# Encouraging Desistance through Resettlement: An Exploration of Voluntary Sector Practice

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**Abstract**

*This study is an exploration of voluntary-sector resettlement practice and the encouragement of the desistance process through resettlement work.  The author discusses how desistance theory ties in with resettlement practice.  This exploration is important because of the current political context of resettlement and the Government's pledge to revive the rehabilitative ideal.  Through this revival, the Government has focused their efforts towards resettlement support, both in custody and on release, with a view to supporting offenders to lead lives free from crime.  The voluntary-sector has been given an important role within this agenda and they have been encouraged to become major providers of resettlement services through Payment by Results contracts.  Therefore, this research aims to address how effectively voluntary-sector organisations can support desistance through resettlement.*

*The author uses thematic analysis and a deductive 'top-down' process to analyse a series of in-depth interviews sourced from staff, volunteers and service-users of a voluntary-sector resettlement project.  The author analysed the data in accordance with the literature surrounding resettlement and desistance with particular emphasis on whether voluntary resettlement practice accords with desistance research and theory.  The author then uses those findings in order to shed light on the implications of the implementation of desistance in resettlement practice.*

*The author concludes that voluntary-sector resettlement practice did not accord with desistance due to the incorrect utilisations of practices.  Underpinning this was a lack of understanding, on an organisational level, of desistance in resettlement work and it was found that this was either a possible consequence of, or made worse by, the traditional model of resettlement which voluntary-sector organisations work within which, by their nature, militate against a desistance-based approach to resettlement.  The collective findings, therefore, led the author to question whether desistance theory and research is useful for voluntary-sector organisations to implement due to the complex nature of desistance and the difficulty in retrofitting it into traditional ways of voluntary-sector workings.  Thus, these implications and findings provide a foundation for, and indicators of, future research into how resettlement services can support desistance through resettlement.*

## Copyright Statement

## Author Biography

*Jade McGlynn acquired a first class Batchelor of Science degree with Honours from the University of Huddersfield, UK, in 2012. Since obtaining a degree she has made a commitment to post-graduate education with a view to continue to PhD level. She has experience of working with offenders, both in prison and in the community, in her previous role as a resettlement worker. Her research interests are prisons, the penal system, reintegration, resettlement and the portrayal of crime in the media.*

## Contents:

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## Introduction

This research is about the voluntary-sector in the provision of ex-prisoner resettlement. Resettlement has been around for over one hundred years in different forms and guises (Raynor, 2007) and it is currently undergoing another alteration in policy and practice. The Coalition Government's commitment to a 'rehabilitation revolution' has seen resettlement resurrected and with it, a large-scale change in how resettlement services are provided along with a shift in the providers of these types of services (Home Office, 2003; MOJ, 2013). Also, resettlement and rehabilitation policy has increasingly taken into account desistance research in a bid to see ex-prisoners live crime-free lives (Clinks, 2013; MOJ, 2013; NOMS, 2013; Prison Reform Trust, 2012). Therefore, this research will look at the introduction of desistance in resettlement work, particularly in relation to short-term prisoners supported by voluntary-sector organisations. Ultimately, it will look at whether voluntary-sector practice accords with desistance research and whether desistance theory is useful on a practical level, which makes this research particularly timely.

Firstly, the complexity of resettlement and the existing literature surrounding resettlement and desistance in relation to successful practice will be explored. Research questions will be drawn from areas of concern in existing research or areas that are particular points of interest. The method of data collection and analysis will then be discussed along with ethical considerations. Finally, the findings of this research will be discussed, the implications of the findings and recommendations for practice, along with reflections on the fieldwork and research process. It is hoped that this research will contribute to a foundation for further research in exploring the position and utilisation of desistance in resettlement as resettlement enters a new era in terms of its promoted position within the Governments agenda to reduce reoffending.

# Understanding Resettlement

Firstly, it is important to define what resettlement is.  Unfortunately, this is a problem in itself as the only thing that is clear when trying to establish resettlement is that it is unclear (Hedderman, 2007; Raynor, 2007). Furthermore, it is not just academics or practitioners who find this to be an issue but those who receive resettlement support (Maruna, 2006). It is sensible to look to official documents for clear definitions; however these do nothing to provide clarity (Raynor, 2007). To give an example, the UK Association of Chief Officers of Probation define resettlement as:

> "A systematic and evidence-based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and re-offending is significantly reduced. It encompasses the totality of work with prisoners, their families and significant others in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations" (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, 2001, pp. 12)

This definition suggests that resettlement is everything and nothing and the only theory is that it has to involve things that work (Maruna, 2006). Similarly, The Ministry of Justice and the HM Prison Service define resettlement as:

> "Resettlement is where prisoners and their families receive assistance and support from the Prisons and Probation Services, and voluntary agencies to help them prepare for life after prison. This includes advice about their entitlement to state benefits, training, education, work experience and preparation for release" (MOJ, 2012; online).

Similar to the previous definition it is broad, which could essentially include anything in practice. There is no specificity given to what is meant by "preparation for release" and the only clear areas mentioned are the acknowledgment of welfare needs.

Berinbaum (2009) suggests that problems with defining resettlement actually act as a barrier to resettlement itself.  The concern is that those who engage with resettlement services may not understand what resettlement is supposed to achieve or what they are engaging in (Berinbaum, 2009; Maruna, 2006).  This also has implications for practitioners of resettlement, for example, do they know what they are supposed to be implementing when the policies and definitions regarding the issue are not clear?

A reason for this confusion could be the historic changes in language and the shifting focus of work with offenders over the decades.  What we now regard as resettlement has had different 'official' names with different meanings over the last two centuries (Raynor, 2007).   In order to put the

constant changes in terminology in their political context and to explain resettlement in its current political context, a brief history of resettlement is required.

Terms such as 'Discharged Prisoners Aid' and 'Aftercare' were used at a time when the caring connotations behind these words were deemed appropriate and this was before and during the 1960s where there was still faith in the rehabilitative ideal (Newburn, 2007; Raynor, 2007; Workman, 2009). However, 'Aftercare' eventually became 'Throughcare' where the welfare of prisoners became a low priority with the probation services shifting their focus towards risk-management (Raynor, 2007). 'Throughcare' was later replaced with the term 'resettlement' seemingly because the term 'Throughcare' was too closely associated with the tolerance of crime and the caring services, thus 'resettlement' was adopted precisely because of its lack of connotations (Home Office, 1998; Maruna, 2006; Raynor, 2007). In 2003, 'offender management' was adopted in official discourse which stated that offenders needs were to be addressed because they were criminogenic and should therefore be acknowledged to reduce risk (Home Office, 2003; Raynor, 2007). As we can see there was no emphasis to aid offenders for their own benefit but rather because their needs had now been identified to be conducive with offending behaviour. Also, during this time, Custody Plus was introduced under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to meet the resettlement needs of short term prisoners through a period of supervision in the community for every person who served a short-term sentence (Criminal Justice Act, 2003; Raynor, 2007). However, Custody Plus was never implemented and was eventually repealed by the Coalition Government (Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act, 2012).

Consequently, we are left with a number of terms that appear to have little meaning, the danger being that they run the risk of connoting different things to different audiences (Maruna, 2006). Hedderman (2007) agrees that while the term resettlement appears in government policy statements, regional action plans and academic papers, it is debatable as to whether we are all thinking the same thing. To some, resettlement refers to the services available to ex-prisoners on release but to others, it includes a sense of social reintegration and acceptance (Hedderman, 2007; McNeill, 2004).

A source of further confusion is the synonymous use of 'reintegration' and 'resettlement'. In a document by the Ministry of Justice entitled 'Resettlement and Reintegration' regarding the resettlement of young offenders, 'resettlement' is used next to 'reintegration' in the title and yet refers to the process throughout the document as 'reintegration'.

"The care plan will allow a dedicated team to evaluate risk-assessed opportunities to assist in the reintegration process……by keeping them aware of their progress and success to date along with the targets set for their reintegration…..Following release into the community the residential support officer will help reintegration by attending, wherever possible, the first training plan review in the community" (MOJ, 2012; online).

It is important to clarify what reintegration is to avoid confusing it with resettlement in this research. Reintegration is defined as the social inclusion of a person in the community and, when offenders become productive parts of their community, they can be said to have been successfully reintegrated (Restorative Justice, 2013). Reintegration is rooted in a number of theories such as labelling theory, learning theories and social control giving it a solid theoretical foundation which has influenced practices such as restorative justice (Hannem-Kish, 2005). Resettlement, however, has no such theoretical foundation and a criticism of resettlement has been that it has no compelling narrative for how it works or what it does, therefore making resettlement and the aspects of resettlement a significant area of criminological study (Maruna, 2006). While reintegration can offer *some* theoretical underpinning for resettlement they are not, and should not, be taken to mean the same thing. We should regard resettlement as a process and that reintegration is an aspect of that process and not the process itself (Berrinbaum, 2009). In other words, reintegration is a piece in the wider resettlement puzzle.

It is not difficult to see how terminology exacerbates confusion felt by those wishing to understand what resettlement is and what it does. However, the term used predominantly in official discourse is 'resettlement' and this term will be used for the purpose of this research. 'Reintegration' will be used in order to describe an aspect of that process. As for what resettlement means, Hedderman (2007) uses the term to refer to the social integration of ex-prisoners on release and to address their practical service needs, thus the term resettlement will be used in the same way in this research.

### *The Problem of Resettlement and Short-Term Prisoners*

In England and Wales there are over 80,000 people in prisons at the time of writing and 7,004 of those prisoners are serving sentences of less than twelve months (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2013). Research suggests that, whilst this prisoner group form the largest proportion of offenders in the prison system and are at the highest risk of recidivism on release, they have the least done for them while in custody and have the most needs on release (HMIPP, 2001; Morgan, 2004; National Audit Office, 2002; SEU, 2002).

In recent years, the use of short-term sentences has been heavily criticised by politicians, the media and agencies (The Guardian News, 2011; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Many have argued that short-term sentences are detrimental to tackling reoffending as they make the situations of offenders worse as they may lose their accommodation, employment, and break relationships with families (Morgan, 2004; SEU, 2002). In response, there has been a new emphasis on resettlement services across England and Wales aimed at those who have served a short-term sentence and 'revolving door' prisoners (Revolving Doors Agency, 2011). Policies such as 'Breaking the Cycle' target these two prisoner groups which in many cases are synonymously linked (MOJ, 2011). This policy aims to address the 'idleness' of prisoners by encouraging them to undertake constructive activities during their sentence (MOJ, 2011). However, words such as 'idle' do not fit within what we imagine to be rehabilitation and support resettlement and this use of language hints at a wider problem in policy and the on-going debate surrounding the approach taken to reduce reoffending.

### *Aims of Resettlement*

Official policy explains that the aims of resettlement are to reduce reoffending and increase public protection (Home Office, 2004; MOJ, 2013). Therefore, many resettlement projects make it their mission to enable offenders to lead a crime-free life, to change their ways and become productive members of society (c.f. St Giles Trust, 2013).

However, there is currently a conflict in policy between the punitive and rehabilitative ideal. Resettlement sits firmly in the camp of rehabilitation as it aims to help offenders to help themselves yet a full investment in the rehabilitative ideal is unlikely, from a policy perspective, due to the Government not wanting to be seen as being 'soft' on crime (Raynor, 2007). The concepts of rehabilitation and punitiveness are theoretically at odds with one another and so to have resettlement tagged as an afterthought on the end of a punitive regime would undermine any rehabilitative effect that is hoped to be achieved through resettlement work (Raynor, 2007). Nevertheless, restrictive elements are still present in resettlement (Raynor, 2007). Resettlement often includes supervision, monitoring or punishment and we cannot dismiss tools such as restrictive license conditions as they have an important part to play in protecting the public (Raynor, 2007). Therefore, two opposing concepts are at work in resettlement and Maruna (2006) argues that the punitive nature of restrictions could be damaging to the reintegration process.

Despite this, the Justice Secretary has recently proposed that all short-term prisoners are to have access to a mentor on release, particularly short-term prisoners who have traditionally missed out on this opportunity (BBC News, 2012). This new proposal, it seems, is a rejuvenation of Custody Plus

which never materialised.  In addition to the new mentoring scheme, the Ministry of Justice has announced that, as from autumn 2014, the majority of male prisoners will be housed in seventy planned 'resettlement jails' around England and Wales (BBC News, 2013; MOJ, 2013).  All prisoners serving a sentence of twelve months or less will spend their full sentence in a 'resettlement jail' and will receive a tailored package of support upon release from custody (BBC News, 2013; MOJ, 2013).  It would seem that the mentoring proposal announced in 2012 will now work in tandem with these resettlement jails as part of the Government's strategy for reform.

### *Summary*

In summary, resettlement has become a large part of the Government's recent agenda to tackle reoffending rates.  However, there is a lot of confusion surrounding what resettlement is, what resettlement means and what resettlement entails and official policy and discourse does little to alleviate this.  Additionally, the conflict in policy between rehabilitation and risk-management creates further confusion as to how those leaving prison should be dealt with on release.  A persistent and major criticism of resettlement, however, is that it appears to be largely a – theoretical (McNeill, 2004).  Therefore, in the next section we will explore a solid theoretical underpinning for resettlement practice, along with and exploration of the 'mechanics' of resettlement and those who provide such services.

# Resettlement, Desistance and Practice

We have established that resettlement is a confusing concept and this confusion is exacerbated when looking at the relationship which resettlement practice has with theory. However, before we explore this, we must establish the most predominant form of resettlement practice.

In 2002, the Social Exclusion Unit published a report which stated that there were seven barriers to resettlement and these areas are: accommodation, education/training/employment, health, drugs and alcohol, finance, family and relationships and attitudes, thinking and behaviour (Home Office, 2004; SEU, 2002). In response, the Reducing Reoffending National Action Plan (2004) was implemented to directly address these issues in resettlement practice. Therefore, most resettlement providers use this as a template for their work (Raynor, 2007). However, resettlement providers will address these interventions differently according to which sector provides the service and the project's own aims and agendas (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007; Raynor, 2004). Similarly, although the majority of resettlement providers assess prisoners in order to identify needs and support, some projects may concentrate on a small number of issues whereas others will take into account a broader range (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007).

In the instance that a project does not address a specific prisoner issue internally, projects will usually signpost prisoners to relevant services and therefore resettlement is reliant upon multi-agency working in order to provide holistic support for ex-prisoners both in custody and on release (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007).

Recently, emphasis has been placed on multi-agency working due to the reliance on voluntary-sector services to provide support (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007). This has been further developed by Payment by Results (PbR) schemes that allow the voluntary-sector to provide resettlement services, indicating a shift in provision from the public sector which has traditionally been the main provider of resettlement (MOJ, 2013). A number of concerns have been raised, however, regarding the implications of PbR schemes in criminal justice. Firstly, PbR schemes require a clear definition of the proposed outcome (in this case reducing reoffending) however, the outcome of 'reducing reoffending' is not straightforward (Fox & Albertson, 2012). Despite this, PbR models in criminal justice will focus on a narrow set of outcomes (i.e. 'proven reoffending' through reconviction rates) which will not take into account whether offenders have genuinely ceased to offend or if offenders have become less easy to catch (Fox & Albertson, 2012). Furthermore, the competitive nature of PbR schemes could inhibit successful practices being shared between service providers, particularly

in relation to the voluntary-sector, joint-working between providers could be either weak or non-existent resulting in both overlaps and gaps in provision and thus multi-agency working will be compromised (Fox & Albertson, 2012; Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007). It has also been argued that PbR schemes will lead to 'cherry picking' whereby organisations concentrate on 'easy cases' or on clients which are more amenable to change in order to be paid through PbR schemes (Fox & Albertson, 2012).

## _Resettlement and the Voluntary-Sector_

The advantages of the voluntary-sector in resettlement are that they can apply for funding from a variety of resources, are better equipped to address a number of prisoner needs through already sustained links within the community and have the flexibility to work to their own aims and agendas (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007).

However, voluntary-sector providers have been criticised for providing the service that they want to provide as opposed to the service that is needed (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007). It has been argued that the introduction of privatisation and PbR (Payment by Results) schemes is, in some respects, a motive by the Government to avoid opposition to its crime policies by making voluntary-sector providers reliant on statutory funding thus making it impossible for them to criticise policies under threat of losing financial security (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007). Nevertheless, due to PbR contracts, the voluntary-sector is becoming a major provider of resettlement services in England and Wales and, therefore, fit into the broader Government agenda (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007; MOJ, 2013).

