massive change in the way that housing for female offenders is managed. I don't think that just because you're being released from prison, you're automatically considered as a priority so I think offenders have to prove themselves to be more vulnerable than someone that isn't an offender. I know that the prison doesn't have a legal requirement to provide housing on release. I know that people's basic human rights aren't being met, there's 30 I think human rights and 3 of them are to do with accommodation and they're not being met. I put a bid in on Friday for £25,000 to support 6 of our most entrenched women, so they'll literally get £4000 each on release from prison to try to get some appropriate and stable housing, if the council does provide them with some kind of tenancy then they tend to be living in shells, no carpets, no curtains, no white goods. Women don't have the ability to cook, women that have been entrenched in the criminal justice system don't know how to cook so it's about supporting them to maintain that tenancy. So we're looking at piloting

42 between September and March, access to appropriate, stable, long-term, private tenancies for  
43 6 women coming out of prison to see if that will make a difference to them.

44 Q) What are the biggest barriers for women in this position in finding suitable employment?

45 R) ID. A lot of women coming out of prison don't have any ID. So quite often we have to  
46 broker access to support through probation, so whether or not the person or the employer will  
47 accept a letter head saying that this is the person that it is, so access to ID, confidence in  
48 themselves and the belief in themselves, lack of qualifications, employers judgements around  
49 female offenders, so we did have an offer from crown point plaza to host some work  
50 experience for our women, but what they did say is that we can't have any women that have  
51 been in prison for either violence or theft and that's what women tend to go to prison for! So  
52 it was a non-starter to begin with, and we have had some successes, so we do have some  
53 people that have come through our offender programme and have got a job so we never give  
54 up, getting our women employed is a real hope, it is actually an aspiration that we never lose  
55 sight of.

56 Q) What about employability skills then? Do you feel there is enough support and courses to  
57 help women coming out of prison with things such as CV writing and basic maths and  
58 English skills?

59 R) Yeah well we run I.T. for beginners, which is part of CV writing skills and things like that,  
60 so we do cater for that kind of thing but I think most of the women that come here at too far  
61 removed from that, they are very chaotic.

62 Q) So maybe not at this point then, do you think that is something that would come later on?

63 R) Yeah.

64 Q) How do women find reuniting with their family, friends and partners after prison?

65 R) It can be problematic, I think that upon release you expect everything to be okay again but  
66 it's not, you are just going back to the same life. A lot of our women don't have a positive  
67 network of friends and family, so again when talking about housing a lot of our women don't  
68 want to be re-housed where they were prior to prison, because again its exposure to the same  
69 people, peers, and issues that they have had before. I think it's quite difficult to generalise  
70 because some families are very supportive, we had one young girl recently take her own life  
71 in prison which was very upsetting, she was probably about 24, and her mum donated the  
72 funeral proceedings to us because she valued the service that we provided, and her mum was  
73 constantly on the phone to the key worker, and the key worker was amazing just saying all  
74 the positives that we had recognised in this young girl, so she obviously had a very  
75 supportive family but the majority of our women don't.

76 Q) For those that have had children, would you say that this presents any problems when  
77 supporting these women after release? Such as custody issues?

78 R) Yeah, so a lot of our women have had numerous kids removed on the basis that they keep  
79 having children in the hope that they will get to keep the next one, but unfortunately they  
80 don't change their behaviour so that's not always going to happen. So within the centre, we  
81 have a therapy group called 'Living Without Children', so that's a talking therapy group

where you share your experiences of coming to terms with the fact that your kids are never going to be in your life again unfortunately.

Q) How do you think that that works then? Do you think that they are quite emotional then or is that something they have already realised by the time they come to that program?

R) I don't think you ever lose the emotion attached to that wrench, I think that wrench is what causes a lot of post-traumatic stress syndrome within our women as well. We get a lot of referrals from social care in the sense that if women engage with us (the service) it looks good and they (the ex-offender) are working towards getting their kids back or contact with their kids, but that is something that is beyond our control.

Q) What would you say is often the main priority for women post-incarceration?

R) Housing.

Q) Do you think that there are any differences between the way males and females prioritise or experience their release?

R) I think that in terms of housing, so you very rarely get women that are street-homeless as they "sofa-surf", so it's kind of hidden, whereas men will appear on the streets as homeless. So I think for a woman, to feel human, I think you need your home and I think you need your things around you. Part of my bid that I put in on Friday was in terms of removals and storage, so a lot of women if they get arrested and are sent straight to prison, the council, if they are staying in council or private property, start an eviction process after thirteen weeks, which literally means that the flat gets emptied and the woman's possessions get skipped or tipped, which means that when they come out they haven't got anything apart from what they are stood up in, now how is that making anyone feel human? It isn't is it? So in our very damp cold cellar we have black bin bags of stuff for the women that are fortunate enough to know that they are going to go to prison because they have got to present it at the police station, so if they know they are doing that they bring their stuff here so we keep it for them on release. It's not fit for purpose though because we have got a very damp cold cellar where we are storing people's TV's and DVD's, so I have put a bid in for a removal man and a proper storage facility. So I think if you sort a woman's housing out you make her feel human and she begins to believe in herself, and I think from that, everything can then be developed. Yeah, it's about belonging and feeling human and feeling like you can contribute.

Q) As staff supporting women post-incarceration, what are the most difficult things to support women with after release?

R) Housing. A lot of our women have had previous experiences of crisis housing, which means that quite often they are banned, and how can you ban someone from a crisis housing service? So quite often we have to re-broker access to emergency housing, so the [service name removed] for example, because the council has a duty of care regardless. We had one woman who had an indefinite ban, who we had to argue for until they let her back in again.

Q) Do you feel that the service you provide as it is currently offered is adequate or specialised enough in guiding these women throughout their transition?

R) Yeah, we are gender specific, that is our specialism, so we measure gender specificness through women being supported in a woman only environment. Instant access to services because we are not very patient. Tailor made services – not everyone has to do the same

124 thing, it's specific to their particular need. It's got to be customer and user led so we don't tell  
125 them what to do, they tell us what they want to do and we support them. Finally, it's  
126 delivered in a professional way that's non-judgemental and empathetic.

127 Q) In terms of the instant accessibility, can you take self-referrals then?

128 R) Yes, they can drop in and fill in a form and then they are instantly within the service.

129 Q) Is there any way they can access the service before they come out then? (Discusses briefly  
130 that the service is based at New-Hall too) So how does that work then? Is that as soon as they  
131 know they are coming up? What are the timescales between the support starting and the  
132 woman leaving prison?

133 R) So within the prison we have got a 'Women Centre' there, so when in custody they access  
134 support there. Our colleagues in New-Hall then get a potential release date that is or isn't  
135 always stuck to, depending, so we get a list of women that are going to be released, we then  
136 go into prison, we meet them and say "This is us, come and see us, on the day you are  
137 released this is where we are", so there is consistency from custody to community.  
138 Unfortunately, we always know them, so if we are doing our job properly we shouldn't know  
139 them, because we are all about stopping re-offending, but when we walk into prison it's all  
140 "Hiya!!".

141 Q) Do you feel that you are well enough equipped to support these women throughout their  
142 leave from prison, whether that is regarding funding or training?

