



This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights and duplication or sale of all or part is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for research, private study, criticism/review or educational purposes. Electronic or print copies are for your own personal, non-commercial use and shall not be passed to any other individual. No quotation may be published without proper acknowledgement. For any other use, or to quote extensively from the work, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder/s.



**Peer support and seeking help in prison:  
a study of the Listener scheme in four prisons in England**

Michelle Jaffe

Thesis submitted for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology

December 2012

Keele University



## **Abstract**

Samaritans volunteers have been visiting prisons since 1991 to select, train and support prisoners to provide confidential emotional support to other prisoners. Despite its existence for approximately two decades, the Listener scheme has received very little research attention other than a few scattered examples of in-house or small scale reviews (for example Davies, 1994; Richman, 2004; Snow & Biggar, 2006; The Samaritans, 2001a; 2001b). This paucity is also reflected in the current lack of knowledge about peer mentoring and support more widely, despite the significant government attention it has received. This thesis explores and analyses the operation of the Listener peer support scheme in four prisons in England. It investigates how prisoners used (or did not use) Listener support in their patterns of coping and help-seeking in prison, how the Listener scheme was perceived and used by prisoners, Listeners and prison staff, and how Listeners described their experiences of conducting their voluntary work in prison. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted, including a survey of prisoners (n=331), and interviews with prisoners (n=14), Listeners (n=16), and prison staff (n=12). This thesis contends that the prison environment shapes and influences help-seeking by prisoners and the operation of peer support schemes in important ways. It is asserted that help-seeking by prisoners is ‘strategic’, that there is a need to recognise the importance of the factors that drive help-seeking in prison, and the impact this has on the spectrum of help-seeking activity that prisoners exhibit. Furthermore, this thesis examines the dilemmas and contradictions that arise, when prisoners attempt to engage as citizens by volunteering and helping their peers, with whom they share the same pains of imprisonment and experience of subordination.



## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to Samaritans. I am so grateful to Samaritans' General Office for sponsoring and supporting both me and the research. In particular I would like to thank Dr Stephanie Stace, Maria Foster, Jane van Zyl, Pam Blackwood and Joe Ferns. Thank you to Samaritans of Stoke and Newcastle for inspiring me to conduct this research. It was the sheer dedication and enthusiasm of the volunteers (both on the 'outside' and the 'inside') that led me to develop such an interest and passion for work related to supporting prisoners. Thanks go to Ruth Acty who motivated me to look at the work of Samaritan-trained Listeners more closely, and facilitated a number of prison visits during my time as an undergraduate and master's student. I will always remember her kindness and the insight she gave me to the closed world of the prison. Kathy Biggar, a remarkable figure responsible for the introduction of the Listener scheme in prisons, offered much valued information, advice and support throughout the course of the research for which I am extremely grateful.

I am thankful for the guidance from my lead supervisor, Mary Corcoran, who encouraged me to think outside the box, challenged my thoughts, and persistently pushed and stretched me beyond what I thought I was capable of. Not only that, but her unfaltering moral support, in the face of what felt like insurmountable stonewalls, will never be forgotten. I am thankful to Susanne Karstedt for teaching me so much about research (especially quantitative research), for encouraging me to apply to do a PhD, and for being a source of inspiration, guidance and support not only for the three years she was my supervisor, but in the years that followed after her departure from Keele. Her words of encouragement and faith in me gave me the impetus I needed to persevere. I am grateful to Julius Sim for becoming my second supervisor after



Susanne's departure, whose grounded and constructive advice was much appreciated during the write-up phase. I would also like to thank the Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice for providing me with a three year scholarship for my tuition fees and for providing me with an opportunity to do a PhD.