It is concerning then that the effectiveness of voluntary-sector resettlement services is unclear. Schemes run by statutory services have been found to be more effective than those provided by the voluntary-sector (Clancy et.al, 2006; Lewis et al, 2003). It was found that prisoners were more likely to continue engagement with statutory services on release as opposed to voluntary-services and, voluntary-services were less effective because of their lack of focus on encouraging motivation and thinking skills (Clancy et.al, 2006; Lewis, 2003). In short, services that focused on dealing with offender attitudes, thinking and behaviour were more effective than those which focused on addressing welfare needs (Clancy et.al, 2006; Lewis et al, 2003). Therefore, the difference in effectiveness was explained by the differing focus of work between these two providers (Clancy et. al, 2006; Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007). Many voluntary-sector providers deal with immediate practical issues (or welfare needs) such as finding accommodation and accessing benefits, making their long-term effectiveness unclear (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007). This is due to voluntary-sector providers recording short-term outputs as measures of success (for example, finding

accommodation) and thus do not demonstrate how they contribute to reducing reoffending (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007). This could ultimately be a barrier for voluntary-sector providers as the new Government proposals (MOJ, 2013) state that in order to receive payment through PbR contracts, projects must be able to evidence how they reduce reoffending. Overall, the general effectiveness of the voluntary-sector in the provision of resettlement is largely unproven (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007) which makes it a particular point of interest in the current political climate.

### *Establishing Successful Resettlement Practice*

Until recently, much has been made of 'what works' in resettlement as opposed to how and why practices work and thus resettlement has lacked a solid theoretical component (Hedderman, 2007; McNeill, 2004; Moore, 2012;). In 1999 a commitment was made to build an evidence-base with regards to offender resettlement and how reducing reoffending could be achieved (Hedderman, 2007). However, the problem with a 'what works' only approach to resettlement is that it begins in the wrong place (McNeill, 2006). It begins by thinking about how practices can be constructed rather than thinking firstly about how change can be understood (McNeill, 2006). This is a danger because, no matter how good the quality of the practice or how evidence-based the approach, resettlement depends on other factors such as motivation, engagement and the contextual factors of an individual's life (McNeill et. al, 2012). Therefore, resettlement and its practices should not be concerned with *producing* change but *accelerating* change (McNeill et. al, 2012). The way to accelerate change rather than produce it can be found in theories of desistance (McNeill et. al, 2012).

### *Desistance Theories*

Desistance theories find their roots in the criminal careers approach which is a framework within which theories can be proposed and tested (Farrington, 1992). A longitudinal sequence of offences that an individual commits is deemed to be their criminal career and includes a beginning (onset), a career length (duration) and an end (desistance) (Farrington, 1992) and it is here that we see the word desistance used in order to describe the end of a criminal career. Since then, desistance theories have become predominant and applicable to many other areas in criminology, one of which is resettlement work, and there is now a large corpus of desistance theories which explore factors which may enable an individual to cease offending (Burnett & Maruna, 2006; Moore, 2012). A number of key factors have been found in desistance research such as maturation (or growing out of crime), social bonds (such as family, employment, community involvement) and the forming of personal narratives that restructure cognitive processes, identity and self-image (Maruna, 2001;

Moore, 2012). In order to gain a representative insight into desistance we will explore three over-arching theories or paradigms of desistance research. Early theories of desistance fall within the ontogenetic and sociogenic paradigms; however, these do not combine both individual and structural factors in order to explain desistance (Weaver & McNeill, 2007). To explore the dynamics of the desistance process we will look to narrative theories (Maruna, 2001; Weaver & McNeill, 2007).

Maturation falls into the ontogenetic paradigm and is based on the principle that everyone 'grows out of crime' eventually (Maruna, 1999). This theory is developed from theories such as 'maturational reform' which suggests that criminality naturally declines after the age of 25 (Glueck & Glueck, 1940). Maturation and the age-crime curve is still the most influential theory of desistance in criminology and it has been argued that other variables associated with desistance such as employment, do not explain crime as well as the variable of age itself and, therefore, desistance is explained as a natural part of ageing (Gove, 1985; Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985). However, the explanation that someone will 'grow out of crime' does nothing to help us speed up the desistance process (Maruna, 2006).

Social bond theories fall into the sociogenic paradigm and suggest that there is an association between desistance and the external circumstances of the individual (Weaver & McNeill, 2007). These theories state the significance of ties to family, employment or education in explaining changes in criminal behaviour across the life course (Weaver & McNeill, 2007). These theories develop from social control theories and assert that the experiences that lead to desistance are partially under the control of the individual (Maruna, 1999). Desistance research suggests that offenders find things other than crime as a source of achievement such as a job and a family and therefore, the stronger the ties to society and the community that an individual has, the more likely they are to desist (Maruna, 1999). As such, those who lack social bonds are more likely to stay involved in crime as they feel they have nothing to lose from a societal and personal perspective (Maruna, 1999). However, desistance cannot be attributed solely to the existence of these social attachments but rather what these ties mean to the individual in reducing both opportunities and motivations to offend (Weaver & McNeill, 2007).

Narrative theories explore the dynamics of desistance and are developed from the subjective perspectives of offenders by drawing on their accounts of desistance (Maruna, 2001; Weaver & McNeill, 2007). These theories suggest the significance of the subjective changes of the individual's sense of self and identity in changing motivations and more consideration for the future (Maruna, 2001; Weaver & McNeill, 2007). Maruna (2001) compared the narrative 'scripts' of active offenders

and desisters.  The persistent offenders followed what Maruna called a 'condemnation script' and felt resigned to a life of crime (Maruna, 2001; Weaver & McNeill, 2007).  The desisters, however, followed a 'redemption script':

> "The redemption script begins by establishing the goodness and conventionality of the narrator-a victim of society who gets involved with crime and drugs to achieve some sort of power over otherwise bleak circumstances.  This deviance eventually becomes its own trap, however, as the narrator becomes ensnared in the vicious cycle of crime and imprisonment.  Yet, with the help of some outside force, someone who "believed in" the ex-offender, the narrator is able to accomplish what he or she was always 'meant to do'…" (Maruna, 2001, pp. 87).

Those who follow this script 'make good' and while both active offenders and desisters shared a sense of fatalism, the desisters' fatalism was not seen as an issue of denial but rather a need to believe in the essential goodness of the 'real me' (Maruna, 2001).  This indicates that a particular identity narrative may be the most personally persuasive, meaningful and enabling for a person trying to desist from crime thus desistance narratives must be supported (Maruna, 2001).

This is a brief introduction to the influential theories of desistance and there is not space here to explore them all.  Therefore, a more exploratory account of desistance is outlined below specifically in relation to resettlement practice.

### *Factors Associated with Successful Resettlement and Desistance*

The convergence of evaluative research and theoretical approaches to desistance is important because historically the 'what works' literature and desistance literature has developed along separate paths (Maguire & Raynor, 2006).  However, there have been significant steps towards a new way of thinking about evidence-based practice within a desistance paradigm (Maruna & LeBel, 2010). This has recently been recognised in policy (MOJ, 2013; NOMS, 2013; Prison Reform Trust, 2012) which stress the importance of desistance in resettlement practice.  Therefore, the 'marriage' between desistance research and evidence-based practice is outlined below with factors being explored that are conducive to both successful resettlement and desistance research.

### *The Process of Desistance*

Desistance is not an event but a difficult and lengthy process and is not linear but zig-zag in nature (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). Thus, desistance is a journey of set-back and progress, hope and despair (McNeill et. al, 2012). Due to this, relapses during the desistance process are to be expected as

people do not just cease offending, they are likely to encounter set-backs and so relapses into prior patterns of behaviour will occur but these should not be taken as indications of failure (Burnett, 2004; Farrall & Calverley, 2006; Maguire & Raynor, 2006). Practitioners should, therefore, be realistic about the desistance process not just in terms of how long the desistance process is but also in terms of expecting relapses and effectively managing them through regular review processes (McNeill & Weaver, 2010). The Prison Reform Trust (2012) outline that managing the high potential for relapses is essential and that policies which treat all relapses as a breach of conditions can be a barrier to resettlement as it creates resistance as well as decreasing engagement and motivation (Prison Reform Trust, 2012).

## Readiness to Change

Desistance research indicates that individuals differ in their readiness to change (Farrall, 2002; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Maruna, 2001). This readiness to change can be affected by a number of factors including, as mentioned earlier, age, social bonds, major life events and social circumstances (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). However, the way these factors interact with one another is complex which makes it difficult to identify when a person is in the right frame of mind to change (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). Therefore, resettlement assessments should explore dynamic issues such as the strength of ex-prisoners' social bonds, their aspirations, approach goals and their openness to change (McNeill & Weaver, 2010). This can be done by, perhaps most obviously, asking the individual, however, other techniques such as motivational interviewing can also be used to assess desistance readiness (McNeill & Weaver, 2010) and this technique will be discussed later in this section with regards to eliciting motivation. Therefore, it is important to understand and respond to individuals' circumstances with support being person-centred and led by the individual and support being understood as a joint enterprise by practitioners working *with* ex-prisoners rather than working *on* ex-prisoners (McNeill et. al, 2012; Maguire & Raynor, 2006). The Prison Reform Trust (2012) confirms that genuine consultation and allowing individuals to take a leading role in their support plans is vital as it enables people to take responsibility for their lives and develop clear and realistic goals for the future.

## Human Agency

The process of personal change is, therefore, subjective and change is heavily reliant on the agency of the individual (Farrall, 2002; Farrall & Bowling, 1999; McNeill, 2006; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Maruna, 2001). Human agency has been found to be as important as, if not more important than,

the structure of promoting or inhibiting desistance (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). Research suggests that while social environmental factors have a part to play in future offending, the way in which ex-prisoners respond to situations is much more influential when determining whether or not they reoffend (Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Maruna, 2001; Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). Maruna (2001) found that people react differently depending on their subjective understandings of their situations and those who had a narrative that supported desistance had an exaggerated sense of control over their life and a clear vision of the future. Therefore, optimism was essential for them to maintain the desistance narrative (Maruna, 2001). Maruna (2001) elaborates that this optimism was sometimes not reflective of the individuals' situation in reality and therefore those who were able to maintain 'hope' in the face of 'dire' circumstances were more likely to desist. Addressing thinking and attitudes is, therefore, important to help individuals' overcome the social and practical problems that they will face (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). Particularly as it has been found that no matter how strong a 'narrative' an individual has, their motivation can be seriously affected by persistent set-backs (Burnett & Maruna, 2004).

The importance of addressing human agency was also found during the Pathfinders Scheme which aimed to quantify what facilitated successful resettlement practice (Clancy et. al, 2006; Lewis et. al, 2003). In their comparison of resettlement projects it was found that probation-led projects (which focused on offender attitudes and thinking) were more successful than voluntary resettlement projects that focused on 'welfare' needs (Clancy et. al, 2006; Lewis et. al, 2003). However, the promotion and importance of human agency is not reflected in standard resettlement practice, as the seven pathways focus strongly on the provision of practical services and accord more with a traditional model of working with ex-prisoners (Maguire & Raynor, 2006).

The addressing of human agency can depend on which model (and sub-models) services work within (Raynor, 2004). The majority of resettlement services work within a traditional model of resettlement known as a needs-based model which rests on the assumption that prisoners have a number of needs which impact on their offending (Raynor, 2004). The problem with this model is that it does not take into account much desistance research and may even militate against desistance (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007). This is due to the focus on identifying needs as opposed to deeply entrenched needs conducive to personal change (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007). Within this model is the 'opportunity deficit' sub-model which rests on the assumption that offenders are largely the victims of social circumstances and problems beyond their control (Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Raynor, 2004). Resettlement services which operate under the 'opportunity deficit' model (mainly voluntary-sector services) provide advice, support and sympathy as well as acting as an

advocate and referring ex-prisoners to relevant agencies (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007; Raynor, 2004). However, the deterministic assumptions of this model which allow offenders to present themselves as victims of circumstance means that the chances of addressing personal change is low and may have the opposite effect by making the concept of offending more acceptable to the offender (Raynor, 2004). Therefore, some resettlement services take a mono-faceted approach to resettlement due to their assumptions regarding offending behaviour (Raynor, 2004).

However, the RRNAP's seven pathways to resettlement do recognise, however minimally, a multi-causal explanation of offending (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). The last intervention is 'attitudes, thinking and behaviour' which contains a different 'implicit criminology' and recognises that criminal behaviour may also involve the cognition of the individual (Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Raynor, 2004). As Raynor (2007) explains, this pathway is not just another item on a list of needs but will play a crucial part in determining how effectively ex-prisoners use resources designed to address the other six pathways. A sub-model of resettlement which acknowledges a multi-causal explanation to offending is the 'offender responsibility model' (Raynor, 2004). The offender responsibility model recognises the environmental problems that offenders face but is heavily rooted in addressing their attitudes, thinking and behaviour and rests on the assumption that offending is avoidable (Raynor, 2004). Resettlement services which adopt this model (mainly statutory-led services) focus on the same methods as the opportunity deficit model but with an added emphasis on cognitive challenge, motivation and pro-social input (Raynor, 2004).

Thus, desistance research suggests that resettlement services should address both welfare needs and attitudes and thinking to reinforce plausible narratives that support desistance (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). The relationship between social factors and agency is complex and more research must be done in order to understand how they interact with one another (McNeill & Weaver, 2010). However, we know that it is not just about ageing or getting a job but what these developments mean and signify to the individual and whether or not they are seen to be compelling enough reasons to change (McNeill et. al, 2012). Therefore, there must be a distinction between the 'objective' changes in an individuals' life and the 'subjective' meanings given to those changes (Farrall, 2002). It is these subjective meanings which are closely associated with the cognitive processes which exemplify secondary desistance and the re-structuring of self-identity (Moore, 2012), the importance of which will be outlined later in this review.

*Generating & Sustaining Motivation through Relationships and Social Capital*

Building on agency, desistance research indicates that motivation is essential to the desistance process (Farrall, 2002; Maguire & Raynor, 2004; Maruna, 2001). This is due to the reasons mentioned above and supporting ex-prisoners to overcome set-backs in order to avoid reoffending (Burnett & Maruna, 2004; Maruna & Raynor, 2006). Therefore, ex-prisoners must acquire 'human capital' (gaining skills and personal resources) which can be encouraged through addressing internal processes and other skills-related courses such as in the Pathfinders Scheme where a short motivational program (FOR-a-change) was put in place to encourage motivation ( Clancy et. al, 2006; McNeill, 2006; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Putnam, 1995; Raynor, 2004; Raynor, 2007). Motivation can also be sustained through the acquisition of 'social' capital (connections and relationships with other people in formal and informal social networks) and providing the opportunity for ex-prisoners to practice newly forming identities (McNeill, 2006; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Putnam, 1995; Raynor, 2007). In other words, the avoidance of offending during desistance will be determined not just by ex-prisoners' range of personal abilities, skills and capacities but also through their social networks (Moore, 2012).

Research suggests that motivation is not a fixed attribute of an individual but can be an indication to a specific intervention and therefore intrinsic motivation for change (and subjective meaning) must be elicited *from* rather than instilling it *in* a person (Burnett, 2004; McNeill & Weaver, 2010). Motivation is modifiable and subject to change in the course of interpersonal transactions and social capital can be activated through the relationships which ex-prisoners form with resettlement workers (Burnett, 2004). This resonates with social cognitive theory and the underlying assumption that subjective meaning is moulded within human relationships (Bandura, 2001; Burnett, 2004).

Motivational interviewing can promote desistance in a one to one setting which comprises of individual work (with a befriender, mentor or supervisor) and enables ex-prisoners to form pro-social relationships (Burnett, 2004). Through these relationships, ex-prisoners may find someone from a non-criminal background who can become significant in their lives or can become a role model for them, particularly for those who have broken relationships with their families (Burnett, 2004; Maruna, 2006). Also, evidence suggests that people are more likely to take advice from someone they know as well as keep appointments and, therefore, the generation and sustainment of motivation is easier within the context of a relationship (Clancy et. al, 2006; Raynor, 2007). The Prison Reform Trust (2012) emphasise the value of mentoring systems in this respect.

In practice, this requires a continuity of service *and* contact, and 'through the gate' services (which begin in custody and continue into the community) have been identified as the ideal practice precisely because of the continuity they provide (HMIPP, 2001). Continuity of contact with project

workers, specifically volunteer mentors, has been significantly associated with lower conviction rates (Clancy et. al, 2006). In this instance, an advantage of volunteer mentors is the time they have to offer and an unconditional commitment to helping (Raynor, 2007). However, professional relationships are not the only or significant way to enable an individual to activate social capital (Farrall, 2004).