143 R) In terms of training we have got some fantastic key-workers, they know everybody and  
144 everybody knows them, they know all the support services inside out so we can signpost out,  
145 they are very good so I don't think there is any need to ram training. We do have training to  
146 keep ourselves up to trend, so we do things around 'spice', we do things around human  
147 trafficking, we do things around personality disorder, but in terms of advice and guidance  
148 they are excellent. There is always room for more funding, because there is so much that we  
149 would want to do that we currently don't have the capacity for, so my contract specific to  
150 female offenders was halved under transforming rehabilitation, I used to have four dedicated  
151 members of staff to work and support with women who were referred to us either through the  
152 CRC [*Community Rehabilitation Company*], so low to medium risk, or through the NPS  
153 [*National Probation Service*], which are high risk, I have now only got two members of staff,  
154 but the volume of women (service users) are the same, so it's more for less. We would  
155 definitely like to do something more around mental health and something definitely more  
156 around housing, if we could we would buy every woman a home because that's the way to  
157 reduce homelessness. If they trash it, we would buy them a new one, because I think [*service*  
158 *name removed*] don't sign up to the theory that if you keep giving a woman chance after  
159 chance it encourages them to behave irresponsibly, we don't buy into that because we don't  
160 see the alternative as an option, we will just keep giving and keep giving and keep giving  
161 until we have cracked it.

162 Q) Would you say that offering gendered support is something which is beneficial and  
163 preferred by your clients?

164 R) Yes. I think that all the research would say that women need gender specific support  
165 because the criminal justice system is designed by men for men, like everything in this world,

and that's why [service name removed] was originally created, because there was an unprecedented amount of suicides in female prisons, so women tend to go to prison for theft and assault and tend to go for less than twelve months, 52% of the female prison population are victims of abuse themselves, so you could argue that their offending behaviours are a manifestation of feelings and emotions that they haven't managed, whether that's the same for men I doubt, I doubt 52% of the male prison population are victims of abuse because they are the abusers. Women also have the additional strain of something awful like 17,000 kids a year get taken into care because their mums are locked up temporarily, and I think 2,000 of that 17,000 stay within a wider family unit, 15,000 go into local authority care, and there is emerging evidence to prove that if you are in local authority care you are more likely to end up in the criminal justice system. So women need to be supported in a gender specific way, for me what is motivation for change is the relationship between the key-worker and the woman, and I think for a woman you need to be supported by a woman, because then you bring all the gender issues into it, we get women. It's not just emotionally as well it's practically, we know what it is like to be a mum, we know what it is like to be a carer, we know what it is like to have to have all the pressures of keeping things going when you are falling apart yourself, we know what it is like to be a woman. We need to be gender specific and I think that all the research out there would back that as well.

Q) Similarly, do you think that this helps in your ability to offer support effectively?

R) No, I think that working with women is much more difficult than working with men, I don't know whether I can qualify that. I just think that women are much more emotional and I think that our specialism would be wasted working on men, because we do work on a gender specific approach.

Q) You know how if you are offering a group and there is all women there, do you think if it was a mixed group it would be more difficult to get your point across?

R) Yes, a lot of our women rely heavily on peer support which wouldn't be the same if it was mixed. We have a women only building, and a lot of the women say that when a man is in the building the atmosphere changes, even if it is a professional man, they are like "Get him out of here!" and I am like "Hang on a minute, he is with me! And you are in our centre", so I think that women supporting women is the best approach.

Q) Finally, have there been any issues you have found to be of importance to you, good or bad, that we haven't already discussed?

R) Well the good thing is that we are here, so they know that they have got a centre that they can come to on release, and to fulfil their community order, and to rebuild their lives by addressing the underlying reasons for offending in the first place, and for crisis, so we have a lot of people turning up unplanned, because they are in crisis, so we had one woman this morning who had been beaten up by her sister in law, so she had come in here to ring the police and we have had to find her alternative housing because she can't go back there. So the good things are that there is support, it's gender specific support, I think I've recently done a piece of research to prove that this area, I think they have had 266 women through in the last year, and we have a re-offending rate of 9%, compared to something like 18.3% nationally, so it is that handful of women that are completely entrenched that we are unable to

208 rehabilitate, but the ones that aren't deeply entrenched we do have success in rehabilitating,  
209 so that's something we are very proud of.



**Appendix 17 - Zoe Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 21/08/16**

**Interviewing: Zoe – Female probation hostel and worked closely with the male probation hostel.**

Q) As staff supporting women post incarceration, what are the biggest difficulties that you face in supporting these clients?

R) Feeling...well I think the biggest barriers are, well lack of places to send them and organisations that will work with people that have criminal records, so a lot of places have really strict criteria, so for example for those that have drug and alcohol problems, if they are still using the drugs and alcohol then they can't be seen in a lot of places, mental health wise they have to come off the drugs and alcohol before they get assessed for mental health. Erm, just a lack of places generally because of funding and cuts, and also with the people themselves I think, a lot of it, I mean I think a lot of them don't want to change, I think some of them do and some of them don't want to and some of them are like doing it because they have to.

Q) Is that because of their probation?

R) Yeah because of their license or their conditions or sometimes you're asking them to leave behind a lot of stuff that that they've known, maybe their friends and family and where they've come from so their whole way of life, so a bit of everything really.

Q) What would you say is often the main priority for women post-incarceration?

R) Usually the people that I've worked with, they've wanted to get on benefits straight away, people that I worked with didn't necessarily have many friends or family that would support them so they were housed somewhere temporarily with us, didn't necessarily know where they were going to be in a few months' time so I think usually that was one of the first things that they wanted to do. A lot of them just seemed quite lost, a lot of the people that we worked with didn't necessarily have a plan to go back to so I think it was just deciding what they were gonna do and where they were gonna go.

Q) Do you think there are differences between male and females during their release and in what they prioritise?

R) I didn't work that closely with the males but we did work in conjunction with cardigan house, Ripon house worked in conjunction with cardigan house which is the male one and I know they had a high number of sex offenders that went there so I don't know if the nature of the crime would necessarily have anything to do with what they wanted to get out of you know after prison but I think with women there were a lot more issues that we would have to deal with more frequently than the staff in the male hostels would have to deal with, so things like housing, alcohol and drugs, and keeping to their conditions, they were all pretty standard, and even mental health to some extent but I think the women, there were a lot of other issues, so we got a lot more cases of prostitution so street workers, we got more cases of ... and this is going to sound quite bad but the atmosphere in the males hostel was sometimes, obviously it depends on the day, could be a lot calmer, where in the females could become a bit bitchy when they're all together. I think there's also issues around social services, child protection issues, they did seem that we did have to deal with those kinds of issues more than the staff in

43 the male hostels did so yeah I think there are kinds of different issues that seem to affect the  
44 women more. Also, I'm just thinking, the women in our hostels had travelled a lot further, a  
45 lot of the time. There's a lot less female prisons to male prisons, and also less female-only  
46 hostels so like approved premise wise, there's only, well I think well a couple of years ago, I  
47 think there was six, I don't know what the current number is but there's a lot less female-only  
48 approved premises than there are male's ones so there's a lot less chance that you'll be close  
49 to your friends and family than if you were male.

50 Q) Do you feel that the service you provided at the hostel was adequate in guiding these  
51 women throughout their transition?

52 R) Yes and no, I think, it was there, and we were there to provide help if they wanted it, but I  
53 think obviously each organisation is independent so the organisations don't necessarily work  
54 together as well as they could, the police and probation have different systems, the hostel has  
55 another different system, so although we use probation it's sort of, once probation got  
56 privatised that's sort of split into two different ones, so there's no there's no set system where  
57 you can just go on and get one set record for that person, it's all just different records of the  
58 same person. Also I think in terms of being ready to change, in order to change a lot of  
59 people when they first come out of prison I think they don't know what they want or where  
60 they want to go, there's a lot of stuff that they want to sort out when they get out, they're in a  
61 new place, they don't wanna, you know some of the most vulnerable women, they don't  
62 necessarily want to trust you because they don't know you. I don't think some of them are  
63 ready to make some of the changes that are expected of them and that some of the changes  
64 that they have been told to make that they might not want to make themselves and I think that  
65 it has to come from them a bit. I think that the people that do want to change that are ready, if  
66 they wanted to do well, they could do well but it would essentially be down to them to use the  
67 things that were available to them, but to use them they sort of have to meet that criteria. So  
68 sort of things like keeping appointments, getting off drug and alcohol, the waiting list for  
69 mental health services isn't great so those types of things yeah.

70 Q) What aspects of services and support do you think require more attention or what do you  
71 think that women need in terms of services post release?

72 R) Erm, I think a bit more person-centred focus about what they want as individuals, I think  
73 it's really hard to generally say because there's lots of issues that come into it like mental  
74 health is a massive one, because lots of people that we dealt with where may be in prison they  
75 hadn't been assessed or they come without their meds all prisoners sent them without their  
76 meds obviously did got to set up a new GP when they're in a new area. Erm I think  
77 confidence and low self-esteem, we have a high rate of self-harm in a hostel, again drugs and  
78 alcohol is a big one, I mean those services are there but there's no kind of offender-specific  
79 ones I don't know if erm if they have to try and fit around the other services rather than the  
80 service being specific for them. Again this project that work specifically with women that a  
81 street working but a lot of these women actually want to Street work that's what they choose  
82 to do when rather than... so yeah person centred I suppose more support with housing um  
83 yeah some of the offences a difficult but things like if you've got an Arson offence then you  
84 can't get certain housing and things like that erm, I don't know what the answer is really but I  
85 think yeah it's a person centred.

86 Q) Do you feel you were well enough equipped to support these women throughout their  
87 leave from prison, whether that is regarding funding or training?

88 R) Yeah so we had some external training that was organised through the hostel which was  
89 more focused on working with them to do things like... kind of like our *healthy me* is, so  
90 confidence building and that kind of stuff and it was really good, I think it was called  
91 *Footsteps* - that was independent training, otherwise it was just the general probation training  
92 which I think was quite well rounded, the sex offender training was good... yeah we had  
93 quite a lot of training really. I mean we did a 'working with women' training, specifically,  
94 which was quite interesting but it's still sort of the basics I mean maybe... I think I actually  
95 had quite a lot of training I'm trying to think of areas where it could have been better... I can't  
96 think of anything that was missing because I tended to get quite a lot and if I couldn't find it I  
97 would just ask for it but I can't even think of anything that I had to ask for.

98 Q) Would you say that offering support to women only is beneficial and preferred by clients?

99 R) Yeah I think you need to, I think it's good for them to be able to have that specific support  
100 and also for the men to be able to have that male specific support there is that stuff out there  
101 for men, yeah I think yeah they should do we should do that.

102 Q) Similarly do you think that this helps in your ability to offer support effectively?

103 R) Yes and no, I think it depends on in what way you are supporting them because I think a  
104 lot of the women had issues with men in the past and there's a lot of them that experienced  
105 domestic violence and I don't think for them they would have been up as comfortable in a  
106 group with men I think you'll probably get more out of them then you would in a mixed  
107 group.

108 Q) So do you think that the women have any preference in terms of staff as in whether  
109 workers are female or male?

110 R) Majority of the time it didn't seem to matter, it's more the attitude of the staff so someone  
111 they get along with, didn't feel judged, someone who could have a bit of a laugh with them,  
112 who would have equal respect. I think I only ever came across two instances where someone  
113 had an issue with staff, and that was one woman who didn't really didn't trust men after her  
114 experiences with domestic violence and one woman who was quite racist basically and he  
115 was Asian and she didn't like that, so that was really the issue I think, rather than him being  
116 male. I don't think with the women that I worked with I didn't had much of an issue with  
117 staff, I think it was just if they liked that staff member or not and I think that's more down to  
118 the approach, I don't think that... I think that would have been the same... the instances  
119 where I can think of people clashing with staff it was where they felt judged or they felt they  
120 were being bossed around and stuff so I suppose that's more to do with authority rather than  
121 the gender of the staff I think.

122 Q) Have you found that when substance misuse has been an issue, this is something that the  
123 clients are able to keep under control?

124 R) No. Well... yes and no. Yes, sometimes, if they are determined not to... But a lot of the  
125 time they will come out and they've already got a drug dealer set up in the new area, they  
126 may have tried other stuff in prison because they can get their hands on it have no idea how,  
127 but they do, because some of them will say "I didn't have a problem before I went in". Also

128 legal highs were a real issue at one point which, there's not really much you can do about  
129 them other than educate, so yes and no. I think that can stop some of them accessing mental  
130 health services because they don't necessarily want to or can't come off the drugs and  
131 because they don't necessarily show willing, the drugs people won't work with them, which  
132 means they can't access health services that they need, so that's quite a big barrier I think.

133 Q) What have been the main physical health issues that were prevalent?

134 R) All sorts really, the majority of women that were in the hostel, obviously we had a  
135 medicine cabinet that we locked up for when they took their meds but the majority I'd say  
136 99%, well 95% that came through the hostel were on some form of medication to do with  
137 either physical or mental health issues. We've come across disabled people so we had two  
138 downstairs rooms for disability access such as a lift, people with walking problems, back  
139 problems, people with other problems such as hepatitis or HIV and things like that so a really  
140 wide variety, people that were pregnant as well. I'd say nothing that stands out as being  
141 specific really.

142 Q) And do you think healthcare was sought and provided effectively? Such as GP's, dentists  
143 or sexual health screenings etc?

144 R) I think for a lot of women generally that's quite difficult because when you sign up for a  
145 GP it can take a while... we did as standard get them signed them up for a local GP service  
146 when they first came in and part of the contract that we had with the GP service is that they  
147 could get really quick appointments and that worked really well because often there were a  
148 lot of issues with meds being sent on and that they haven't been sent correctly from prison on  
149 to the new place and so filling out all these details, and in terms of mental health, obviously  
150 the waiting lists are really long and the funding for that's not great and we did have links with  
151 a CPN who did come and visit but again it's once you've seen them, it sort of transferring  
152 them on, It was ok, could be better.

153 Q) What kinds of mental health problems were often likely in these women?

154 R) I'd say a high percentage of them had mental health problems, either diagnosed before  
155 prison or after prison or... during prison. A lot of personality disorder, a lot of schizophrenia,  
156 a lot of drug-induced mental health problems, a lot of depression and anxiety. I'm just trying  
157 to think of any others... a lot of self-harm, a lot of and say when I was there we had a few  
158 suicide attempts, we had two serious ones while I was there with in the space of 2 years, so  
159 quite a wide variety really.