Employment and family relationships are the two most important ingredients for social capital and they are both the precursor and the outcome of/for social capital (Farrall, 2004). Farrall (2004) found that the majority of instances in the activation of social capital were related to the individual's family (in this case probationers families) and more precisely their families of origin as they were the family group most commonly available to the individual. Families of origin provided a range of resources for the individual such as a stable environment or a 'safe haven', support in resourcing employment, and, while families of formation (i.e. wife, children) were found to be sources of motivation for individuals wishing to desist, they did not provide the opportunities or resources that families of origin could (Farrall, 2004). Overall, it was found that good family relationships can provide an increase in structured time, increase self-esteem and provide emotional support and therefore those who work with ex-prisoners should actively call upon this form of social capital by liaising with ex-prisoner families through direct appeals to family members (Farrall, 2004). In policy and practice, efforts have been made to involve ex-prisoner families more in an individual's resettlement by allowing families to become part of ex-prisoners' resettlement and reintegration plans (Clinks, 2013; Prison Reform Trust, 2012).

Employment or work that is rewarding to the individual can also activate social capital (Farrall, 2004). Paid employment can provide an income and encourage independent living as well as provide financial security; however, non-paid work can also activate social capital (Farrall, 2004). Voluntary work can lead to a sense of hope, orientation towards the future and activate a sense of belonging for the individual within the community thus showing society that an individual's resettlement and reintegration is worth investing in (Maruna, 2006). Additionally, work can facilitate significant relationships and increase daily interaction with non-offenders (Farrall, 2004). In practice, employment is encouraged in a number of ways such as employment skills workshops (Farrall, 2004) and employment schemes such as the 'Achieve' employment pilot in probation (c.f. Cheshire Probation, online, 2013). Volunteering opportunities are also encouraged in practice, for example, groups such as the Inside-Out Trust which provides volunteering opportunities for prisoners and ex-prisoners in leadership roles and often work with volunteers from the wider community who have had no involvement in the criminal justice system (Maruna, 2006). Thus ex-prisoners make their

move from outcast to 'good neighbour' to show the community that they are more than the sum of their offences (Maruna, 2006).

However, it is the significance that ex-prisoners place on family relationships and work roles that allow them to maintain desistance and therefore social capital feeds back into itself (Farrall, 2004). An individual activates social capital through these relationships and then, because of their investment and the resources which come with it, they feel they have too much to lose by committing crime (Farrall, 2004). Furthermore, social capital opportunities allow individuals to practice newly forming identities and solidify legitimate identities (Farrall, 2004).

*Self-Identity*

Recently, evidence has emerged regarding the relationship between self-identity and the desistance process (McNeill et. al, 2012). Maruna & Farrall (2004) refer to desistance as a transition between 'primary' and 'secondary' desistance. Primary desistance is the achievement of an offence free period and secondary desistance is the adoption of a non-offending identity (Maruna & Farrall, 2004; Raynor, 2007). Therefore, it can be argued that secondary desistance should be considered the 'holy grail' of rehabilitation services for those who persistently offend, as secondary desistance is the internalisation of change and the redirection of an ex-prisoners life (McNeill et. al, 2012).

However, the rejection of a criminal identity for persistent offenders is unlikely to be easy (Maruna, 2001). A barrier to resettlement is the stigmatisation of offenders and as a consequence social exclusion is a problem for many who leave prison (SEU, 2002). Reintegration is an integral aspect of resettlement, however, for reintegration to be achieved, not only must an ex-prisoner wish to be part of society but the community must also be willing to accept and welcome an ex-prisoner back (McNeill, 2006; Maruna, 2001; Prison Reform Trust, 2012). Yet, it is unclear whether society really *wants* ex-prisoners to be inclusive and this is evidenced in the way that society perceives ex-prisoners (Maguire & Raynor, 2006).

A stigma is a characteristic that we possess which causes others to look at us in a negative light and a stigma that is permanent or severe can cause an individual to have a 'spoiled identity' (Goffman, 1963). Ex-prisoners and offenders are most likely to have a 'spoiled' identity as the stigma which is attached to them is so severe that they will always be thought of as criminals, even if they have served their time and been rehabilitated (Goffman, 1963). Particularly in the case of a criminal, it is

the perceived deviance of the individual which causes them to be rejected by society and thus labelled socially abnormal (Goffman, 1963). As a result, 'offender' becomes their master status which overrides all other features of the individual's identity (Goffman, 1963). Furthermore, studies have shown that offenders are perceived to be indistinguishable from their offence. Reeves (2013) found that those who worked in probation hostels saw the offenders (sex offenders) and their offence as one and the same. Similarly, in a study of media reporting, McGlynn (2012) found that the media stripped offenders' identities down to nothing more than their criminal status, therefore portraying offenders as one-dimensional caricatures of their true selves.

Therefore, many do not believe in the potential for others to change and a way in which stigma can be ascribed to individuals is through the process of 'othering' (Maruna, 2001; Young, 2007). In all forms of intolerance is the concept of a despised 'other' or those who have essentially flawed natures and, by creating a "bogeyman", society is able to maintain their sense of morality through the classification of 'us' and 'them', 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Jewkes, 2004; Young, 2007). There are two types of 'othering', one of which is liberal 'othering' and is done to people who *could* be like us but some deprivation makes them 'other' (Young, 2007). The second type of 'othering' is demonized 'othering' where an individual is seen to be less than human and so moral and law abiding citizens could never relate to or be like 'them' (Young, 2007). Consequently, the process of 'othering' leads to the social exclusion of those who are marginalised in mainstream society and reinforces the notion that these people should be rejected (Young, 2007). This is a barrier to the resettlement and desistance process, as an aspect of resettlement is reliant upon acceptance from the community towards ex-prisoners (Prison Reform Trust, 2012). However, this is also detrimental to the individual as this rejection may prevent them from adopting pro-social identities through the internalisation of negative external identities.

This internalisation of negative identities can be activated through labelling. Labelling theories argue that criminals are not fundamentally different to 'ordinary' people but rather it is the label of criminal which makes the individual act as such (Becker, 1963; Newburn, 2013; Tannenbaum, 1938). In this setting, delinquents or social deviants are not seen as being inherently different or bad but rather as good people doing bad things (Becker, 1963; Newburn, 2013; Tannenbaum, 1938). However, persistent labelling can lead to secondary deviance whereby an individual realigns their self-concept with deviance itself (Rosenburg, 2010). This is concerning, as labels invoke ready-made and socially understood narratives of offenders which, in turn, gives meaning to their social and personal identity (Reeves, 2011). Bain and Parkinson (2010) ask that at what point does an offender experience 'de-labelling' which would then make them nothing more than a human being? As a

community, we do not seek to 'de-label' someone, rather we stigmatize, marginalise and exclude even though offending is something which society wishes for people to move away from (Bain & Parkinson, 2010). The effect of labelling, as well as changing an individuals' self-concept and the way in which they perceive themselves, is that we take away from the individuality of the person and place the offender in a position of subservience (Bain & Parkinson, 2010).

Desistance theories suggest that identity is not a fixed construct but is fluid with individuals being able to shed their offender labels (Clinks, 2013; Maruna, 2001). Identity change is, however, not revolutionary but a gradual evolution based on the slow accumulation of disconfirming information (Maruna, 2001). Drawing on narrative theories, McAdams (1993) explains that we make ourselves through myth and through the stories which we tell about ourselves. The premise is that by providing coherence to confusing experiences within our lives, by arranging the episodes of our lives into stories, we can discover what is meaningful to us and the reconstruction of these stories by integrating the past, present and future, is itself the process of identity development in adulthood (McAdams, 1993; Maruna, 2001).

Specifically in relation to ex-offenders, Maruna (2001) found that in order for offenders to desist from crime they need to develop a coherent, pro-social identity and this can be done once ex-offenders make sense of their lives. Therefore, ex-offenders need to not only account for, but understand their criminal pasts and also understand why they are no longer like that (Maruna, 2001). Also, they need a credible self-story, not only to explain to themselves how their pasts have led to their reformed identities but also to explain to others (Maruna, 2001). Those who had desisted had a strong sense of purpose in life, believing that their criminal pasts were a prelude to their newfound calling, and, through the reconstruction of life narratives, individuals were able to discover what was significant and meaningful to them (Maruna, 2001). While a narrative framework is not present in resettlement practice, some rehabilitative organisations adopt a narrative model. Alcoholics Anonymous' twelve-step programs use the reworking of an individual's self-story as the recovery process itself and the success of AA's twelve-step program suggests how powerful story-telling can be (AA, 2014, Maruna, 2001; Presser, 2009). This philosophy is reflected in the AA primary text, the "Big Book", which is a collection of 29 life stories of the original members of the organisation (Maruna, 2001). Restorative Justice scheme's also use narrative frameworks through their victim-offender mediation schemes which allow the re-telling of events or stories in a setting where the offender is supported but also held accountable as they structure their pasts to fit in with the futures they desire (Presser, 2009).

In an attempt to embed identity change into a model of resettlement practice, Maruna & Lebel (2003) argue the need for strengths-based resettlement, as opposed to the needs-based models outlined earlier in this review.  Strengths-based resettlement focuses on positive contributions which a person can make in the community and therefore 'earn redemption' (Maruna & LeBel, 2002; Maruna & LeBel, 2003; Weaver & McNeill, 2007).  This model draws upon a normative theory of justice based around reparation and the empirical theory of a 'looking-glass' self-concept (Burnett & Maruna, 2006; Maruna et. al, 2004).  Therefore, offenders repair the harm that has been caused by an offence through 'earning' ones place back into the moral community and, by giving ex-prisoners roles in the form of rewarding work that is helpful to others (and turning the receiver of 'help' into the 'helper'), these contributions can be recognized in order to 'de-label' symbolically the stigmatised person (Burnett & Maruna, 2006).  This provides the opportunity for individuals to develop pro-social self-concepts and thus a strengths-based model actively encourages the adoption of a pro-social identity associated with secondary desistance (Burnett & Maruna, 2006). However, Burnett & Maruna (2006) found in their study of The Citizens Advice Project that when strengths-based initiatives collided with risk-management policies they worked in conflict.  Burnett & Maruna (2006) explain that in a society which is organised around concerns for public safety, ventures which rely on trust and optimism are particularly vulnerable to closure.  Therefore, barriers to identity change are present within current resettlement practice.

**Summary**

In brief, resettlement is a difficult subject to pin down. The changing terminology, unclear definitions in policy, the shifting work focus, competing theoretical positions and models for resettlement contribute to a general confusion when attempting to understand what resettlement is and what it entails (Moore, 2012).  However, it is encouraging to see that the contribution desistance research can make to resettlement is being acknowledged by policy makers and has been introduced into policy and practice (Clinks, 2013; MOJ, 2013; PRT, 2012) to provide resettlement with a theoretical foundation.

In this exploration of resettlement we have seen that there are many factors and practices which can accelerate the desistance process.  Resettlement must support desistance through addressing internal processes of individuals and social factors simultaneously to encourage the formation and sustainment of desistance narratives (McNeill et.al, 2012; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Farrall, 2004). Resettlement must also support the inclusion of the individual in society and encourage community acceptance in order to break down social exclusion and barriers to internal identity change (Burnett & Maruna, 2006; Maruna & LeBel, 2002; Prison Reform Trust, 2012).  In short, because desistance is

multi-faceted, resettlement work and practice must also be multi-faceted as well as being familiar with the subjective and individualistic nature of a persons' journey towards personal change (McNeill et.al, 2012). However, some models of resettlement may inherently militate against desistance due to their mono-faceted approach (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007; Raynor, 2007). Furthermore, the effectiveness of some providers, particularly the voluntary-sector, is unclear (Clancy et. al, 2006; Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007).

It is an unpredictable time for resettlement with many changes being introduced; most notably Payment by Results schemes, mandatory mentoring and the establishment of resettlement jails (MOJ, 2013). Therefore, resettlement projects will be forced to 'up their game', demonstrate their commitment to desistance-focused work and evidence how they make a contribution to the Government's plans to reduce reoffending in order to stay afloat in an increasingly competitive environment (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007).

# Research Aims

There will be three questions which this research will aim to answer. Given the criticism aimed at voluntary-sector providers along with their promoted position in the provision of resettlement, the voluntary-sector will be explored in this research (Clancy et. al, 2006; Maguire & Raynor, 2006). Also, given the Government's pledge to target short-term and revolving door prisoners in resettlement, this prisoner group specifically will be focused upon (MOJ, 2011; MOJ, 2013).

A) To what extent does voluntary-sector resettlement practice accord with desistance theory? Throughout this research we have seen that the voluntary-sector has been criticised for neglecting the internal processes in resettlement necessary to facilitate personal change, as well as their overall effectiveness in the provision of resettlement (Clancy et. al, 2006, Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Raynor, 2007). Therefore, given the sectors promoted position in the provision of resettlement and their encouragement to bid for PbR contracts, it is important to explore whether voluntary-sector providers support desistance.

B) Is the value of desistance theory recognised at an organisational level? We have seen in the literature review that policy has recognised desistance (Clinks, 2013; MOJ, 2013; Prison Reform Trust, 2012). However, we have also seen that resettlement, as a concept, is confusing due to the shifting foci of work and unclear definitions of what resettlement is (Berinbaum, 2009; Hedderman, 2007; Maruna, 2006; Raynor, 2007). Therefore, adding a complex theory of human change to an already confusing and unclear concept could mean the value of desistance is not understood on an organisational and practitioner level.

C) Do traditional models of resettlement hinder desistance implementation? We have seen that traditional models of resettlement, particularly models which the voluntary-sector traditionally works within, are at odds with a multi-causal approach to resettlement and may militate against desistance (Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Raynor, 2007). Therefore, it is interesting to explore whether traditional ways of working could hinder the implementation of desistance-based practices.

<center>**Methodology**</center>

Qualitative analysis was chosen for this study and the data collected through a series of interviews with staff, volunteers and service-users of a case study resettlement project. The data was analysed through thematic analysis. To answer the research aims, in-depth analysis was required regarding how those involved in resettlement engage with the process. The rationale for using qualitative methods and thematic analysis will be explored in this section.

### *Qualitative Research*

Qualitative methods are used when a researcher aims to develop an authentic understanding which reflects the various perspectives of participants in a certain social setting (Bachman & Schutt, 2009). A main difference between a qualitative and quantitative approach is that quantitative approaches are concerned with numbers and a qualitative approach is concerned with words (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to view the relationship between theory and research (Bryman, 2012). This study is heavily based on the relationship between theory, research and practice to establish whether resettlement practice accords with desistance theory.

Bryman (2012) explains that qualitative research has been criticised as it is seen to be inferior to quantitative research due to qualitative research lacking hard facts, numbers and statistics. Consequently there has been a crisis of confidence in qualitative research from both inside and outside of the field (Morse et. al, 2002). Furthermore, the software used in analysing quantitative data does little to alleviate this crisis as data analysed in this way is seen to be more valid (Morse et.al, 2002). Thus the validity and reliability of qualitative research is questioned, as the findings are open to interpretation by the researcher and therefore pose the risk of researcher bias (Jupp et.al, 2000). Another disadvantage is that qualitative research is often conducted on a small scale, therefore compromising data generalizability (Jupp et.al, 2000).

Despite these issues, qualitative research and methods are not to be dismissed. Perhaps, most importantly, qualitative methods allow the researcher to acquire rich, detailed and in-depth data around participant opinions and perceptions (Babbie, 1996; Bryman, 2012). Also, qualitative methods allow for flexibility enabling the researcher to develop areas of interest on the spot which helps them to gain a deeper understanding of participants' beliefs (Babbie, 1996). Furthermore, when researching crime, specific and valuable data can be gained from employing an unobtrusive technique due to the sometimes sensitive topic (Epstien, 1988). Therefore, for many social scientists, qualitative research is a helpful and meaningful method which allows the exploration of complex issues which a quantitative method would not allow (Bryman, 2012).

A case study has been used to explore current resettlement practice and how those who go through resettlement engage with the process. The type of case study used for the purposes of this research was an 'explanatory' case study which is used to explore and describe phenomena and also to explain causal relationships and develop theory (Harder, 2010; online). There are a number of advantages of using a case study as a research method. Firstly, case studies provide context-dependent (practical) knowledge as opposed to context-independent (theoretical) knowledge (Flyvjberg, 2006). Furthermore, case studies can provide a special kind of detailed and adaptable information and provide rich, raw material for advancing theoretical ideas (Wilson, 1979). However, their use as a research method has been heavily criticised in terms of validity and reliability (Bryman, 2012). It has been argued that results cannot be generalised from one single case and therefore the representativeness of the data is compromised (Bryman, 2012; Flyvjberg, 2006). Also, it has been argued that case study results are particularly prone to subjective bias whereby the researcher uses a case study as verification for their already preconceived notions or hypotheses (Flyvjberg, 2006). Despite these points, Flyvjberg (2006) argues that case studies are a sufficient method for important research tasks which hold up well against other methods of research methodology and are important to the development of the social sciences. Thus a voluntary-sector resettlement project was chosen as a case study.

The case study resettlement project wished to remain anonymous and therefore have been provided a pseudonym with all identifying information being omitted. Resettlement Service England (RSE), which receives funding from a variety of sources and is situated in England, agreed to give the researcher access. RSE has no Government funding at this time but is planning to bid for Ministry of Justice contracts. RSE works with men leaving two local prisons to resettle in a county in England. In accordance with the literature, RSE has been chosen as they focus their efforts towards supporting men who have served short-term sentences of 12 months or less and provide a 'through the gate' service working with men both inside prison and in the community. They are able to do this through their number of volunteers.

RSE explain in their own words the type of support they provide:

> "Assisting service users to access accommodation, training and employment we also provide assistance in becoming organised and attending appointments; getting into mental health services or supported housing. Our staff and volunteers are trained to address and discuss men's attitude towards offending and deal with these specific issues to promote change.

RSE's ultimate measure of success is that a man maintains a crime free life following release from prison" (Resettlement Service England, 2013).

RSE also employ paid staff and there are two main resettlement workers, an education, training and employment worker, two assistant resettlement workers, a volunteer co-ordinator and director of the project, along with two members of admin staff. It was hoped that with the number of staff, volunteers and service-users, the researcher would be able to gain a representative sample.

### *Method*

The chosen method to gather data was in-depth interviewing of resettlement staff, volunteers and service-users, as the researcher hoped to gain detailed information regarding participants' thoughts and experiences (Boyce & Neal, 2006; Punch, 2005).

Participant observation as a method was not practical as it required a person to take a role in the social setting which would have been too time-consuming for the researcher (Boyce & Neal, 2006). It was also impractical for RSE as they were conscious about the time that would be taken up by the research. Also, focus groups would have been inappropriate as the researcher hoped for candid thoughts from participants and they may not have felt comfortable divulging information in a group setting, therefore one to one interviewing was deemed appropriate (Boyce & Neal, 2006).

An advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide more detailed data than that which is available through other data collection methods such as surveys (Fraser & Francis, 1998). To answer the research questions, it was essential that in-depth perspectives were explored so any form of quantitative data collection or analysis would not be sufficient to answer the research aims. Another advantage of in-depth interviews is that this method is flexible and can be adapted easily to a wide range of topics thus there are no limits as to what can and cannot be talked about as it is up to the interviewee to share their experiences with the researcher (Punch, 2005).

Additionally, interviews provide a relaxed setting in which to gain information from participants (Boyce & Neal, 2006). It is not an intimidating situation but more like a general conversation and given that many of the participants were vulnerable adults, a comfortable setting was important to ensure that participants were comfortable divulging personal information (Boyce & Neal, 2006). The researcher was mindful of the relaxed atmosphere as, being a previous resettlement worker herself, knew that ex-prisoners can be introverted and may find it hard to talk about their experiences. The researcher's past experience as a resettlement worker and its relation to this research will be explored later in this section.

However, there are limitations to in-depth interviewing. In-depth interviews may be prone to bias, for example participants may have wanted to show RSE in a positive light to demonstrate success (Boyce & Neal, 2006).  While the researcher aimed to gain authentic opinions from participants, their stake in the project could bias their responses, especially in terms of the project's efficacy as RSE's funding is reliant upon its success.  Therefore, the researcher needed an interview schedule to allow minimal bias and also work on interviewing techniques to minimise the chances of biased responses (Boyce & Neal, 2006).  Furthermore, building rapport with participants was also essential to minimise biased responses by reassuring them that responses would remain confidential (Bryman, 2012).

Also, in-depth interviews are time-consuming because of the time that it takes to plan and design research instruments, conduct interviews, transcribe interviews and analyse the data, thus careful and timed planning by the researcher was essential (Boyce & Neal, 2006; Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher needs to be knowledgeable about the interview topic to develop new questions from the interviewee's responses (Kvale, 1996). The researcher must also be able to make participants comfortable, appear interested in what participants are saying, avoid yes/no and leading questions, use appropriate body language and not be influenced by their own researcher bias (Boyce & Neal, 2006).  This issue was minimised by having a well thought out interview schedule.

### *Sampling*

Qualitative sampling was used in this research.  Purposive sampling is the selection of units with direct reference to the research questions being asked therefore, the researcher selects their sample with particular research goals in mind (Bryman, 2012).  Purposive sampling is used for qualitative purposes due to the nature of qualitative research and the need to analyse a specific group of people (Bryman, 2012).  Staff, volunteers and service-users were contacted and all the staff and volunteers (approx. 30) who worked at the project were invited to take part.  This was achieved through the researcher being given access to staff and volunteer lists via a designated member of staff.   The researcher approached the staff and volunteers of the resettlement project by email.

Not all service-users were contacted as this study was concerned with a specific type of ex-prisoner. Bryman (2012) explains that criterion sampling means sampling all units that meet a particular criterion.  In accordance with the literature, the researcher chose to use criterion sampling.  Firstly, we are concerned with short-term prisoners in this research as this prisoner group has been targeted in recent policies surrounding resettlement due to being the largest offender group in the

prison population, amongst other reasons outlined elsewhere in this research (HMIPP, 2001; MOJ, 2011; MOJ, 2013). Secondly, the Government also aim to target revolving door prisoners and those who persistently offend, as they have been deemed to be a particularly problematic group when trying to reduce reoffending (MOJ, 2011). In addition, this research is not concerned with primary desistance (or an offence-free period) but secondary desistance and the internalisation of change and redirection of ex-prisoner's lives (McNeill et.al, 2012; Maruna & Farrall, 2004). Therefore, supporting secondary desistance is crucial to reduce reoffending in terms of those who persistently offend and habitual offenders (McNeill et.al, 2012). Thus, service-user criteria were set as such: to have served a sentence of 12 months or less, to have a previous offending history and to have been imprisoned more than once.

Due to regulations at RSE, RSE could not allow the researcher access to their database unsupervised due to their confidentiality agreement so the researcher could only have access to the database via a designated member of staff, therefore presenting a risk of sampling bias. A sampling bias is a distortion in the representativeness of the sample when some members of the population stand no chance of being selected (Bryman, 2012). However, while the researcher was supervised during the sample selection, only the researcher had influence over who was selected to participate. 14 service-users were contacted to participate as there were only 14 service-users on RSE's database that met the service-user criteria. Service-users were first contacted via post and if there was no response within a week, the researcher contacted them by telephone. The first 5-7 service-users who responded to the requests were interviewed.

The intended sample was 7 staff/volunteers and 7 service-users. Sample size in qualitative research can be difficult to establish as it is impossible to know how many participants will be needed to achieve rich data (Bryman, 2012). A general rule of thumb is that the size should not be so small as to make it difficult to achieve informational redundancy yet neither too large as to make it difficult to undertake a deep analysis of the findings (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Generally, the selection of participants should continue until the saturation point where they yield little additional information (Bachman & Schutt, 2009). This was not possible as the researcher had to take into account time and resource constraints of the project. RSE's consciousness of the time frame for this research meant the researcher had to make allowances and adjustments to the sample size in order to maintain good rapport with the organisation and maintain agreed access with organisational gate keepers.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research.  There are both unstructured and structured interviews, however, some argue that there is no such thing as 'unstructured' interviewing as, by definition, interviews have a focus and a purpose irrespective of how undirected they are by the researcher (Brinkmann, 2013; Bryman, 2012).  These types of interviewing are different to the quantitative method of structured interviews as unstructured and semi-structured interviews used in qualitative analysis centre around gaining greater generality in the formulation of initial research ideas and on gaining participants own perspectives (Bryman, 2012).  Semi-structured interviews were chosen because, while unstructured interviews are beneficial for their flexibility, the interviewer has no interview guide and this was not practical due to the different areas which were covered in this study (Bryman, 2012).

In semi-structured interviews the researcher has a list of questions which need to be covered but the interviewee still has a lot of choice on how to respond (Bryman, 2012).  Also, the researcher may ask questions which are not on the guide by picking up on points of interest from participants' giving the interviewer flexibility (Bryman, 2012).  The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows insights into how participants view the world; however, a limitation of any interview is that the researcher must have an appropriate technique to avoid leading participants (Bryman, 2012).  If the researcher asks leading questions then the data may lose its credibility and, therefore, the types of questions asked during the interview are paramount (Bryman, 2012).  To avoid leading questions, interview schedules must be planned around an outline of the interview topic and questions should be generally short and to the point as more details can be elicited through follow-up questions which can uncover true meanings (Bachman and Schutt, 2009).  Therefore, an interview schedule was prepared and general questions were tailored to answer the research questions and explore participants' understandings of resettlement and the desistance process.  While participants' were asked different questions depending on their responses, the same topics were covered and a similar wording used to each participant.

Data recording is advantageous in semi-structured interviews and, because it was hoped that each interview would last around 45 minutes, a tape recorder was used where consent from the participant was given.  Tape recorders are often used in in-depth interviews; however, they may inhibit participants from being honest due to the thought of being recorded (Bachman & Schutt, 2009).  Despite this, an absence of a tape recorder would mean constant note-taking which can prevent an adequate display of interest by the researcher and can hinder concentration (Bachman & Schutt, 2009).

Once the data was collected, the researcher transcribed the interviews electronically to start data analysis. Transcribing allows a thorough examination of participant responses as well as correcting the limitations of the researcher's memory (Heritage, 1984). Also, transcribing provides credibility and the reliability to the data as it opens the data up to scrutiny by other researchers who can undertake a secondary analysis which helps to counter accusations that an analysis may have been influenced by researcher bias (Heritage, 1984). Furthermore, it allows the data to be reused in other ways, for example in the light of new theoretical ideas and findings (Heritage, 1984). However, the procedure of transcribing is time-consuming for the researcher so the researcher planned a transcribing period in order to write-up the data (Boyce & Neal, 2006; Bryman, 2012).

### *Thematic Analysis*

Thematic analysis was chosen for data analysis. Thematic analysis is a common approach to qualitative data analysis although it has no identifiable heritage like grounded theory or critical discourse analysis (Bryman, 2012). It is a method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data and can aid in organising and describing data in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, themes within the data are identified through the use of codes and the themes and sub-themes are identified through the reading and rereading of transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012). Thematic analysis was chosen due to the theoretical freedom it gives to the researcher in providing a detailed account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, as this research is concerned with the perceptions and opinions of those who engage in the resettlement and desistance process, the researcher needed to explore the complexity of the data which thematic analysis allows (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012). However, thematic analysis is rarely acknowledged in the social sciences as it is the researcher who identifies the themes within the data and also the researcher's interpretations of what the themes mean and signify in relation to the research, making it vulnerable to researcher bias (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012)

The process of thematic analysis involves identifying themes and codes within the data-set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Firstly, the researcher must be familiar with the data in order to generate initial codes or indicators of themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes are identified which capture something important about the data with regard to the research aims and represents something which is recurring within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once a theme is identified, the researcher reflects on the initial codes that have been generated to gain a sense of the continuities and linkages between them so that the researcher can generate concepts between inductive and deductive processes (Bachman & Schutt, 2009; Bryman, 2012). In essence, the researcher 'pulls

apart' the data, interprets it via inductive and deductive processes and then puts the data back together again more meaningfully in accordance with the literature (Bachman & Schutt, 2009).

Thematic analysis can be done either by an inductive 'bottom-up' analytical process or by a deductive 'top-down' analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Hayes, 1997). An inductive 'bottom-up' approach to thematic analysis means the themes identified are heavily linked to the data themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A deductive 'top-down' approach, on the other hand, is heavily theoretical and steered by the researcher's theoretical interests and thus is more analyst-driven with a more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As this research is heavily theoretical, a deductive 'top-down' analytical process was used in order to identify themes within the data-set.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Qualitative research can raise ethical issues and it is the responsibility of the researcher to identify the consequences of their involvement (Bachman & Schutt, 2009).   This research involved participants and ethical issues were taken into consideration to safeguard participants and the researcher.  These issues were dealt with to protect those involved and also to address how they might have impacted this study.  The researcher followed and upheld the British Society of Criminology code of ethics and this project was proved to be ethically sound by the University of Huddersfield School of Human and Health Sciences Research via the school's ethics panel.

### *Permission to undertake the study*

RSE agreed to give access and take part as a case study.  The terms of access discussed between the researcher and the Director were that the researcher would be granted access to RSE's staff and volunteer lists as well as the service-user database via a designated member of staff.  In accordance with their policies and procedures, the researcher was supervised during the sampling process. Furthermore, the researcher and RSE agreed that interviews would be undertaken at the RSE office. This was to safeguard both service-users and the researcher as a member of staff would always be present within the office.  However, interviews took place in a conference room with a closing door and no-one from RSE was present during the interviews. RSE also requested that the researcher be as quick as possible during data collection due to concerns about the time used by the researcher being there.

Informed consent is essential with any research involving human participation and it is imperative that participants understand their involvement in the research in its entirety to freely participate (Bachman & Schutt, 2009). The researcher made clear to participants that their involvement was entirely voluntary and they could withdraw from the research at any time with no questions asked. Furthermore, participants were asked to read a comprehensive information sheet before signing the consent form and agreeing to participate.

The researcher and director of RSE agreed that incentives would need to be used to encourage service-user response rates. While the use of incentives is a grey area in terms of perceived coercion, many studies of this nature have used incentives to encourage participation. Wincup & Hucklesby (2007) explain that encouraging participation from ex-prisoners in particular is difficult and that this affects much of the research undertaken with this specific group. Lewis et.al (2003) used incentives in the form of a £15 postal order in their evaluation of resettlement practice and Wincup & Hucklesby (2007) in their evaluations of resettlement projects used a £15 high street voucher to encourage participation. It has been found in previous studies that use of incentives had a positive impact on the response rate of participants (Wincup & Hucklesby, 2007).

However, there is a possibility of coercion. Couper & Singer (2008) explain that incentives should not be used if there is a risk of psychological harm to the participant. Therefore, it would be deemed coercive if participants were willing to take risks which they would not usually undertake for the purpose of participation and the persuasion of an incentive (Couper & Singer, 2008). However, it has been noted that undue influence and the risk of coercion are more likely to occur through large value incentives rather than small ones (Couper & Singer, 2008).

In accordance with RSE's policies no cash incentives were used. While speaking to the director about appropriate incentives, the director suggested a supermarket voucher, as many ex-prisoners run out of food on a low budget. The researcher initially agreed but later realised that alcohol is sold at supermarkets thus supermarket vouchers would not be appropriate given that service-users may have issues surrounding substance misuse. Therefore, a range of small pre-purchased incentives were used which the participant could choose from should they participate. The incentives were: a £10 Amazon voucher, a mobile top-up to the sum of £10 or a pre-prepared food hamper worth £10. These incentives were chosen as they posed no harm to participants and could not be used for prohibited or unacceptable purposes. It was hoped that the use of incentives would encourage

participation as the low-response rate is the main problem faced by researchers in this field (Wincup & Hucklesby, 2007).

*Confidentiality and Anonymity*

Confidentiality is essential and every effort should be made to protect the identity of those who take part (Bachman & Schutt, 2009) and, in this instance, also to protect the identity of the project. While fictitious names are often used to protect the identity of participants it is not always sufficient in providing participants with anonymity as individuals in the setting may be able to determine another participants' identity through actions or behaviours described and may then become aware of knowledge about their colleagues or service-users which had been formerly kept from them (Buchman & Schutt, 2009). Below are the potential issues and how they were resolved.

Firstly, RSE (as an agency) may have been aware of who took part in this study as the interviews took place at their office. The office is small and it would be impossible for staff and volunteers not to see who had taken part as the room where the interviews took place is directly in front of the RSE entrance. Likewise, staff and volunteers may have known which of their colleagues had taken part in the research. All participants were notified that the researcher could not guarantee that RSE would not know they had taken part in the research before agreeing to be interviewed. They were also notified that they could withdraw from the research at any time, with no questions asked. This information was given to them verbally and also in the form of an information sheet and consent form.

Secondly, the only time that participants' confidentiality could have been compromised during this research was if they divulged information regarding a future offence, historic offences unknown to the police or RSE, a child protection issue or, if the researcher believed the participant or anyone else was at risk of harm. In this scenario, the researcher's duty would have been to inform RSE and/or the appropriate authorities. All participants were notified of this before agreeing to participate.