160 Q) Was a diagnosis and treatment in place for these issues?

161 R) Mixed, I mean some of them it take a long time and you can see that some of their  
162 previous history might have been different if they've been if they have been caught before or  
163 whilst they are committing smaller crimes. A lot of them will have committed a lot of smaller  
164 offences before a really big offence, which then meant that they were in the system so then  
165 they were more likely to get the help and GP's and what have you. I think hospitals in general  
166 could be better at dealing with self-harm and suicide attempts, sometimes the girls had a good  
167 experience but sometimes it was almost like an eye roll of "look who's here again", which

168 isn't great. I don't know I think that the help was there if they wanted it but for a lot of them it  
169 was quite scary or that they didn't know or they didn't necessarily want that diagnosis, or by  
170 the time they get round to the appointment that lost interest didn't have the interest anymore  
171 so I think the help is there is still needed it was getting them to come round to the idea of  
172 taking that help and trusting people to get that sorted.

173 Q) How easy would you say it is for these women to find suitable housing when leaving  
174 prison?

175 R) I think for people with an arson conviction, it's very difficult. A lot of places will not  
176 touch them at all. I think there's a lot of places that work quite well together, *[service name*  
177 *removed]* housing for example, *[service name removed]* places like that, there is some  
178 supported housing that you can get into, but there is waiting lists Again, drug issues and  
179 things like that might cause issues in terms of money in private renting it's a bit more  
180 difficult. I think the fact that they've got a criminal record I think possibly, it depends as well  
181 obviously with a lot of them around benefits so it might be some places that don't accept  
182 DSS, *Choose and Move* that's another good one but a lot of the places are a bit of a shambles  
183 so again it's just luck isn't it, it's just coming across somewhere that's nice, in a nice area if  
184 they want to get out of that environment, you know a lot of the houses that they might be able  
185 to get into a probably not in the nicest areas and they're more likely to get one of those  
186 houses when they are to get into private rent a lot of the man in a position where they can  
187 afford private rent. So I suppose it depends on the type of housing as to how easy it is.

188 Q) What are the biggest barriers for these women to find employment or Improving  
189 employability and skills?

190 R) Some of them came out on schemes, so one of them worked at a Sports Centre, another  
191 one worked at Jessops photography place so they come out on schemes and I think there was  
192 someone that worked at Travelodge.

193 Q) Am I right in thinking that they have things like that at New Hall as well so that they've  
194 got it before they come out?

195 R) Yeah so they would come out of prison already with that job to set up so they can be  
196 released on rattle so temporary licence so that they can go and do these jobs as well, so  
197 there's a few schemes like that have been set up. As for getting into college and stuff like that,  
198 we worked with a college so that they could get cheaper courses and things like that, some of  
199 them I think some of them got jobs as cleaning jobs, one got a job in a café. *[service name*  
200 *removed]* took people on as voluntary to get back into work I think it is difficult generally  
201 and it I think it's probably a bit harder for them when they come out of prison because  
202 they've been out of work for so long and they've got that big gap to explain, it probably just  
203 put people off to a certain extent unless they're really skilled.

204 I think a lot of them as well don't want a job, a lot of them didn't want to as they were happy  
205 on benefits, a lot of them come from a background where all the family and friends are on  
206 benefits and they're in and out of prison and they are happy! They seem to somehow get  
207 more money, a lot of them are on disability and couldn't work as well and that's a big thing  
208 where even if they wanted to work they couldn't do because of the mental health issues or  
209 physical health issues.

210 I think confidence and low self-esteem as well, maybe that's part of them not wanting to have  
 211 a job because I think quite often as well it might be street workers, that's what they want to  
 212 do, they want to street work, I mean one girl, I spoke to her and within a couple of hours  
 213 she'd earned £200 and she was done for the day, we had a conversation about it and I said  
 214 "well as long as you're safe" because you can't tell someone not to do it because her point  
 215 was "I'm not going to get a job, I've been in and out of prison and I haven't had a proper job  
 216 since I was in my teenage years" and she was now in her forties so she's been in and out of  
 217 prison for the last 20 years so why would she go and get a job, so she's not going to be able to  
 218 in her mind go and get a job so maybe that's a company thing and also she can make more  
 219 money doing something that she's done before and she know how it works.

220 Q) If in terms of education do you think that there's any gaps in education for these women  
 221 that they might need urgently?

222 R) Well yeah I mean education in sexual health and drugs can't be a bad idea... but actually I  
 223 think education in parenting would be quite good, more education in parenting, I think a lot  
 224 of the things as well there is gaps maybe prior to committing offences so maybe they've  
 225 come from sort of a difficult background from their home life, maybe didn't go to school that  
 226 much, a lot of them didn't have qualifications and maybe don't see themselves as being able  
 227 to get the qualifications, I think it's almost like people don't think that's for them whereas  
 228 other people might grow up thinking that that's an open option for them, these women have  
 229 never seen that as an option for themselves so that I suppose is confidence and upbringing I  
 230 suppose and people don't expect that from themselves. I think a lot of people that have come  
 231 from that background don't necessarily know how to parent themselves or their own children  
 232 when they're in that situation, it's easy to get involved in gangs or people that are not very  
 233 good for you or domestic violence or drugs so to sort of escape from all that so I suppose  
 234 yeah education... I suppose it's showing them what that can lead to and that they've got  
 235 options because a lot of them don't see that for themselves.

236 Q) From your experiences, can you discuss the process of reuniting with family after prison?

237 R) A lot of them didn't necessarily have very Close family and friends, those that did they  
 238 sometimes would be quite far away from where they were actually from, so they may have to  
 239 travel to see the family and friends and then be back for curfews, that was difficult unless you  
 240 get overnight permission or if the family and friends would come and visit them I think it is  
 241 quite difficult for them but obviously in the day a lot of them had free time between the  
 242 curfew hours unless they have to check in at certain times so I think it's mixed, I think it just  
 243 depends on their individual family dynamics but a lot of them would prefer to go out of the  
 244 hostel with their families rather than bring their families to their room or something.

245 Q) For those that had children, how easy was it for them to reunite with their children after  
 246 release?

247 R) I think it's difficult, I think again it's down to individual circumstances, I mean we were  
 248 dealing with medium to high risk so a lot of them a lot of the cases that be trying to get the  
 249 kids back - sometimes unsuccessfully, sometimes successfully or they might be in the  
 250 process of their kids being adopted or they might find out that the kids have been adopted  
 251 while they were in prison, that was probably more common in that they wouldn't get the kids  
 252 back or that the kids have been looked after by a family member and then actually that they're

253 their family member didn't necessarily want them to be as involved again with the children  
254 after they come back. I suppose it's recognising their relationship with their children has  
255 changed since they left and actually they're not the main caregiver anymore.

256 Q) Finally, do you think there are any other issues that you have found to be of importance,  
257 good or bad, that we haven't already discussed?

258 R) Yeah I think susceptibility to domestic violence, a lot of people seem to get involved in  
259 relationships pretty quickly with other guys that are not the nicest let's say, so I think  
260 susceptible to domestic violence. A lot of them maybe needing support around that so sort of  
261 relationships and I suppose that comes back to confidence again and self-worth so thinking  
262 about what you actually worth. May be better understanding for the police, that these women  
263 have to go through some of that stuff because I think sometimes the police don't get it as  
264 much like that all these other issues are going on for these women when they coming out of  
265 prison, that it is different from the men and it is easier to just see them as bad, and I think  
266 there's a lack of understanding around mental health with the police as well.