While RSE may have known who took part in the research, participants were assured that RSE would not know which participants had divulged specific data. This was achieved by providing participants with pseudonyms and ensuring participant identities were protected at all times. Additionally, where something was said during interviews which was relevant to the research but could have compromised anonymity, the details and events were changed by the researcher. Furthermore, only the researcher knows the sources of the information provided by participants and only the researcher and her supervisor had access to the information which participants provided. The

supervisor only had access to the information once data had been anonymised and all participants had been allocated a pseudonym. Neither RSE nor any-one else had access to the data and all participants were notified of this before agreeing to participate.

All participants were informed that data would be kept private and only the researcher would see it before anonymisation. The transcribing process was done electronically by a computer and the identities of participants were changed during transcribing. Participants were also informed that on completion of the research, collected data would be destroyed along with sample lists and anything that divulged participants' details and identities. Participants' personal information was not used anywhere in this research. Electronic information will be permanently deleted, tape recordings will be destroyed and paper notes will be shredded. Participants were notified that the only information remaining will be the information selected for use in this research and all data was dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Finally, participants were notified that the findings may be used in conferences, local seminars or academic peer review journals. They were also informed that the University of Huddersfield, RSE and the researcher will be issued with final copies and that participants could request a final copy of the research.

### Support for Participants

Subject wellbeing should be paramount to ensure that the research will not intentionally cause adverse consequences to any individual (Bachman & Schutt, 2009). While this may happen unintentionally, researchers must take care to avoid direct harm to the reputations or feelings of individuals and this is done, in part, by maintaining confidentiality (Bachman & Schutt, 2009). However, participant support was provided should they be affected by anything during this research.

The researcher did not ask participants about their offence or offending history as it was of no relevance to the research. However, participants were asked about their feelings and experiences of life in the community. Therefore, the researcher put together a support sheet which was given to participants once the interview had ended. Whilst it was unlikely that information of a distressing nature may arise, procedures were put in place to ensure that participants could gain access to support should they need it. If information of a distressing nature did arise, the participant was notified that they could withdraw from the research if they needed to. There was also an opportunity at the end of every interview for the participant to 'wind-down'.

### Risk and Safety

The researcher has worked in resettlement, both voluntarily and professionally, has received training to work with ex-prisoners in the community and worked with offenders in prison.

Therefore, the researcher was able to draw upon the training throughout the field work to ensure that participants and the researcher were not at risk of harm. Furthermore, the researcher is experienced in handling sensitive issues with service-users. RSE service-users undergo risk assessments so the researcher was informed of concerns regarding participants. While RSE do not work with sex offenders, they do have service-users who are of a concern to the police because of their behaviour.

*Researcher Bias and Conflicts of Interest*

The researcher has worked for RSE previously as a resettlement worker and therefore knew some staff and volunteers. However, the researcher did not give staff or volunteers, who she knew in a professional capacity, preferential treatment. All participants were asked questions of a similar nature around similar topics and were treated as any other participant. While the researcher has an interest in RSE and has been involved in their work, the researcher was objective during fieldwork and data analysis. The researcher did not let her personal feelings towards the project influence the questions asked or how the findings were analysed. By using RSE as a case study, the researcher treated the case study, the field work and analysis of findings the same as if any other resettlement project was used as a case study.

### *Summary*

In summary, a voluntary-sector resettlement project gave the researcher permission and access for use as a case study. In order to explore perceptions and opinions of current resettlement practice, the researcher conducted a series of in-depth interviews with staff, volunteers and service users of the project. The researcher proceeded to transcribe the interviews and, through a process of reading and re-reading transcripts, thematically analysed the data to identify codes within the dataset which were then interpreted in accordance with the literature. Throughout field work and analysis, ethical considerations remained paramount to the researcher and all ethical guidelines and agreements were upheld. In the following section, we will explore the findings of this research and the links between resettlement, desistance theory and resettlement practice.

**Findings & Discussion**

The following sections will discuss the findings in accordance with the literature review. The findings are presented within an organisational framework, reflective of how much of the organisations' practices accord with desistance research. Thus the codes and themes found within the data are discussed in relation to theory and practice. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of participants. Please note that quotes from respondents are in italics and where quotations are in bold font, emphasis has been added by the author. The participant sample was smaller than expected due to low-response rates. Therefore, data presented below is sourced from seven respondents: three staff members, two volunteers and two service-users. The implications of the low sample will be discussed in the 'Reflections' section of this research.

Much of what has been found accords with previous research into voluntary-sector providers and resettlement. However, here new light is shed on why voluntary-sector providers may not be encouraging desistance through resettlement work.

***Practice Model***

RSE use the seven pathways to successful reintegration model set out in the Reducing Reoffending National Action Plan (2004) and therefore focus on seven areas of intervention: accommodation, education, training and employment, finance, drugs and alcohol, health, family and relationships and finally, attitudes, thinking and behaviour. This is expected as these interventions have been specified as crucial to the resettlement of short-term prisoners and this is the prisoner group that RSE focus their efforts towards (SEU, 2002). RSE assess these interventions in their assessment tool which displays interventions as 'sections' which the service-user must rate on a scale of 1- 8 in terms of importance. Therefore, RSE work to the traditional model of needs-based resettlement and focus on offending-related factors (Raynor, 2004). In terms of sub-models, RSE fit within an 'opportunity deficit' model of resettlement and thus see service-users as victims of social circumstance (Raynor, 2004). This was evidenced in practitioners' opinions and, therefore, the organisation approaches resettlement from the deterministic viewpoint that environmental needs lead to offending and that environmental needs will lead a way out of offending:

> *"….leading a crime free life and often that's about providing people with alternatives erm, you*
> *know, financial reasons and motivations are reasons for them committing crimes and make*
> *sure they've got access to benefits, to erm, any sorts of grants or loans that they may be*
> *eligible for, erm, and looking into any sort of employment opportunities….although, you know,*

*it sort of takes longer to get money that way [employment] it's honest money isn't it…so we'll focus on that so stealing doesn't become their sort of option" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

Therefore, the focus is on addressing environmental interventions in their work.  In leaflets and pamphlets distributed around the prison, RSE describe their service as:

"RSE is a resettlement project which aims to reduce reoffending and contribute to building safer communities…HELP WITH: **accessing housing and employment, support with drug and alcohol problems, money and debt issues.  Also family support and getting in touch with others who can help**" (RSE, leaflet, 2012).

This description resonates with answers from all staff and volunteers when asked what type of service they provide:

 "*I mean our primary role in a nutshell is to help and support guys to basically live a crime free life and we do that in a number of ways, practical ways, looking at all the pathways including **accommodation, jobs, training**…."(Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

 "*it's a through the gate service…the truth is it takes a long time to put in housing referrals to get men set up and **deal with debts to housing providers**, that kind of stuff" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

 "*…we help with housing benefits, access to medical services .." (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

 When asked whether their work addressed both environmental factors and internal processes one member of staff and one volunteer responded accordingly:

 "*..Definitely welfare needs.  I don't think that is the way it should be but yeah" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

"*It's more practical stuff, you know, we do applications for them and things like that" (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

It has been documented elsewhere that resettlement services have been criticised for this as they tend to dismiss a multi-causal approach necessary to encourage personal change (McNeill & Weaver, 2010; Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Maruna, 1999; Moore, 2012).  However, economic circumstances and their effects on service-users are not to be underestimated as one staff-member explained:

"*It's very difficult for someone to engage in support or ask for help with any other outcomes when they haven't got a roof over their head and that often takes the role of the main priority" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

This is reflective of the hierarchy of needs theory.  This theory of human motivation suggests that biological and physiological needs, such as food and shelter, come first with all other needs being secondary (Maslow, 1943). While this is logical and immediate needs are important to address they are not the only factors necessary to achieve desistance or successful resettlement thus environmental and internal factors should be addressed simultaneously (McNeill & Weaver, 2010).

If these were the only responses and definitions provided, then establishing the type of service that RSE provides would be simple.  However, there was discord, not only among staff members but among RSE's own definitions regarding what type of service they provide.  Online, RSE give a different account of their services in comparison to the one used in leaflets:

> "The support needs are those identified by the service user as being **significant** to them in maintaining a crime-free life**.  As well as** assisting a service user to access accommodation, training and employment we provide assistance in becoming organised and attending appointments; getting into mental health services or supported housing.  **Our staff and volunteers are trained to address and discuss men's attitudes towards offending and deal with these specific issues in order to promote change**" (RSE, 2013; online)

This definition suggests a service which simultaneously seeks to address both 'human' and 'social' capital; internal processes and environmental factors.  Two members of staff reflected this definition by indicating that internal processes were addressed:

> "….at the end of the day like and this is what I've said **the attitudes, thinking and behaviour underpins everything for me personally so it doesn't matter what they've identified as a priority,** well it does matter, but I think the attitudes, thinking and behaviour is going to tie into this as well" (Geoff, I:1, Staff)

> "it's holistic support that we provide I think so I think there definitely is a lot of attention to attitudes and internal processes and looking how we can support them to change rather than what we can put in place to make it look as though they've changed" (Reginald, I:6, Staff).

Also, RSE offers long-term support which would indicate a service not just focused on addressing short-term environmental interventions:

> "…Basically, RSE say that the support is there for as long as a service-user needs it.." (Susan, I:3, Volunteer)

> "**…**we can give **in-depth support** to a larger number of service users." (Joe, I:2, Staff).

Despite the opportunity of in-depth or long-term support, staff and volunteers said that service-users usually withdraw from support once welfare needs are met:

*"..You know, a lot of the time they want someone to help them to have somewhere to go on the day they're released and then after a bit they might want help finding a job and then they say they're ok and leave.." (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

*"…some people use us like an insurance policy. If they've got somewhere to go when they come out but they think 'oh well actually, if they can offer me anything better' so they will go through the whole assessment process with us while they've got nothing to do while they're inside and see if we can come up with a penthouse suite for them on release and when we can't offer that erm then they think 'oh well I'll stick with plan A and I'll go and stay with my friends' and we'll never see them again…" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

These responses accord with a picture of an organisation which does, in fact, predominantly address short-term environmental needs. Also, as we have seen, the organisation advertises itself to service-users as addressing short-term environmental interventions. Therefore, service-users can only be expected to engage on that basis. This also resonated with a service-user when asked whether he had received support with his personal development and skills:

*"I didn't even know owt about that like I didn't know that they even did stuff like that" (Arthur, I:4, SU).*

In short, it was difficult to establish what type of service RSE perceives itself to provide. On one hand, organisational definitions and participant responses point to a mono-factor approach to resettlement (environmental needs), while on the other, organisational definitions and participant responses point to a multi-factor approach (environmental needs and internal processes). Therefore, it is unclear what the organisation perceives itself to *do* and it would seem that RSE has a confused identity. Evidence to support that the organisation takes a mono-factor approach to resettlement, by focusing on environmental welfare interventions, will be drawn out in these findings in the exploration of the service which the organisation *actually* provides.

### *Measuring Success*

RSE state that their aim is to contribute towards reducing reoffending (RSE, 2013) and participant responses echoed this:

*"..to reduce reoffending, that's definitely the goal is that they learn to live a life free from crime.." (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

While RSE claim that their "ultimate measure of success is that a man maintains a crime-free life following release from prison" (RSE, 2013), there was no evidence to support this claim and their methods of measuring success do not accord with measuring reoffending or desistance outcomes. Firstly, RSE measure success based on short-term outputs:

> "..we record success in terms of has someone got a house, has someone got a job, has someone got onto an education course, has someone dealt with their debts and all that kind of stuff…" (Joe, I:2, Staff)

This reflects a mono-faceted approach to resettlement and this particular method of measuring success has been criticised by others (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007). Also, the organisation measures success through tracking reconviction rates which does not measure reoffending or desistance outcomes. RSE (2013) states that outcomes are measured through tracking reconviction rates every 6, 12 and 18 months.  Staff responses confirmed this method:

> "..she'll [the director] be looking at stuff like, well, if a person has stayed out of prison six months after release, twelve months after release and eighteen months after release…" (Geoff, I:1, Staff).

> "…we check whether they have gone back inside or not so that's how we do that" (Reginald, I:6, Staff).

Reducing reoffending and reducing reconvictions are not the same thing and reconviction rates are not a clear indication as to whether someone is reoffending (McNeill et.al, 2012).  Furthermore, while they measure success under the umbrella of reconviction, they actually only record their success in terms of imprisonment.  Where it is found that a service-user has not gone back to prison it is recorded as a measure of success, however, a service-user could have reoffended, been reconvicted and sentenced to a community order which RSE would know nothing about, particularly when tracking service-users who are no longer engaged with the project.

This could be problematic for the organisation when bidding for Payment by Results contracts as providers' level of payment will be dependent on the reductions in reoffending they achieve (MOJ, 2013). Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice aims to see offenders completely desist from crime and thus will enforce a binary desistance measure i.e. rewarding only complete desistance (MOJ, 2013). However, while official policy deems that desistance must be measured, there is evidence to suggest that policy does not fully appreciate the nature of desistance as using 'reducing reoffending' as a means of measuring desistance is too narrow (McNeill et.al, 2012).  This is because recidivism is not a straightforward measure of behaviour change or shifts in identity and, therefore, using reducing

reoffending as a sole measure of success is unlikely to determine success in terms of desistance (McNeill et.al, 2012).  To measure desistance, projects must be able to measure long-term desistance-outcomes which require the collection of subjective qualitative data (McNeill et.al, 2012).  McNeill et.al ( 2012) explain that qualitative longitudinal research by following up ex-offenders and gathering detailed evidence about the influences on their desistance could be a possible medium for doing this.  However, this type of measuring could be hindered by the voluntary nature of the project which may not have the funds or capacity to implement these methods.

*Resettlement & Quantitative Data*

Noticeable about the methods of measuring outcomes is that they are both quantitative methods.  It would be naïve to suggest that funders and their demands do not steer the work, to an extent, of voluntary resettlement projects (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007) and short-term outputs and statistics of imprisonment are easier for funders and investors to process as they are tangible outputs and quantifiable facts.  This could be indicative of a wider problem in resettlement as quantitative data is not only used in measuring success but also in assessing prisoners and this points to a lack of faith, in general, in the utilisation of the qualitative social sciences in resettlement practice.

An example of this is OASys, the tool used by probation to identify offenders' risks of reoffending which is based on a questionnaire which calculates percentage indications of these risks (Inside Time, 2012).  These scores are calculated considering a number of factors such as static factors, dynamic factors and probation officers own professional judgement (Inside Time, 2012).  However, the problem with quantitative data is that it does not paint a clear and detailed picture and it was found that probation officers who used OASys often dismissed the quantitative outcome as they did not feel it was an accurate reflection of the offender (Newbold, 2011).  Therefore, in many cases it was the professional and individual judgements of probation officers that were relied upon when dealing with offenders rather than the output of OASys (Newbold, 2011). Quantitative data is unhelpful as the predominant way of measuring and assessing desistance as human beings, along with their reasons for and methods of personal change are complex, therefore numbers, percentages and outputs cannot reveal accurately what will lead or has led a person to positive change (McNeill et.al, 2012).

**Internal Processes**

As the organisation uses the seven interventions, an acknowledgment of the internal processes of service-users would be expected due to the pathway of 'attitudes, thinking and behaviour' (ATB).  Also, 'ATB' has its own section on the assessment tool.

It was found that the organisation did not assess where service-users were, on the 'spectrum', in terms of addressing ATB and this was evident in participants' responses when asked what practitioners aim to find out about service-users when they come to the ATB section in the assessment:

*"I think, oh god, I don't know…I'll just be like 'are you willing to engage?' Or just see how they're generally thinking"…then once they're out [of prison] I'd say asking them if they feel as though I'm still doing my job for them…" (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

*"erm……is that the one where you ask them how they're feeling at that stage?"…I don't really recall to be honest, other than that" (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

General questions such as "how are you feeling?" suggests a lack of understanding of how to utilise the ATB intervention in accordance with successful resettlement practice. Also, it was found that ATB may not be recognised or understood by practitioners on a level which is conducive to successful resettlement and desistance work, as practitioners see ATB as the same as the other interventions and, therefore, the individual chooses whether ATB is an issue or not:

*"…I'm not sure if its [ATB] considered a priority because the assessment is not about what I deem as a priority but what they think is a priority.." (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

*"..they'll [service users] say something isn't an issue when it clearly is and that can make it difficult…but you can't make them do something they don't want to do" (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

This indicates a lack of understanding of ATB as it is not just another pathway but will determine how an individual addresses the other six interventions (Raynor, 2007).  In order to appreciate ATB it should be considered central to resettlement plans and assessments rather than *part* of an individuals' resettlement plans (Youth Justice Board, n.d.).