**Appendix 18 - Amy Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 11/08/2016**

**Interviewing: Amy**

Q) As staff supporting women post incarceration, what are the biggest barriers or difficulties you face when working with a client?

R) A lot of it's just sort of general stuff like benefits and housing, but I think a lot of it is more personal like confidence, trying to rebuild them. I think quite a few of them feel like they have failed a bit and it's kind of trying to rebuild that.

Q) In terms of failure, in what way?

R) Just because they have a record I suppose.

Q) How do you feel you do that, rebuild them? Is it just through supporting them?

R) Yeah just through support, trying to kind of listen to them, listen to how they are feeling and their opinions on things. I think a few people, a few of the women feel that people don't listen to them after they have got their criminal record, they've got this appointment and that appointment and it's very overwhelming.

Q) So what would you say is often the main priority for women when they first come out of prison? What's the first thing that they want to get sorted out?

R) I would say it would be the housing first, depending on the situation. I don't know, I suppose it differs between some of them, I have had some that have been determined on dealing with their drug or alcohol issues, and others want to sort their mental health issues again, they are wanting to get that sorted.

Q) Do you think there is any difference between what males and females prioritise when they come out of prison?

R) I'm not sure if it's different, I think it's handled differently by them. Again I think it's that women seem more emotional and a bit more... needing extra support. I think a lot of the men that I deal with, a lot of them do seem to have mental issues but it seems different to the way the women deal with it if that makes sense.

Q) Apart from prioritising, do you think there is any way they experience release from prison differently?

R) Yeah, I think it does hit the women a lot more, especially if they have got families as well, and I don't just mean children I mean parents as well.

Q) You think the family side of things is more a women issue?

R) Yeah I think so.

Q) Do you feel the service you provide, as it's currently offered, is adequate in guiding these women through their transition?

R) Not really, [service name removed] is mostly around housing and things like that, on paper we don't give emotional support.



38 Q) So you think that could be what is needed a bit more?

39 R) Yeah.

40 Q) So what aspects require more attention? What do women need in services post release?

41 R) Yeah it is more emotional support like I said, or even more social contact, trying to get  
42 them back out and feeling comfortable out socialising again.

43 Q) Do you feel that you are well enough equipped to support women, throughout leave from  
44 prison, regarding funding and training?

45 R) No.

46 Q) What gaps are there in those two things I just mentioned?

47 R) There is no funding there really for that kind of thing, and training, training is a bit of a hit  
48 and miss at times.

49 Q) What training would you like?

50 R) I would like sort of more mental health training.

51 Q) Counselling skills or therapy or a bit of both?

52 R) Yeah a bit of both, anything to help handle things a bit better and know what we are  
53 doing.

54 Q) How do you find offering support to both genders independently?

55 R) Fine, I do feel that I become... not emotionally attached but sort of a bit more concerned  
56 about the women than I do with the blokes, because they just seem so much more vulnerable  
57 some of them.

58 Q) Would you say you alter your approach and support based on their gender?

59 R) I don't think so, I hope I don't, I wouldn't want to change it. I think if there is a man or a  
60 woman in a sort of emotional state I like to think I deal with it the same way.

61 Q) Have you found that when substance misuse is an issue, this is something that clients are  
62 able to keep under control when they come out of prison?

63 R) No. I think it's falling back into old habits, and if you end up back in areas where there's  
64 people they associated with before they have gone to prison it just doesn't work. I was talking  
65 to one of my clients the other day, we had just been to *[service name removed]* for a drugs  
66 and alcohol appointment, and she was saying that she was off heroin for four years because  
67 she went to Pakistan, away from everybody, she was with family but no one that she had used  
68 with, and yeah she was clean for four years, but went back to *[place name removed]* and was  
69 using again within a couple of months. She said that because she was walking down the street  
70 and bumping into people that she was using with she went straight back into it.

71 Q) What have been the main issues you have come across with these women in terms of  
72 healthcare and mental health? What are the main problems?

73 R) I think the help is there for the mental health to a degree, but I don't think they always  
74 want to access it. I think there is still a little bit of stigma there, so they have got the mixed  
75 thing of the offence and mental health combined, and it's just motivation, a lot of them don't  
76 seem to be motivated to access the help. I think a lot of them maybe need more advice on sort  
77 of safe using as well. The client I have just been on about, a few weeks ago she has just been  
78 diagnosed with Hepatitis C because she was using, I mean she knew the risks but she did it  
79 anyway really, sort of sharing needles and stuff.

80 Q) So like more education on those sort of things?

81 R) I think so yeah.

82 Q) Do you think there is any problems in accessing healthcare rather than mental healthcare?

83 R) Finding a dentist seems to be a big thing, a lot of them seem to be struggling with dentists.  
84 With doctors and everything I've found that they are alright, but dentists they do struggle.

85 Q) How easy is it for women leaving prison to find suitable housing?

86 R) I think it's quite easy, as long as they know about the organisations there is quite a lot to  
87 help them, but it's making them aware of those services first I mean they have no idea where  
88 to go really.

89 Q) So it's just an issue of signposting them to the right places and then once they are aware it  
90 is good?

91 R) Yeah once they are aware it is quite good.

92 Q) What are the biggest barriers for women in this position in finding suitable employment or  
93 improving employability skills?

94 R) Motivation I think. Quite a few that I have come across just aren't really motivated to go  
95 into work, they use the old "Oh now that I've got an offence, no one is going to employ me".  
96 I mean for some that's a confidence thing but for some it's like a self-sabotage thing, like just  
97 any old reason I don't know. I mean again I suppose the mental health comes into it, I have a  
98 client who is working part time but she has had days that she has missed because of her  
99 mental health and she has just not been able to leave the house.

100 Q) In terms of reuniting with family when they come out of prison, can you discuss this  
101 process, how easy is this for them and how do they cope with this?

102 R) Some ones that I have worked with have gone back into families quite well, one client  
103 actually moved in with her daughter to help look after the grandchildren afterwards, so I think  
104 it's quite a normal thing really. Another young girl, she was suffering domestic violence from  
105 an ex-partner, so again she goes to stay with her mum when he's bothering her, so I think  
106 they seem to do alright.

107 Q) For those who have had children, how difficult would you say this process is for women  
108 when they are coming out of prison? How difficult is it for them to gain access to their  
109 children again?

110 R) I would have thought it would be quite difficult I think, I mean it depends on the offence  
111 in terms of gaining access full time with them but it would be difficult as well just to get back

112 into that routine, from stepping out of the family routine to trying to get back in, and the  
113 children readjusting as well it would be a big issue for them.

114 Q) From you experiences in this area, do you think there is any difference in stigma in men  
115 and women coming out of prison?

116 R) I think so yeah because I don't think people expect women to go to prison. Whenever you  
117 think of a prison you think of a building full of big butch men.

118 Q) Do you think that the stigma is worse towards women because of that then?

119 R) Yeah, like sort of "You're a woman, you shouldn't do that", especially if it's like a violent  
120 crime as well or things like that. A lot of people don't see women like that. Yeah I think it is  
121 still a problem, I think it adds pressure onto the woman I think, because they are not expected  
122 to get into trouble, they are not expected to get arrested or go to prison, I think that probably  
123 adds to the mental health side of it.

124 Q) Are there any other issues, that I haven't already mentioned, that are important to these  
125 women in that transition?

126 R) Debt can be quite a large issue, again it's kind of signposting them through to  
127 organisations that can help.