The organisation may, however, perceive itself as addressing ATB intrinsically.  *One* of the organisations service descriptions clearly states ""Our staff and volunteers are trained to address and discuss men's attitudes towards offending and deal with these specific issues in order to promote change" (RSE, 2013; online).  However, it was found that staff and volunteers received no training to do this:

*"…hmmmm…interestingly very little in terms of formal training…erm, I've never had any specific training erm, you know, we're not a counselling service so the idea isn't that we all become counsellors." (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

*"it varies really, erm, being a charity we're not really in a position where we've got training like I don't have a budget for training and in previous jobs I've had a budget for training" (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

Also, when volunteers were asked if they had received training to address the ATB of service-users, they responded:

*"No, not that I can remember" (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

*"Hmmm…no, not that I can think of" (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

We could deduce then that the practice of the organisation does not address the ATB of service-users intrinsically or in accordance with resettlement and desistance work for the simple reason that they are not trained to do so.  However, three practitioners said that they did address the ATB of service-users despite any training:

*" we are always addressing attitudes, thinking and behaviour…you know for example, when someone is being racist, you can either ignore it or you can challenge it…it's kind of intrinsic to what we do but I don't think I've ever specifically spelt it out to volunteers in that way, if that makes sense?" (Reginald, I:6, Staff)*

*"so they [service users'] might say 'yeah, yeah, yeah I want to live somewhere' so then I can say 'well actually you said in your attitudes, thinking and behaviour that you're still going to take drugs'. The attitudes, thinking and behaviour underpins everything for me personally" (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

*"He knows that I'm there to like have a chat with but he knows that I'll tell him, I'll say 'Look what you being a prat for?' Or I'll sit down and give him the honest truth rather than being like 'yeah, yeah, that's fine do what you want' kind of thing'." (Sally, I:5, Volunteer)*

Noticeable here are the foci around the challenging of behaviours and, in this way, practitioners address an aspect of ATB.  However, they do not address ATB fully in a way which is conducive to successful resettlement and desistance work.  Also, the single association between challenging and ATB suggests a lack of understanding of the multi-faceted nature of ATB and the role which internal processes play in successful resettlement and desistance work.  There was further evidence of a lack of understanding when practitioners were asked about the nature of ATB:

*"It's not our job to change…to, erm…mind warp them" (Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

*" I don't know…we get taught about different situations and how to deal with if a service user becomes aggressive or anything like that" (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

These responses implied a level of confusion between practitioners about what ATB is and how it can be utilised in resettlement and terms such as "mind warp" suggest that ATB is perhaps discouraged.  Services can refer service-users to other agencies for any intervention which they do not address internally (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007).  Although, throughout the data, there was no evidence to suggest that RSE did this in relation to ATB.

However, policy does not make clear ATB's role in resettlement practice.  Some policies ascribe ATB to accredited cognitive programs such as cognitive self-change and managing anger (NOMS, 2004; RRNAP, 2004).  Other organisations ascribe ATB to forms of restorative justice whereby individuals are encouraged to meet victims of crime and see the impact which crime has on individuals and the community (Restorative Thinking, 2013).  These two practices come from competing theoretical roots.  The first practice is rooted in needs-based resettlement and addressing criminogenic attitudes, thinking and behaviour, and the second practice is rooted in restorative justice and accords with a strengths-based model of resettlement.

In summary, the organisation may perceive itself to address the ATB of service-users but this is not the case as staff and volunteers have no training to do so.  The lack of understanding as to what ATB is and how it can be implemented could be a consequence of, or made worse by, the approach which the organisation takes to resettlement work as this model, by its nature, neglects the multi-causal nature of desistance.  Therefore, the ATB intervention (and the only intervention which emphasises the role of human agency in resettlement) is not utilised effectively or appreciated.  Policy, however, does nothing to aid understanding as there are competing theoretical positions present.  While this is an issue, the issue which cannot be ignored is that neglecting internal processes is likely to be a barrier in competing for contracts through PbR schemes, as providers which fail to acknowledge any internal processes are unlikely to be successful in both resettlement and desistance (Maguire & Raynor, 2006).

### *Assessing Desistance Readiness*

When it comes to assessing desistance readiness, the organisation has practices which *could* assess desistance readiness but are not utilised to do so.  The organisation has an individualist, person-centred approach to resettlement and both assessments and action plans are led by the service-user:

*"It's quite a visual thing, you know, sort of saying they're in the centre of that and this is about what they want help with rather than us coming in and saying 'you clearly have a drug problem, you're clearly stealing to fund that drug use'.." (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

*"..they identify what their needs are. It's really led by them it's person centred and they do it in consultation with us erm but at the end of the day, all we're doing is facilitating them and supporting them so to speak" (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

However, service-users are asked to identify their *needs* in relation to offending:

*"..any of the things they identify erm that they need to stop them from going back inside and stop them reoffending" (Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

*"…identifying things, you know, so that they can comfortably live without feeling the need to reoffend" (Geoff, I:1, Staff)*

Therefore, assessments revolve around identifying offending-related factors rather than factors which would be conducive for them to change (McNeill & Weaver, 2010). Desistance is a subjective process which is different for every person based on various factors in their lives, not simply offending related factors (McNeill & Weaver, 2010). The focus on identifying criminogenic factors is not surprising, as needs-based models identify needs which are specifically related to offending thus the emphasis, in opportunity deficit models, is centred on immediate welfare needs (Raynor, 2007). However, this means that desistance-focused work is not present at the beginning of service-user support. There was further evidence to support that desistance- readiness is not assessed:

*"…we assess their needs for when they come out and ask them **what** they want support with.." (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

*"…it's getting them to identify **what** they want support with…" (Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

Notice the foci on *what* service-users want support with rather than *why* they want to change. Service-users demonstrated the difference between these two concepts:

*"I needed a bit of support, you know, with housing needs and work area" (Arthur, I:4, SU).*

*"Basically, I have an alcohol problem…" (Scott, I:7, SU).*

However, when asked specifically why they wanted to change they revealed the significance of these objectives:

*"I've got a little boy so, he's only seven months old so I wanted to get out and get a place and try to get a job and stuff like that to be like a better role model for him and take care of him and stuff like that really"* (Arthur, I:4, SU)

*"It's because none of my family want anything to do with me now…they've taken as much as they can and my daughter has just turned 21 now so I don't see her anymore. My mother, who I love to this day, she's cut me off.."* (Scott, I:7, SU).

These reasons for, or motivations to, change revolved around service-users' family relationships. However, the organisation not recognising service-users' reasons for change was evident when service-users were asked if they had received support to build these relationships:

*"No not really. It's more like he'll [resettlement worker] make appointments for me with housing and stuff and looking for help with work"* (Arthur, I:4, SU).

*"No, it's just really around alcohol to be honest…"* (Scott, I:7, SU).

We touched upon the importance of family relationships in the literature review and, despite the organisation claiming that they provide support with family issues in their advertisements (RSE, leaflet, 2012), no evidence was found to support this. Overall, we can deduce that the significant factors in service-users lives and their intrinsic motivations are not elicited or supported by the organisation. This is concerning, given that practitioners felt that successful resettlement was ultimately down to the individual's motivation to change:

*"..there are a few people who are in the criminal justice system without any support and **they stay out of prison because they're motivated enough to change and I think that's what it really comes down to when you strip back the support...**"* (Geoff, I:1, Staff).

*"..it's down to their individual motivation..there are some people who, erm, have grown sick of offending and they want to change, you know, so if they really want to then hopefully they will engage with support.."* (Joe, I:2, Staff).

However, if the organisation does not identify and support service-users' motivations to change they cannot expect service-users to have or maintain those high-levels of motivation. Service-users admitted that their motivations were low since being in the community:

*"..while you're in there [prison] you've got that much time on your hands so you think you'll do anything when you get out of prison and that you'll stand outside the job centre all day but you*

*don't do it when you're out, you know, you think you're going to do all this stuff and then you just don't do it" (Arthur, I:4, SU).*

It could perhaps be that the organisation assumes service-user motivations to be the objective factors that they identify in assessments and this would be supported by the needs-based opportunity deficit model the organisation works within. While service-users were, of course, concerned with environmental needs, their motivations for change lay in what those objectives *meant* to them as opposed to the objective itself. McNeill & Weaver (2010) describe this interaction between 'subjective' meanings and 'environmental' factors as a 'virtuous' circle where hope and hopefulness is realised through environmental opportunities which, in turn, reinforce hope and hopefulness. However, it is essential that environmental opportunities are seen as precisely that and not necessarily hooks for change and, therefore, interventions must address 'objective' factors and 'subjective' meanings and simultaneously attend to both (McNeill & Weaver, 2010).

Not identifying service-user motivations for change also has implications when it comes to service-user set-backs. Set-backs are commonplace during resettlement and can severely affect service-users (Maguire & Raynor, 2006):

*"It can be hard for them to say get a job for example and I think that can be very de-motivating like they come out and they're raring to go and then they get that rejection and they just slip back into their old ways" (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

*"..if they can maintain positivity then that's great but also set-backs can knock that and then sometimes they go back to offending" (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

*"…you know, you turn up for appointments yourself and you're keeping up with it and then you start to disbelieve in it because you don't see no change and because you're not seeing anything you think you might as well go back to your old ways" (Arthur, I:4, SU).*

Therefore, when set-backs occur, practitioners are left with nothing to sustain motivations as they do not recognise service-user intrinsic motivations. This, coupled with the organisations' failure to address service-user internal processes, means that resilience cannot be built and thus set-backs can severely effect service-user engagement. A lack of resilience was evident in service-user comments:

*"…I'm finding it hard enough as it is to cope because it's just one thing after another, you know, so I think I'll just have one [drink] like a can of lager or a couple of pints at the pub and then it just escalates from there, you know?" (Scott, I:7, SU).*

Resilience research suggests that most people will do well despite exposure to great adversities; however, practices must be in place which facilitate resilience rather than hinder it (Masten, 2001). This can be done by moving away from deficit models and adopting strengths-based models to replace them (McNeill et al, 2012; O'Leary, 1998). A strengths-based model is, however, fundamentally at odds with the deficit model which the organisation works within.

### *Relationships*

In the previous section it was evidenced that the organisation does not explicitly support service-user family relationships in a way which is conducive to supporting desistance. We also know that the organisation does not encourage the acquisition of human capital as they do not address internal processes. However, professional relationships can activate both human and social capital within an individual (Burnett, 2004; Farrall, 2004).

The organisation has a mentoring system in place using a large base of volunteers in order to support service-users. Much can be achieved within the context of a relationship and mentors can become positive role models for ex-prisoners, can trigger a number of intrinsic changes for ex-prisoners through 'looking glass' techniques and can enable ex-prisoners to develop pro-social relationships (Burnett & Maruna, 2006; Farrall, 2004; Giordano et al, 2002). The importance of mentoring, therefore, in terms of desistance is placed upon the relationship itself and the changes which these relationships can initiate.

There are different ways in which the voluntary-sector may utilise mentoring and The Scottish Mentoring Network (2006) identified that some utilise it as such:

"Mentoring- The role of the volunteer is to work with the mentee solely on agreed objectives which are clearly stated at the start. Each meeting focuses primarily on achieving the objectives, and the social relationship if achieved is incidental" (Scottish Mentoring Network, 2006; p.1).

Evidence of this way of working with regards to mentoring was found within the data set:

"..they [service users] are matched up with a volunteer who generally meets them on release and **helps them to achieve those things that they've identified** that they want to achieve and help them to resettle with housing and the things we've just talked about…it's not befriending we don't just go and sit and have a chat with them" (Reginald, I:6, Staff).

Similarly, volunteers indicated that their meetings were focused on meeting objectives:

*"…when an action plan is set **it's kind of like 'okay, well we're going to go away and do this and you go away and do that' and agree on a time and actions for the next meeting**…you know, they might have alcohol and drugs problems or help finding employment and training"* (Susan, I:3, Volunteer)

*"..erm, in meetings we **work on the things they have identified that they need help with, you know, if they've got problems with housing or anything**. Erm and we do applications for them for things like that.." (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

Thus the crux of service-user and mentor meetings is to meet objectives outlined in initial assessments. There was also evidence to suggest that the relationship between service-user and mentor was considered secondary as when practitioners were asked why mentors were important to the organisation, staff replied:

*"…it's down to capacity so we're a small organisation and we don't have the capacity.. now where volunteers come in and I think is crucial to the service is that they can attend appointments and they do a lot of follow up stuff, you know, chasing various agencies and erm making appointments and stuff like that and working on action plans…So I think the volunteers play a crucial role" (Geoff, I:1, Staff)*

*"…I have limited time erm, you know..but this model of having volunteers who can each take on one or two service users allows each resettlement worker to potentially support say fifteen to twenty people..the fact that we have volunteers who can accompany them to appointments and assessments and they help them fill in paperwork.." (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

*"….it's difficult for a paid resettlement worker because they have very large case-loads to consistently give support and a volunteer can provide that and that weekly opportunity to go and its focused volunteering.." (Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

The importance of volunteers is placed upon the capacity they provide for the organisation as opposed to their mentor role which further evidences a lack of understanding of desistance in resettlement from an organisational and practitioner perspective. The organisation not recognising the significance of the relationships which mentors can create with service-users was also evidenced in volunteers' lack of training on *how* to be a mentor:

*"…well the induction training is three days and is about what volunteers do so we talk to them about agencies that can be used to help for things such as housing erm also like boundaries*

*exercises and risk-assessment and erm, you know health and safety and emergencies…"*
*(Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

*"…erm, we have training before we become a volunteer and that tells you about how to have boundaries with service users and that kind of stuff…" (Sally, I:5, Volunteer)*

*"…well, the thing is you pick up a lot of it during shadowing and you kind of, you know, work with the resettlement workers and stuff but there isn't a point where you sit down and talk about how you mentor someone or what it involves…." (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

Therefore, volunteers are not trained on how or why they should build relationships with service-users and the only time relationships are mentioned is in relation to creating boundaries with service-users.  As we can see, the significance of a mentoring relationship is not mentioned in the three-day 'induction-training', nor is it addressed in the 'practical-training'.  The concern with 'shadowing' is that if staff-members do not have the training or recognition of the significance of professional relationships, then volunteers cannot effectively support desistance through mentoring. Naturally by working with someone some form of relationship will develop; however, if it is not desistance-focused then it is unlikely to be significant to the service-user to support desistance. Also, there is evidence to suggest that the relationships which are created between practitioners and service-users could be undermined by certain practices in place.

RSE are a 'through-the-gate' service and the importance of this has been mentioned elsewhere in this review, however the crux is that it is important because continuity of contact allows a relationship of trust to be built before release with a support-worker and thus, encourages engagement and sustainment of motivation in the community (Burnett, 2004).  However, at RSE, the person who sees the service-user while in custody is often not the same person who works with them in the community:

*"…a resettlement worker who is a staff member assesses their needs in prison…and then they are matched up with a volunteer worker who generally supports them in the community so the majority of them meet them in the community.." (Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

*"..I say to everyone that if they want support once they're released then they will have the opportunity to have a volunteer to support them.  I won't be their erm, their main support worker once they're in the community…" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

*"…we aim to work with guys when there's three months left of their sentence but it's not always the case when we get referrals so we can see someone maybe just a few weeks before*

*their release and it's well known to see someone like last minute of the day or two before*

*release…it's usually a resettlement worker who sees them in prison and then on release they're*

*matched with a volunteer" (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

This break in continuity was confirmed by volunteers when they were asked if they met their current
service-users in prison:

*"…they [resettlement workers] usually see them [service users] maybe like a couple of times*

*before they're out. I didn't meet my service user in prison though.." (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

*"No, no, I didn't meet him in prison" (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

Therefore, the relationship between service-user and support-worker is broken once service-users
are in the community and thus service-users have to begin the process of building relationships,
particularly building trust, with another person. This could also potentially reduce the possibility of
service-users engaging on release. Trust between practitioners and service-users is significant as a
reciprocation of trust can enable service-users to maintain a pro-social identity by feeling that
someone believes in them and it has been found that trust has a significant impact on those who
desist from crime (Farrall & Calverley, 2006). However, within the dataset there was evidence of
elements of distrust between staff and service-users by implying that service-users need to be
'checked-up' on:

*"…I mean it depends on the service user as **some of them can be a little bit dishonest and be***

***saying different things to different people and if you're having regular contact with those***

***other support workers then you're more likely to erm, pick up on those kinds of things**…"*

*(Joe, I:2, Staff).*

Trust, however, is further undermined and potentially jeopardized when it comes to termination of
support.

On paper, RSE have a "three strikes and you're out" policy with regards to terminating service-user
support:

*"…if you look in our paper work then it says three chances depending on what has happened.."*

*(Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

In reality, it was found that service-users were given many chances by staff and volunteers; however,
termination of support is down to the discretion of the support-worker.

*"We treat everyone on an individual basis we really don't generalise…**at the end of the day a lot of the time it's left up to the resettlement worker to make that decision**..it's not unusual like there are a couple of guys on my books who I've had to send one of our letters out to and say, you know, 'well look in the past you know you've subscribed to our service X amount of times and you've never engaged and we've laid out support for you and you've not done any of these things so maybe this is not the right service for you'…" (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

*"..**it's down to the individual resettlement worker, you know,** there are some service users I know of who, erm, ask for help numerous times and then not engage numerous times and there comes a point where we have to say, you know, 'look we can signpost you to other agencies who can help but we won't continue'..you know, **you're trying to assess their erm motivation and how willing they are to match that motivation with action**…" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

This method of termination could put a strain on the relationship between service-user and support-worker as one service user demonstrated:

*"..[support worker] said to me **'it's getting to the stage where I'm giving up on you because I don't know how much more I can do'**….so if I'm still coming down here [RSE],which I hope I am, because I don't just mean coming down here I mean the life here as well…you know, [support worker] said 'you need to get out Scott, you can't just be staying in your flat all the time and drinking you keep letting me down and it's not just me you're letting down, you're letting yourself down'.." (Scott, I:7, SU)*

Therefore, while-ever the threat of support termination is there, a reciprocation of trust between service-users and practitioners is unlikely to be fully realised.  We can also deduce from these findings that the organisation do not fully appreciate the nature of relapses in desistance, as these can be relapses not just in action (or reoffending) but also in behaviour (Maguire & Raynor, 2006). We can see from the above responses that practitioners can terminate support based on practitioners' assessments of service-user motivation.  However, as we have established, RSE neither identify nor support service-user motivations and therefore service-users cannot be expected to engage on that basis.

### *Reintegration, Self-Identity and Identity Change*

There are many aspects of desistance and resettlement which can facilitate and maintain identity change associated with secondary desistance (McNeill et.al, 2012).  Reintegration is one such aspect and the organisation has practices in place which encourage the reintegration of service-users.  The social exclusion that ex-prisoners face makes reintegration difficult and service-users demonstrated

attributes such as a bleak outlook on life, low self-belief and shame, consistent with a 'spoiled identity' (c.f. Goffman, 1963; Maruna, 2001):

"..I believe that I **might** change but it's just a matter of when…I've got an aim in life but **I don't know whether I'll get there..**" (Arthur, I:4, SU).

"Every day is different and every day varies.  Sometimes I think, you know, now that I've come to see you and I think 'yeah I can do it' **but then when I get home and I lock that door behind me, it'll be different**" (Scott, I:7, SU).

"…some people just won't give you a chance, you know, **I'm not positive but it changes from day to day...you know, I'm worrying all the time, it's stressing..**" (Arthur, I:4, SU).

"…everyone there [in the community] knows me for being an alcoholic, you know,…**people avoid me, you know, they distance themselves from me**…it has a knock on effect with my family, you know, **they don't want me, my family hate me**.  Especially my two nieces, **they detest me so you just give up and you treat yourself like that**, like I don't know any better than that so I might as well just carry on and do it [drink]…" (Scott, I:7, SU).

It has been outlined elsewhere the importance of encouraging community acceptance but, most notably, this can be done by showing society that ex-prisoner resettlement is something worth investing in (Maruna, 2006).  RSE have two practices which support reintegration and the activation of social capital through sustaining networks within the community (Maruna, 2006; Farrall, 2004). One of which is encouraging service-users to participate in voluntary work:

"…we look at voluntary work or something like that, we try to focus on that with all service users whether they hope to get into work or not because it's to get them around people who also want to better their lives and want to do something productive" (Joe, I:2, Staff).

"..well, I think we do things like we encourage them [service users] to get involved in volunteering to engage with the local community, things like community centre.  I mean at a very basic level, things like going to the library to start that kind of community engagement where they're actually getting out there and being part of things.." (Reginald, I:6, Staff).

RSE also have a gym club which service-users are encouraged to join:

"…we've got a gym club which we're piloting which is for our service users to take part in but erm, the outcome is, the end goal is that if they attend regularly then we'll buy them a gym pass for six months so they can then continue doing that…I think but also they can go out of the

*closed sessions that we do and again they're with other gym users so they're not just hanging out with RSE" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

However, staff and volunteers did not recognise that these practices promote the acceptance of ex-prisoners to the community:

*"…our motivation isn't for them to get acceptance from society…some erm parts of society will never accept people who have been in prison so I don't think the aim is to be accepted by society." (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

*"…we can't really control what society thinks and I don't think there's anything that we can really do about that" (Susan, I:3, Volunteer).*

Therefore, identity-change as a concept and its facilitation through a 'looking-glass' technique between the service-user and the community was not recognised, indicating that reintegration in relation to desistance was not properly understood. The implementation of these practices could, however, stem from the underlying voluntary-sector ethos of community involvement and the community foundations which the voluntary-sector is built upon.

There were also inconsistent understanding between staff and volunteers as to why service-users' self-perceptions were important in resettlement work.  One staff member demonstrated a clear link between service-user self-perception and labelling:

*"..I'm not sure whether its confidence or self-esteem or whether it's more just how they feel themselves being labelled by family or probation officers erm generally if you believe you're an offender then you offend whereas if you believe you're an ex-offender, and I try to use that term with service users, then hopefully there's some recognition even though it's a subtle difference…" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

However, other staff members saw service-user self-perceptions as important in terms of how they needed to be challenged:

*"…some guys that we work with are very cocky, confident and sometimes its bravado, you know, it's a show and they need that bravado to be stripped back.." (Geoff, I:1, Staff)*

*"…quite often in our case meeting resettlement workers will say 'I've got this person, he thinks it wasn't his fault, he thinks he's going to come out and get back with his girlfriend who he has beaten up' and we know that is not going to work out like that so yeah definitely self-perception is important" (Reginald, I:6, Staff).*

*"..some guys ,when we assess them while they're still in prison will say, you know, they're living a crime-free life and we kind of have to say 'well, you're not even free of the criminal justice system yet so we can't necessarily say that'..and for a lot of people it's getting them to be realistic about that" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

Particularly interesting is the last response, as this could have been a service-user trying to initiate the beginnings of a pro-social identity.  It is unsurprising that the organisation neither fully recognises nor understands the concept of identity change directly in relation to reintegration and desistance as many of their practices, along with their way of working, militates against personal change and thus identity change (Raynor, 2007).  It is suggested that the concept of identity change should be embedded within the organisational framework in order for desistance identities to be facilitated and supported (Burnett & Maruna, 2006).  Service-users' responses indicated that a narrative approach would be helpful to them, particularly in terms of bringing the past and the future together:

*" …I think you need to be reminded daily of what you did before and what you were like before and what you could be getting and where you're going now, you know, stuff like that takes a long time.." (Arthur, I:4, SU).*

For this service user, looking to the past is something which he thought would be helpful.  However, in accordance with traditional resettlement practice (and labelling theories) RSE wish for service-users to move away from their pasts:

*"…the fact that you're saying that you used to do this or that, you know, it's in your past just like lots of other things that you've done in your past.  You don't need to bring that to the forefront" (Geoff, I:1, Staff).*

*"…some recognition saying 'that's in the past and this is your opportunity to move away from that'…" (Joe, I:2, Staff).*

Resettlement seeks to move individuals away from their past in order to make individuals more future-orientated (Prison Reform Trust, 2012).  Also, labelling theory suggests offenders move away from their negative labels and previous deviant behaviours (Becker, 1963).  However, Maruna (2001) suggests that looking to the past can be helpful for service-users in order for them to make sense of their previous behaviours and what has led them to be 'reborn' as the good person they always were underneath. In this case, the past is used in order to provide a narrative to the future (Maruna, 2001):

*"..I suppose maybe it would be better if you could see something that you could be, you know, so you can always try to aim for that because you seem to lose track of that…**it's hard to be able to see yourself, you know, but if you had some goals and be like 'well this is where we are now' and then 'this is where we're going to be' and hopefully we'll end up there, do you know what I mean?...being able to see something further and see what you could achieve from that.**" (Arthur, I:4, SU).*

Interestingly, 'dreams' which had been shattered or not realised were mentioned:

*"..They might have had a dream when they were younger, you know, before they went to prison and then once they've come out they just put that to one side and they just think that it's not possible to achieve that" (Susan, I:3, Volunteer)*

*"…I still think you want, you know everyone's got like a dream or whatever and you still want that or even just to be a standard guy like everyone else, you know, like Joe Bloggs down the road" (Arthur, I:4, SU).*

These 'dreams' could be the intended destination of the desistance journey and, therefore, desistance is not the outcome of short-term goals but of far-reaching ones which enable ex-prisoners to see a 'future-self' so they will take care of their 'present-self' (Farrall & Calverley, 2006; McNeill & Weaver, 2010). Due to the short-term interventions which the organisation addresses and their assessments of immediate environmental factors, however, suggests that service-users may not be encouraged to look to goals which stretch that far:

*"..it's better to make little goals rather than big goals and them getting totally overwhelmed by wanting to achieve that" (Sally, I:5, Volunteer).*

RSE may have neither the time nor resources to continue with a service-user until they reach the 'dream', however, service-users should be encouraged to see a bigger picture in which these short-term goals fit (McNeill & Weaver, 2010).

### *Summary of Findings*

In summary, RSE practice does not accord with desistance research. Evidence throughout this research outlines an organisation which addresses immediate welfare interventions and this was evidenced through the organisation's assumptions about offending behaviour, their methods of measuring success, their assessments of service-users and the training given to staff and volunteers. Therefore, the organisation does not take a multi-factor approach to resettlement and thus cannot support the desistance process. Through a traditional way of working the organisation enables

service-users to 'get back on their feet' but there is no focus towards facilitating and encouraging personal change.

Due to practices which could support desistance being in place, however, it seems that the organisation exhibits a confused identity in terms of the service it provides i.e. the adoption of a mentoring system, offering long-term support to service-users and having the ATB intervention on their assessments.  These practices, however, rather than being utilised to support desistance, were used to support their own way of working.  We saw this evidenced through the significance of mentoring being placed on the capacity which volunteers provide, service-users withdrawing from support once practical welfare needs were met and the incorrect utilisation of the ATB intervention. Ultimately, support is not desistance-focused, as staff and volunteers are not trained to be desistance-focused.  What is clear is that it is not enough to support desistance by simply having desistance-based practices in place; they must be understood in order to be used to support desistance.  These findings are underpinned by a lack of recognition or understanding of desistance in resettlement on an organisational and therefore practitioner level.  This could be a consequence of, or made worse by, the model which the organisation works within and therefore these findings can be considered circular.

Collectively, however, these findings force us to consider whether the implementation of desistance can be supported by voluntary-sector providers due to implications surrounding the theoretical and structural frameworks within which voluntary-sector organisations work.  This will be explored below in the discussion of why desistance may be difficult for voluntary-sector organisations to put into practice.

## *Implications of Desistance in Resettlement*

The above findings force us to consider whether desistance theory is useful for resettlement practice.  In short, desistance theory is difficult to apply as the theoretical and structural frameworks of voluntary-sector organisations do not support the implementation of desistance.

Firstly, desistance is at odds with standard forms (or models) of resettlement practice.  The collective finding that the organisation works explicitly to address criminogenic welfare factors and, therefore takes a mono-faceted approach to resettlement work, is unsurprising.  This is because it fits within a traditional model of resettlement practice.  We know that the majority of resettlement services work to a needs-based model which encompasses both 'opportunity deficit' and 'offender responsibility' sub-models (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007; Raynor, 2004).  We also know that it is mainly voluntary-sector organisations which work within an 'opportunity deficit' model (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007).  In terms of an 'opportunity deficit' sub-model, a desistance way of working requires a different perspective regarding offending behaviour and the areas to address in resettlement (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2007).  However, traditionally, resettlement is primarily concerned with the welfare-needs of offenders and this is evident in the emphasis placed on them for over one hundred years (NEPACS, 2014) and, if we cast our minds back to the literature review, the definitions of resettlement in official discourse, support a service which addresses only environmental welfare needs (HMIPP, 2001; MOJ, 2012).  That is not to say that service-providers should not adapt to new ways of working but it is not difficult to see why many still work with this focus.  Furthermore, despite the introduction of desistance in policy and practice, these definitions remain unchanged and unrevised.

Even if voluntary-sector organisations adopted an 'offender responsibility' model, like statutory services, they would still not fully accord with desistance. While 'offender responsibility' models address the internal processes of ex-prisoners it is still from a deficit viewpoint that something is 'lacking' within the individual (Raynor, 2007).  The strengths-based model, rooted in desistance research, is at odds with this way of working, as it suggests working to individuals' strengths as opposed to behaviour which needs to be avoided (McNeill & Weaver, 2010).  Thus to *fully* encapsulate desistance in resettlement would require an overhaul of the traditional models which most resettlement projects work within.

Due to the magnitude of change this would require, it is unlikely that well-established service-providers will adopt a completely new way of working and, therefore we are left in a position where

two opposing theoretical frameworks must be integrated; making step-change and retrofitting desistance into resettlement difficult. This tension is echoed in other areas of resettlement. Earlier in this research we touched upon the Government's reluctance to fully invest in the rehabilitative ideal and thus there is conflict in policy between a rehabilitative and punitive approach to reducing reoffending (Raynor, 2007). There are a number of approaches present in resettlement which militate against one another: risk-based is at odds with rehabilitation-based, needs-based is at odds with strengths-based, evidence-based is at odds with desistance-based and yet we expect organisations to employ approaches that are not in accordance with each other. For example, the probation service is expected to have a risk-based *and* rehabilitative approach to resettlement.

Secondly, desistance may be difficult to apply due to its complexity. We have seen in this research a lack of understanding of desistance on both an organisational and practitioner level. We have also seen that, in some respects, policy which is informed by desistance does not fully comprehend the nature of desistance. In brief, the complexity of desistance theories may hinder its use in practice as it may not be accessible in a clear way to either practitioners or policy-makers. When we talk about desistance we are talking about personal change and any theory which attempts to explain personal change is subjective, individualistic and thus complicated (McNeill et.al, 2012). We cannot expect practitioners to fully understand something which has not been fully explored and understood in theory and research.

In addition, McNeill & Weaver (2010) explain that one of the problems with desistance research is that it is not readily translated into a straightforward model for practice. Furthermore, some suggest that we should not look for a standard framework of desistance in resettlement as this would go against the individualistic nature of desistance and so we should look for a 'spine' of desistance in resettlement practice (McNeill & Weaver, 2010). Having a non-standard form of practice will do little to alleviate confusion in explaining *how* desistance can be implemented. As we have seen, there is confusion in practice despite publications (Clinks, 2013; NOMS, 2010) which aim to aid understanding of desistance in resettlement.

The issues outlined above have implications for the structural frameworks which voluntary-sector organisations work within in terms of project aims, funding, resources and capacity, thus making this research more significant as these are issues faced by all voluntary-sector organisations. Firstly, voluntary-sector organisations are steered by original funders, project aims and outputs measured for funders (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007). In terms of desistance, the voluntary-sector system is flawed and has been criticised for measuring short-term outcomes and goals (see Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007).

However, PbR tends to make organisations more short-termist, output or process driven and yet, the Government expects voluntary-sector providers to meet outcomes that demonstrate desistance which is at odds with any short-term approach, process, aims or outcomes.  In short, voluntary-sector providers are unable to respond to this change unless the environmental structure is changed. Additionally, voluntary-sector providers' flexibility will be compromised as, to access and maintain PbR contracts, voluntary-sector organisations will be forced to meet the Government's outcomes as opposed to their own (Hucklesby & Worrall, 2007).

Also, the training required for practitioners has implications for funding.  McNeill et. al (2012) explain that to support desistance, those who work with ex-prisoners must be counsellors who can develop and deploy motivation, they must be educators who can develop and deploy human capital and they must be advocates who develop and deploy social capital.  This level of expertise would require training and training is expensive.  Thus, redirected funding for specific training programs would be required.