128 Q) Do you think there is enough places you can signpost to? Do you think there are enough  
129 support services out there?

130 R) For debt probably not, anything debt-wise I tend to send them to seek advice.

131 Q) What about in terms of anything support wise, do you think there is enough places for you  
132 to signpost to?

133 R) I think around here there is a lot of places for you to signpost people to, I'm not sure about  
134 anywhere else though. A lot of times we find that there will be one place that has got a  
135 customer that basically they don't want to deal with, so they have referred them to us so that  
136 they can get rid of them. We have had a few that have been referred to us and then when we  
137 have accepted them the other place has discharged them.

138 Q) Do you think there are names that places are aware of and then support is not offered to  
139 them based on the previous experiences with that person?

140 R) Absolutely yeah. Other services do do that, I mean sometimes there's certain names that  
141 you know will be impossible to link with support because they just have such chaotic lives  
142 and the places know about them.

**Appendix 19 - Olivia Interview Transcript**

**Researcher and transcribed by: Lauren Bradley 02/09/2016**

**Interviewing: Olivia**

Q) When you've supported women after prison what have been biggest barriers and difficulties that you have faced when working with a client?

R) I think when, I mean we've only recently started supporting women who have been in prison, I think when we have supported clients who have been still involved with probation there has been some issues around... obviously that they have to attend probation and sometimes probation have some sort of added it on to their licence that they have to engage with us as well, so it almost makes engaging with us a chore, and that's not what our service is about, we're a voluntary organisation, we're not statutory, we don't force people to work with us. We put the emphasis on clients wanting to work with us, so if a client is under probation, I've tried to have a word with the probation officers about that and kind of explain that we can't have our service as part of that licence. I think the other main barrier is when you get someone's risk assessment and obviously they've been in prison for various crimes, you can't help but build up a bit of a picture, you build up this thing and when you're about to do the assessment you're thinking, 'oh my god what have I let myself in for', from what's on paper anyway, and then when you meet the person you're like 'what? Where has all this come from?' it's absolutely ridiculous but then I think if you write down everything about yourself on paper it probably wouldn't look too great! So yeah, risk assessments, it's always picking out the worst case scenarios and the worst things that happened in a person's life so I think sometimes you have to, as a worker you have to get over that barrier and you can't help having those assumptions, it's human nature when it's in front of you, you build up those stereotypes don't you, so I think it's just that I've had to be aware of that really and then kind of go in there with an open mind and once you get to know these people, not that you understand why they've committed these crimes, but you kind of think, you know, they've not have the right upbringing, not had the right support, they've been forced into these situations, you know, it's a wonder that they've survived it all! So yeah, I mean to turn clients away for what's on paper would be awful because we don't have any context at all to what has happened. So its remembering that really, and not getting into that stereotype and not going off that first referral form that we get.

Q) What would you say is often the main priority for women when they're coming out of prison and do you think that's any difference between males and females?

R) I'm not too sure, I've not worked with males, again it's quite difficult because we've only got one client who was actually recently come out of prison in to our support, the other clients have had offending history but quite a long time ago so I think for this particular client she just wanted to have fun. She's quite young, she'd just turned 21 when I started supporting her. So her priorities really for getting out of prison were just to go and see her friends and have that sense of normality. The biggest barrier for her was that in her local area it was in the newspaper whenever she was convicted, so now whenever she's out in a local area she gets quite paranoid and anxious that people are talking about her, that people are judging her, thinking that they know her history or know what she's done, so I suppose that has acted as a bit of a barrier of her, actually going out and obviously it's really enforced these negative images of herself and that's really affected a mental health. I suppose reinforced that low self-

esteem that might have got her into these sorts of relationships in the first place really and it's really difficult because what I'm saying to her is "you know we could try doing things, you know we could try going out?", but that's not really what she wants to do, she's quite happy doing her own thing. Staying local, because she does live right out of [place name removed], so yeah I'm not really too sure what her biggest priority is, I think it's just having that freedom and not being judged.

Q) So the service that you currently provide, do you feel that it is adequate enough to support these women after prison? I know you don't have many at the moment with being such a new service, but as you take on more clients, do you feel comfortable and in a position to support them? Think maybe in terms of having enough training or funding, or whether what your service offers is enough?

R) I mean yeah I think so, because when we changed the service, we put the emphasis back on offending behaviour and more about women who have been in prison and we began to build up links with probation. So I suppose it was about getting information on what it means for somebody to be on probation, and on licence, what the terms of the licence mean, and just to have that relationship with the probation where we can phone up and ask questions if we need it. Its vice versa, I think probation have recently started to sort of recognise how we as a service can be quite useful, so if they've got a client and they're struggling with them, I mean this is what happened with our previous client, she was referred to us for sort of self-harm and low mood, low motivation, so we've been able to come in and sort of do that work with her here which obviously probation don't really work on the mental health side so I think together we can really start with a really sort of good partnership so it's having that relationship really that has helped, being able to work together with other agencies and services too because we can't do everything and neither can they.

Q) So what about in terms of training, are there any areas that you would like more training in? Or haven't been able to access training you need to feel equipped to deal with this change of service?

R) I think [service name removed] is actually quite good at providing training, but I don't think there's any training specifically for working with people with offending behaviour because it's just dealing with clients with difficult behaviour really which is what we do on a daily basis. Here I've noticed on my current caseload I have had quite a few clients with eating disorders, so bulimia, anorexia, body dysmorphic disorder, and I thought oh this is really interesting because out of my 3 clients all three of them are showing signs of this, so it's really common here so I mean I was able to find some training that [service name removed] offered so it's just a matter of getting booked on to that, which can be quite a lengthy process. So I suppose there are times whilst you're waiting for training where you just ask a lot of questions to whoever you can! But no, I don't think there's any specific training that we need to have it was just about them relationships with the probation so we can learn through them really, I recently did some training that [service name removed] provided with novel psychoactive substances, so they used to be known as legal highs, so that's really interesting because that is a massive issue in prisons at the moment, spice and black mamba, so I was interested in doing that training because I was thinking in the future if we are getting more clients and they're coming straight out of prison, if they do have those issues you know addictions to novel psychoactive substances, that's going to come in really

helpful so I think it's just a matter of seeing what comes up and if we do need training, it's looking for it, booking it and just improvising in the meantime by asking who you can.

Q) So what do you think women need in terms of services when they come out of prison?

R) I think the main one is employability. So the lady that I'm seeing today, she's mentioned a few times she's quite skilled in a few different areas but that she struggled to get work since coming out of prison because she's got a criminal conviction. My other client that I spoke about, because she's quite young, I chatted to her and I kind of said "do you fancy going back to education, maybe vocational courses, get a job, anything like that?" and she just said "no, nobody will employ me", so it's that sort of attitude, that 'do you know what, if they look at my name then as soon as they see that it's an absolute dead no, you see and robbery on someone's DBS application form even not going to employ you at a bank or even ASDA', you know that's pretty much word for word what one of my clients said to me. So I think some services that are more geared up to help clients, because I think a lot of people, for instance armed robbery, people might have offended because of lack of money, but I think it's just sort of keeping that cycle going if they can't get the opportunity to work and earn legally, what are the choices? They're going to return to crime or something like that, so definitely I think in terms of employability and some work around that. I think as well, for males and there's no real male personality disorder service in the area now, if you look at the prison population I can't remember the statistics of the top of my head, but a massive percentage of the prison population, males and females, have got personality disorder. I'm sorry but in my mind, our country is institutionalizing individuals with mental health issues when they really should be offering that intervention because then they don't have to go into prison in the first place or at least once that personality disorder has been picked up on, interventions might stop, you know, people returning to prison and reoffending and stop that cycle basically.

Q) So would you say that offering support towards women only is beneficial or preferred by clients?

R) I think they do yes, when we were going for our new spec, we were looking to open it up to men, and we did discuss it, and the commissioners made the decision that 'no we wouldn't' and I think that it is beneficial because a lot of our women have actually been through a lot of trauma or a lot of childhood abuse, domestic violence, domestically abusive relationships, and that's the males and the females to be honest but I think when we were running groups one of the things what is the biggest concerns was how would women feel in the group if it was some men and some women and I think with personality disorder it tends to be females that generally females a classified as borderline personality disorder, or emotionally unstable, so it's all about women and it's such a social construction that women are so emotional you know, where with men they are often are diagnosed with anti-social personality disorder which is the idea that when men get angry they lash out, so you know it's completely two different types of personality disorder so by putting those together I don't think the group dynamics and that kind of thing would really work. I don't think, I mean I think as a service we are more geared up towards borderline personality disorder rather than anti-social personality disorder and working with women around that kind of thing now, but we have noticed that there is actually a lot more anti-social personality disorder than we expected, so that is a bigger part of the service now and it wasn't previously, and I think that links with the impulsivity of offending really. They're getting into situations that they normally wouldn't

do, so yeah I think that's why we made the decision and I think our women do benefit from it at the moment but it would be good if we could sort of have, you know if our service could grow when we could have a service for men as well but I think even if we had that then I think we would keep the groups separate, rather than combine it, you just gotta think of individually tailored packages of support for all of our clients because to say that you've got a personality disorder, one size does not fit all, you know not one of our clients, I mean some of them might be similar, but they are all different at the end of the day.

Q) Do you think this helps in your ability to support them?

R) I think it can and it can't, I think our service is sort of written into it that we only employ females, you know female workers and the reason for that is that we're working with vulnerable women who have quite often been abused, so from that point of view it makes it easy because a lot of the women are quite anxious around men so a male worker wouldn't be able to. I mean I've got an assessment later on with a male worker from dual diagnosis and my clients repeatedly asked me if he's going to hurt her and even though I've explained that he's a professional and I'm going to be there, she's so distrustful of males, and of services, because they have abused their position of power, so in that way If I was a male I wouldn't have, I mean it's taken me years to build this relationship anyway and that's as a female, so I would say probably no chance with a male, so I think yes being a female and working with females you kinda have got certain things that you have in common, that you can talk about a bit more freely than if it was a male. Saying that, I have worked with males before, in different services and have still been able to build that relationship and the client actually might have personality disorder as well.

Q) Do you think it makes it easier for you to support ex-offenders when you're directing support at one gender?

R) You know, I'm not too sure, I think if we were working with men and women I don't think it would make it any more difficult because you don't really look at an individual client and think 'oh they're a female, so I'll work this sort of way', I think you just look at them and see what their support needs are, I'm just thinking when I have had a mixed case load before and I've had clients who have had personality disorders you know maybe males and females it didn't really change it didn't make it easier or harder I think if we were to open it up with males it would be really beneficial for them and I don't really think we have to change the way we are working no, it's just whether that would impact the women if they were in groups I suppose. If you were running a group I think it would make sense to have the two separately, but I've not actually had experience, well I suppose I have actually I did some work with the *Prince's Trust* and that was mixed, you know, males and females, but it was very heavily dominated by males.

Q) Do you think that made it harder to reach the females because it was heavily dominated?

R) Yeah actually there was some, I mean it was 16 to 25 year olds, there were some strange dynamics going on within the group, but yeah I think it would be difficult actually if you've got males and females in the same group, knowing how to respond to both and to engage with the women if there's more men.

Q) In terms of substance abuse, have you found that when substance misuse has been an issue it's something which clients are able to keep under control?

R) No not really, I think obviously substance abuse in prison is massive, I mean my client who recently came out of prison, she wasn't much of a drug user prior to going in, it would have been more sort of amphetamines or recreational drugs, but when she was inside she actually sort of had the opportunity to try more stronger drugs. Yeah, so I think, yeah, I think the main reason people use drugs is obviously escapism isn't it, and I think in prison that's why they use it because they need to get out of their head, get out of that system. So I think possibly yes, but then I'm just thinking about the lady that we're going to see today, she was completely, she was into her drugs, but she's completely anti-drugs now, so I think it's something that changes in people really. I think as well, um I mean I'm just thinking about another one, another client, and she is a really heavy poly substance drug user, like smoking crack, injecting heroin, on a regular sort of daily basis. I know that she was in a young person's detention centre for manslaughter, and I think since coming out she's always used drugs, so I don't know if that was reinforced in there, if she used them before, but since coming out, I mean I'm assuming there was no support in place and she has sort of developed this lifestyle where she is a sex worker to pay for her drugs, and it's just vicious, it's a vicious cycle.

Q) So in terms of health care and mental health care first of all are there any particular health care of mental health problems that you've had trouble dealing with?

R) Um well yeah, personality disorder. Clients don't have to have a diagnosis of it for our service but they all have traits of it. The key one's are depression and anxiety, I think every client on my caseload has got that, and then as well bipolar, um I'm just thinking about mine and Sally's caseload, so yeah bipolar, that's sort of come up quite a bit. And then we have got the eating disorders that I mentioned before as well, so bulimia, body dysmorphic disorder, anorexia, so yeah they're the kind of key ones, but it is depression and anxiety that's throughout all of our clients. Physical-wise, there's nothing I can think of that I can recognise as a pattern, our service has only really been going since April in terms of the new style, so there's no sort of patterns that I could recognise emerging at the moment. I suppose the only healthcare issue that kind of ties in, is a lot of misuse of medication, we have a lot of clients, and I don't know how they have got it, but they are on a hell of a lot of prescription medication from GP's. We have a bit of a theory that some clients might present as quite difficult, so in order to get them out the waiting rooms, GP's might prescribe them what they want. We have one client who is able to go into a GP and get pretty much whatever prescription medication she wants, I can't remember what it is off the top of my head, but she wanted to do a home detox by herself, so she went in and was able to get the tablets to do the home detox. She's on a ridiculous amount of medication. She's one of Sally's clients, and when we got her referral we were like "What?". She's on morphine but she doesn't have any pains, so basically she's developed an opiate addiction. So that's actually, now that I'm thinking about it, that's quite common that our clients do tend to be able to get what they want from GP's, which they might not always need it in our opinion.

Q) Would you say when these issues come up then, you think there's any barriers in finding healthcare or mental healthcare?