Furthermore, due to the long-term nature of desistance, long-term support for ex-prisoners is required (McNeill et.al, 2012) yet voluntary-sector providers may not have the resources or the capacity to stay with ex-prisoners until the end of their desistance journeys.  This has further implications for measuring desistance.  Due to its complexity, desistance is difficult to measure and requires both empirical and theoretical measurements (McNeill et.al, 2012).  Not only would this require long-term support to actually measure desistance as mentioned above but, a combination of measurement methods could be too expensive for voluntary-sector providers to consider. Ultimately, the implementation of desistance would, therefore, require a change in both theoretical frameworks and structural ways of working and this would require the backing of organisational policy.  However, it is debatable whether organisational policy would fully back the implementation of desistance due to the magnitude of change it would require.

Therefore, voluntary-sector providers are at a disadvantage before they have placed a bid on a Payment by Results contract. Statutory services may fair better at implementing desistance as they do not face the scale of problems or change that the voluntary-sector does.  Statutory services have steady funding which means practitioners are trained and thus have a better chance of understanding desistance and how to implement it effectively.  Furthermore, the theoretical framework of statutory services is more in accordance with desistance.  Statutory services already address some desistance-factors by addressing internal processes (Raynor, 2007) and therefore an overhaul of ways of working would not be required; making step-change easier.

Consequently, voluntary-sector providers may be more likely to miss out on PbR contracts simply because they do not have the means to deliver the outcomes which the Government expects of them. The Government must take into account these issues if, as they so often claim (Home Office, 2003; MOJ, 2013), wish for the voluntary-sector to become major providers of resettlement services.

### *Summary*

In summary, perhaps desistance theory is not practical or useful to voluntary-sector providers and this deduction is not solely applicable to the case study used for this research as the issues outlined above affect all providers within the voluntary sector. We have seen that the voluntary-sector may not have the means to respond to the changes which the Government expect of them due to issues surrounding, not only structural and environmental frameworks which voluntary sector providers work within, but also their theoretical framework which is at odds with any desistance way of working. Thus, they may not be able to respond to the increasingly territorial environment of resettlement services. This is particularly concerning given the current political climate of PbR schemes, Social Impact Bonds and the privatisation of resettlement services. Therefore, in the next section we will explore desistance-focused recommendations for practice.

Despite the implications mentioned above, it would be unhelpful to focus on things which cannot be changed. Thus, we must look past these implications to identify ways in which voluntary-sector providers can practically support desistance in a way which will alleviate structural and theoretical issues and to support the implementation of practices which will, at least, see desistance at the centre of resettlement work.

*Mentoring*

There are parts of RSE's existing practices which can accommodate desistance-focused work and thus allow, to some extent, a step-change. The mentoring service the organisation offers could ensure that desistance is supported intrinsically within the organisation, as both human and social capital can be activated within the context of a relationship (Farrall, 2004).

To do this the organisation must see the 'relationship' as the fundamental reason for providing mentors and not just for extra staff capacity. However, this would mean desistance-focused training for volunteers and an understanding of 'looking-glass' techniques and how they can activate personal change. For example, external motivational interviewing training and counselling training could be made mandatory for all volunteers and staff. RSE's current mandatory training is done internally and therefore if one member of staff had an appreciative knowledge of desistance they would be able to explain the importance and understandings of desistance to 'would-be' mentors.

To have all volunteers trained at a desistance-focused level would mean that the organisation would have to choose the quality over the quantity of staff and volunteers as it would be too expensive to train volunteers in this way only for them to leave a few months later. This could be alleviated slightly by having tiers of volunteers. Established and experienced volunteers (who have proven their commitment to the project) could become desistance mentors and thus be provided with the training which this requires. Volunteers recruited, who have limited time but can provide extra staff capacity, could be 'support' volunteers who work with desistance mentors and staff to provide extra support for service-users. It would be naïve to assume that all service-users who engage in support *want* to change and therefore, 'support' volunteers could also work solely with service-users who need immediate advice and support for welfare interventions. Many voluntary-sector organisations adopt mentoring systems and this way of working could be utilised on a generalizable scale to support desistance in practice.

*Improved Utilisation of the Assessment Tool, Action Plan and Database*

If there is no desistance-focus in the assessment of service-users there will be no desistance-focus in the support they receive. Therefore, the assessment tool must be utilised to address both immediate needs and desistance readiness to ensure that desistance is incorporated from the start of support. RSE can do this through better use of their assessment tool. Firstly, assessments should be concerned with exploring motivations for change and how the service can support these as well as assessing immediate priority interventions. This means the assessment tool must be evenly used.

Secondly, ATB must be fully addressed and this could be done by not treating ATB the same as the other interventions by making it central to assessments and support. RSE may not have the resources to address ATB intrinsically, although an element of restorative justice and mediation schemes could be something to think about in the future. Thus, emphasis must be placed on addressing service-user ATB externally via other agencies. Therefore, assessments should seek to find out where, on the spectrum, service-users are in terms of addressing ATB and, if a service-user is subject to probation, liaising with their probation-officer could facilitate this as it is traditionally probation which provides these types of courses. In the event that a service-user is not subject to probation or, ATB is not being addressed by probation, then the organisation should refer to third party organisations.

To prevent confusion, RSE could rename a 'section' of their assessment as 'personal change'. They could even make it central to the assessment. 'Personal change' could encompass service-user reasons and motivations for change as well as how their attitudes, thinking and behaviours will be addressed. In the event that mentors are desistance-trained, then ATB could be addressed intrinsically through them. However, there should still be a discussion based around accessing cognitive skills workshops and/or restorative justice and mediation schemes.

Also, the organisation should be more focused towards the family and relationships intervention for those who see their family as significant. This could be done by actively encouraging service-users' families to be involved in the service-user's resettlement. Practitioners could routinely invite family members to attend appointments with service-users, and practitioners could be encouraged to have direct contact with service-users' families and liaising with them as routine practice. Also, reconciliation between families can be supported by practitioners acting as an advocate for the service-user. Furthermore, for those who wish to reconcile with families, parenting-courses or referring service-users to third party organisations which can assist with building positive relationships could be an option.

Staff-members and volunteers would need an understanding of desistance to appreciate the place of personal change in resettlement and, therefore desistance-focused training on how to assess service-users would be required.  This is not solely for the benefit of staff and volunteers but so service-users can be supported to understand personal change.  Weaver & McNeill (2007) explain that service-users are unlikely to recognise their reasons for change *as* reasons for change and service-users must be supported and encouraged to see them as such.  Thus, not only must practitioners be able to understand desistance to support desistance, but also so that service-users can support their own desistance.

Also, the action-plan could be used to support understanding and to keep a desistance-focus.  An altered action plan which sees long-term future goals or a 'dream' at the centre of the action-plan can aid both practitioners and service-users to see a bigger picture in which short-term goals and interventions fit.  Therefore, emphasis is placed on how smaller short-term goals can lead service-users to their ultimate goal.  (Identifying long-term goals and reasons for change can also be supported by focus groups as mentioned below).

To work in tandem with assessments, the database could be altered to ensure that practitioners remain desistance-focused in their work.  Staff and volunteers are prompted to update service-user information and record notes on every meeting with a service-user.  They are also required to input information from the assessment onto the database.  A new section, whereby practitioners input the factors which service-users have identified as important for them to change, could be added to the database making it an integral aspect of support.  Therefore, the assessment, database and action plan would support a service which addresses both environmental and internal factors with a view towards the service-user achieving personal change.

*Focus Groups*

Service-user focus groups could be run once a week where service-users are able to meet and share their experiences about resettlement and giving up crime. Led by a staff-member and by using methods similar to AA, focus groups would provide a way for service-users to tell their own stories and make sense of how they came to be in the position they are in today and thus support the creation of a desistance narrative (Maruna, 2001).  This would also help service-users (and therefore, the organisation) identify what is meaningful to service-users as well as enabling service-users to make long-term goals or 'dreams' (Maruna, 2001).

*Measuring Desistance*

Despite debate about whether we are aiming at the right target by using reducing-reoffending as a measurement, this is what must be done in order for projects to be paid through PbR (McNeill et al, 2012; MOJ, 2013). To help organisations measure desistance we could look to a range of techniques, which, when put together may provide an indicator as to whether someone is desisting or has desisted.

1. Measuring social correlates of desistance- Measuring social-correlates of desistance can provide a piece in the 'desistance measurement' puzzle. RSE already do this by recording the obtainment of environmental objectives. We must remember that social-correlates are still apart of desistance and thus should still be measured as short-term outputs.

2. Recording consistent active engagement – how long a service-user has been engaged with support could evidence their commitment to a crime-free life. For example, those who have been engaged with the project over six months or twelve months are likely to be on the desistance journey. Also, frequency of relapses in action and behaviour could be recorded, as well as how many service-users still engage with the project after relapses.

3. Service User Questionnaires- Questionnaires could be given to service-users to assess changes in attitudes and self-perception. This could allow the organisation to present data which shows a gradual shift in service-users' attitudes and thinking towards positive change.

4. Imprisonment rates- Imprisonment rates could be used to compliment the above measures but they must be seen as just that and not seen as a measurement of reducing reoffending or reconviction in their own right. Also, if the organisation is able to access data on wider convictions i.e. community orders etc., these could be used to measure reconviction.

Therefore, providing four sets of measurements would provide a holistic indicator as to whether service-users are desisting. The trouble with desistance is that it is difficult to establish whether someone has truly desisted (Maruna, 1999). Perhaps then, organisations should aim to record whether someone is likely to be desisting as opposed to whether they have *actually* desisted.

**Summary**

In summary, while a desistance way of working is difficult to implement in the voluntary sector, making existing practices desistance-focused could aid this process. However, these recommendations are not immune to the issues outlined in the previous section. In order to implement and maintain these recommendations changes in funding, capacity and ways of working

would still be required, however minimal. In the following section, the limitations of this study, the fieldwork process and the research experience of the researcher will be discussed.

# Reflections on Fieldwork

It was originally planned that this research would be approached from a service-user perspective to explore whether identity change could be regarded as an overarching framework for resettlement and desistance work.  This could not be done due to low participant response rates.  Despite the use of incentives, there was a low-response rate from all staff, volunteers and service-users and a detailed insight into service-user experiences of resettlement was not possible due to only two service-users participating.  Also, only three out of six paid staff-members participated and only two out of a possible twenty-three volunteers.  Due to the low-sample, the researcher took due concern to not over-interpret the data through a process of reading and re-reading transcripts, looking back through the data and rooting the findings in the data.

However, because of the low-sample the representativeness of the data was compromised and avenues of exploration which were originally planned could not be analysed.  For this reason, the data was approached from an organisational perspective.  Approaching the data in this way means the findings are generalised and issues were able to be explored which are applicable to the voluntary-sector as a whole.  Also, by heavily exploring the relationship between resettlement practice and desistance, the current political-context of resettlement and changes in policy could be discussed, which makes this research timely.  Therefore, this research could provide a foundation for future research into how, or if, desistance is implemented and utilised effectively in resettlement practice.

## *Fieldwork Experience*

The researcher had a unique position in this research as she had a dual status as both an 'insider' and an 'outsider' (Sherif, 2001).  She had an 'insider' status as she had worked for the resettlement project and yet an 'outsider' status as she was there to conduct objective research.  Sherif (2001) describes the insider/outsider status as a negotiation of how the researcher perceives themselves and how others perceive them.  In terms of how the researcher perceived herself she found objectivity fairly easy and felt that the findings of the research were fair and balanced.  The majority of researchers find that their 'insider' status can be problematic when undertaking fieldwork (Chavez, 2008; Harris, 1997; Reeves, 2010; Reiner, 2000; Sherif, 2001).  However, the researcher found that being an 'insider' was problematic during analysis. Due to the researcher knowing about the project and their practices she automatically made linkages within the data.  Thus, the researcher had to be extra careful to root the findings in the data to ensure that her own knowledge about the project did not 'leak' into the findings or analysis.

In terms of how others perceived her, the researcher felt that her 'insider' status was both a help and hindrance.  As an 'insider', the researcher knew the primary gatekeeper of the project and due to the already established rapport, found that facilitating and negotiating access was fairly easy. Reeves (2010) similarly found that having a personal contact to the research site meant that negotiation of access was easier due to bypassing beauraucracies and formal meetings.

However, the 'insider' status of the researcher meant that lines were blurred for service-users. Service-users were made aware on the information and contact sheet that the researcher had worked as a resettlement worker (mainly in the hopes of encouraging participation).  They were also notified that the researcher was no longer a resettlement worker and was conducting research. However, a service-user who participated in the research contacted the researcher numerous times, on the contact mobile phone number, regarding issues of support and getting in touch with their own resettlement workers.

In terms of how the organisation perceived the researcher, the researcher entered this process as an 'insider' and a former employee.  However, as the researcher increasingly became perceived as an 'outsider', tensions became apparent.  The project was not necessarily suspicious of the research but they were wary about how the findings would be presented.  The researcher was emailed throughout and after data-collection asking for clues as to how the findings would be presented. This made the researcher feel uncomfortable as, while she felt an obvious attachment to her former employers, she did not, at the time, feel able to explain the findings in a way which did not portray the service in a negative light.

There were also some constraints and barriers to access during the fieldwork.  The researcher was asked to be conscious of the projects time and resources which would be taken up by the research – understandable given the voluntary nature of the project.  However, formal gatekeepers insisted that the interviews were kept to a maximum of 30 minutes (although on one occasion, the interview went slightly over due to not realising the progression of time).  This often meant that the researcher could not explore participant responses as the interview schedule had to be rigidly stuck to in order to collect the primary data.  Also, the room which the project offered for interviews was primarily for the use of service-user and staff appointments.  Therefore, the room was rarely available for a substantial period of time and, on occasion, interviews had to be adjourned so the room could be used.

In short, the researcher felt, to an extent, constrained and due to the insistence of 'keeping things quick' by gatekeepers, the researcher often felt 'in the way'. The intention of the researcher (once the low service-user sample size became apparent) was to dismiss the criterion sample and widen the sample pool with the intention of reaching out to a second sample of service-users. However, the feeling of being 'in the way' was one of the reasons why the researcher did not pursue this in order to maintain access and good rapport with organisational gatekeepers. Another reason the second sample was not pursued was for reasons of time.

Overall, the researcher felt that while there were constraints on the research and, on occasion, tensions surrounding maintaining access, the research experience had been a positive one which provided the researcher valuable experience for future research. Also, the issues mentioned above surrounding advantages and disadvantages of an 'insider'/'outsider' status usually occur in ethnographic fieldwork and studies (Chavez, 2008; Reeves, 2010). However, as demonstrated here, these issues are also present in non-ethnographic studies and in any type of research which involves the researcher being in a setting where they are perceived as both an 'insider' and an 'outsider'.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, voluntary-sector practice did not accord with desistance research. That is not to say that RSE is a failing service in relation to the service which it provides for its service-users and this research has not been concerned with criticising or evaluating the overall effectiveness of the project. However, the service which they provide is not in accordance with desistance research.

While the organisation had some desistance-based practices in place they were not utilised to support desistance and, due to having practices in place which *could* support desistance, it would seem that the organisation acquired a confused identity. Also, the organisation did not measure desistance or reducing reoffending. Ultimately, the organisation did not support desistance as staff and volunteers were not trained to do so. This resulted in a lack of understanding of desistance in resettlement work on both an organisational and practitioner level, which could be either a consequence of, or made worse by, the model which it works within which does not recognise or appreciate a multi-causal explanation of offending or personal change (Maguire & Raynor, 2006; Maruna & LeBel, 2002). Thus, if desistance is not recognised or understood at an organisational level it will not filter down into practitioner training and practice.

However, there are major difficulties for the voluntary-sector in implementing desistance. These difficulties revolve around the voluntary-sectors theoretical and structural frameworks which do not support the implementation of desistance. Also, official discourse and action has to share some portion of responsibility in recognising that their frameworks of PbR and measuring desistance outcomes do not appreciate the nature of desistance. Thus, they must recognise that their expectations of voluntary-sector providers in terms of delivering desistance outcomes make it difficult for voluntary-sector providers to respond to the change which this requires. These difficulties and the implications of them in the current political context of resettlement should be a topic for further research.

Despite the implications, retrofitting desistance and supporting desistance on an organisational level is difficult but not impossible. Thus, efforts must be made to identify methods for the voluntary-sector to support the implementation of desistance in ways which are practical and achievable. This should also be an area for further research as we have only briefly touched upon a few ways of doing this.

Voluntary-sector providers can, of course, opt out of PbR schemes. However, it is then unlikely that they will be able to compete with services which encourage desistance through resettlement. If they opt in, then they will be forced to meet expected Government outcomes and come to terms

with the issues we have touched upon in this research.  Therefore, voluntary-sector providers are at a crossroads as to whether they will or c*an* realistically become contenders in an increasingly competitive environment.

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