R) Yeah, a lot of clients don't like going to the GP. I do a lot of support appointments with the GP, clients feel anxious in the waiting room having to wait like over 40 minutes for an appointment. Actually going into the GP surgery, quite a lot of GP's can be quite off hand



and they don't have a lot of time to spare for clients and clients don't feel like they have got the time to open up and explain their feelings. I mean don't get me wrong, some GP's are really good, but it's a bit of a mixed bag from what I've experienced. So it's GP's having that time, but a lot of clients do struggle, and a lot of clients as well if they have got a physical health need, quite often they will put it off, and put it off, and put it off, until it turns into something absolutely massive and then they need to be hospitalized for it. For example, I had a client who had a kidney infection and it started off as a bit of pain, and she should have gone to the GP and probably got some antibiotics and got that resolved, but she ended up being taken into hospital and was on a drip for 2 days, because it got to the point where she couldn't walk and she had to call an ambulance. There was something in that about the anxiety, about being anxious about going in and asking for help because they don't know what's going to happen, but then it gets to a point where it kind of gets to crisis point. GP outreach would be fantastic, so you know to be at their houses at least to start with, until they build up their resilience and find it more comfortable going into GP surgeries.

Q) Ok so what about diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems? Has there been thorough diagnosis and treatment?

R) There's quite often a diagnosis in place, our biggest thing that we've come across is "Oh yeah I've been told I've got personality disorder", and then that's it, they don't get told what it is, how it affects you, and what support is out there. So the number of clients who have been given a diagnosis and given a label. So obviously it's more about psychiatrists who give them a mental health diagnosis, but yeah we have had clients who had a mental health diagnosis from a psychiatrist, but not told what it is in detail, and I think personality disorder is the worst one because you automatically think "That's something to do with me, that's something that is the matter with my personality", it's the Jekyll and Hyde thing. I mean it's the same for a lot of things, there's a stigma attached to all types of different mental health problems and as soon as they are given that label, sometimes it can be a good thing to have that diagnosis but other times if it's not if it's not fully described, if the client isn't aware of what it is, then sometimes it is just it's just a label that so there this is another stigma on top of everything else I think personality disorder seems to be more, it's a very sort of emotive subject, but yeah the amount of clients that have got these diagnosis, and I think if you have been told that you've got depression you kind of have a bit of an understanding about what that is, depression is quite common, but personality disorder a lot of people don't have a clue about. Yeah I mean I've got one client that is quite good actually say "this is what personality disorder is", she was really interested in it, "this is how it affects me on a daily basis, this is why it started affecting me".

Q) Was that because she was one that had been informed then?

R) No she was interested and went and found out about it herself, I mean she didn't at first she she did struggle for years and years and it's only once she's come to terms with that mental health is and was interested, that she was she was able to go and do that work looking into it and find that understanding and I think with personality disorder it's about having that understanding and insight and recognising their own patterns of behaviour because once you've done that you can start trying to change them.

Q) How easy do you think it is for people with criminal records to find housing?

263 R) I'm not too sure, I wouldn't have thought it would be much of an issue because I think in  
264 *[place name removed]* you've got places like *[service name removed]* that work specifically  
265 with clients who have offended so it's not something I've had experience of, I wouldn't have  
266 thought it would be an issue.

267 Q) In terms of employment and education then what are the biggest barriers for the women in  
268 this position in finding employment after prison? Or education in employability?

269 R) Yes, I think I touched on this, employability is a major one, I think clients feel quite  
270 hopeless about it, there's not enough services anyway but its about your self-esteem isn't it,  
271 it's having confidence to go out. I don't think there's enough services either that are helping  
272 with CV's or job applications, or even telling them where to look for jobs. I don't know of  
273 any in *[place name removed]*, I asked somebody who used to work here, actually used to  
274 work in *[place name removed]*, and she told me about some organisations that was based in  
275 *[place name removed]*, and it was female ex-offenders only, but in *[place name removed]* I'm  
276 not aware of any

277 Q) When women have come out of prison and reunited with the family how do you think this  
278 is for the women?

279 R) I think the client that I was speaking about before, she lives with her grandma and grandad  
280 so she didn't really have a choice in the matter and since they've been living together, there's  
281 been quite a few disagreements because she feels like they're quite sort of overbearing, but  
282 then the Grandma has also been contacting me because she is quite fed up, she's doing  
283 everything she can to help her granddaughter but she won't take some responsibility and  
284 make some changes herself. So I suppose it's a double edged sword really, I can see both  
285 sides, she has been welcomed back into her family but there are the issues that I think it  
286 would really help the dynamic if the client could move out get her own place and obviously  
287 she can't do that at the moment because she's on bail and part of her licence is that she stays  
288 at this property with her Grandparents. So maybe if the housing was a bit more relaxed on  
289 that then I suppose her relationship with a grandma might be a little better I think. I think she  
290 is really having a hard time because she said that where she's living now, she has commented  
291 that she's had more freedom in prison which is not nice for her but then I can see that the  
292 Grandma has got her best intentions at heart.

293 Q) So what about her mum and dad?

294 R) Her dad has mental health and I think he's currently in prison, mum left, she was taken out  
295 of mum's custody when she was 15 and placed into care and so she lived with grandma and  
296 grandad so I don't really know much about her relationship with her mum I think it's ok at the  
297 moment but it has started to improve a little bit but there have been issues in her childhood  
298 especially, which we haven't got round to exploring yet so that might be the next thing. They  
299 do have a relationship but she doesn't talk about her mum that much so I don't think that it's a  
300 massively positive one, and I think she constantly feels like she's missed out on that  
301 relationship, but yes she's got a younger sister who lives with her mum and she seems to have  
302 a good relationship with her, with the sister, but I mean with Sarah, we found that she seems  
303 to really have rebuilt her relationships, I mean all her kids were either adopted or in foster  
304 care, obviously in the fallout from her been in prison, but she seems to be at the stage now  
305 where she's really working on them and working on those relationships.

306 Q) How easy is it for these women to reunite with their children after prison?

307 R) Um yeah I've not really had any experience, well I've had no experience in that really so I  
308 can't really comment on that, I haven't really had any women that have been trying to get  
309 their children back.

310 Q) Have there been any other issues that we haven't already talked about that you think are  
311 important to women during this transition?

312 R) I think the main things to me, kind of where we started really, which was the fact that  
313 when someone has been inside, you see their crimes, and you do kind of judge them a little  
314 bit. I mean I don't, I was quite anxious about going to her house and lone working, and during  
315 the assessment, she almost tried to scare us off a little bit by saying "I get really violent me,  
316 my partner has to restrain me, I have to be restrained", and the first couple of times meeting  
317 with her I was a bit like "Ooo", and it was just me and her one time and I asked her if her  
318 partner needed to be here and I was.. not scared but I was a bit anxious, but have I got to  
319 know her more and we've discussed it a bit more, and what actually happened was that she  
320 actually felt really backed into a corner, and I told her "I'm never going to back you into a  
321 corner, I'm never going to close the door and never going to say that you can't leave", so I've  
322 kind of understood why she's perhaps acted like that and I think that's the thing you know as a  
323 worker working in the community there is an element, or I think you just have to be really  
324 realistic about that. I think you don't realise that they've never acted unprovoked, there is  
325 context to things and you don't see it on the first referral form, and I think that's what you  
326 have to work out you know, you don't press your clients buttons and I think it's good to work  
327 around that area and learn what their triggers are, that kind of thing, and I think it is having  
328 that agreement in place so you know. It's telling them that "sometimes it healthy to express  
329 your anger, but just you know, it's not take it out on me because it's not the professional that  
330 is the one that you're angry with", and "if you feel that you are getting violent, please just let  
331 me know" so I think the more that you've got a good relationship with clients the more you  
332 work through that, but it is so so hard at the beginning when you don't have anything to go on  
333 than just their crimes

## **The Needs and Experiences of Women Offenders Post-Prison.**