To my amazing family, friends, and fiancé, there is no doubt about it, I simply could not have done this without you. To my Mum, Step-Dad, Dad, Nan and Grandad Jaffe, and Granny and Grandad Tyler – thank you for your belief in me and all the support and encouragement throughout all of my studies. I hope I make you all proud. Loving thanks go especially to my Mum who has been a steadfast source of emotional, practical and financial support, and has gone through all the highs and lows alongside me. A big shout out goes to all of my friends especially Alison Youngs, Amy, Tim and Naomi Rodgers, Bev and Bernard Rushton, Louise, Nigel and Chelsea Cross, Mo Eyres, Sharon Eardley, Clare Giffiths, Julie Trebilcock, Marie Lewis, and Claire Branson. Thank you for keeping my feet on the ground, and being a source of smiles and laughter. To my wonderful fiancé Peter Bellham, I am so happy to have come out of the grey and to have you back in my life at this important time. Thank you for being you, and for putting up with me being me.

Last but most definitely not least, I am forever indebted to all of the prisoners and prison staff who kindly took part in, and facilitated this project. It never ceased to amaze me how willing everyone was to take part in the research and talk to me about their lives and work in such a closed, painful and challenging world. I feel certain that this experience will always inspire me to work in this field, and to help people to be heard.



# Contents

List of tables . . . . .	ix
List of figures . . . . .	xii
List of acronyms . . . . .	xiii
 <b>Chapter 1 – An introduction to peer support and seeking help in prison . . . . .</b>	 <b>1</b>
 <b>PART 1: BACKGROUND . . . . .</b>	 <b>8</b>
 <b>Chapter 2 – Public policy, the voluntary sector and peer support in prison . . . . .</b>	 <b>9</b>
2.1 The relationship between the government and the voluntary sector . . . . .	11
2.1.1 New Labour, crime and communities . . . . .	11
2.1.2 The state and the ‘penal voluntary sector’ . . . . .	14
2.2 Dilemmas of the mixed economy of service provision . . . . .	18
2.3 Peer support, mentoring and volunteering by prisoners . . . . .	27
2.4 Conclusion . . . . .	32
 <b>Chapter 3 – ‘Reaching out’ and ‘breaking in’: the evolution of the Listener scheme in prisons . . . . .</b>	 <b>34</b>
3.1 ‘Reaching out’ and ‘breaking in’ . . . . .	34
3.1.1 Samaritans and prison outreach work . . . . .	35
3.1.2 Developing and rolling out Listener schemes . . . . .	40
3.2 Developing the partnership . . . . .	43
3.3 Research and the Listener scheme . . . . .	49
3.4 Conclusion . . . . .	52
 <b>Chapter 4 – Help-seeking, peer support and volunteering in the prison ‘community’ . . . . .</b>	 <b>54</b>
4.1 The prison ‘community’ . . . . .	55



4.2 Survival in prison .....	62
4.2.1 Survival .....	63
4.2.2 Coping with imprisonment .....	71
4.3 Seeking help in prison .....	74
4.3.1 Support in prison .....	75
4.3.2 Help-seeking by prisoners .....	84
4.4 Volunteering by prisoners .....	91
4.4.1 Neo-liberal strategies of responsibilisation .....	92
4.4.2 The effects of volunteering on the (prisoner) volunteer .....	97
4.5 Conclusion .....	103

## **Chapter 5 – ‘Getting in’, ‘getting along’ and ‘making sense’: methodology, clearance and analysis ..... 105**

5.1 The methodological approach: adopting quantitative and qualitative methods .....	106
5.1.1 Strategic selection of prisons .....	108
5.1.2 Survey of prisoners .....	110
5.1.3 Interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff .....	115
5.2 ‘Getting in’: clearance and research governance .....	118
5.2.1 ‘Going the distance’: obtaining NRC clearance .....	118
5.2.2 Stonewalling? Experiences of research governance bodies .....	125
5.3 ‘Getting along’: the ‘messy realities’ of prison fieldwork and ethical issues .....	129
5.4 Making sense: quantitative and qualitative data analysis .....	138
5.4.1 Reflexivity .....	138
5.4.2 Quantitative data analysis .....	142
5.4.3 Qualitative data analysis .....	143
5.5 Conclusion .....	145

## **PART 2: HELP-SEEKING IN PRISON ..... 146**

### **Chapter 6 – Seeking help in prison ..... 147**

6.1 Contact with the ‘outside’ .....	150
6.2 Types of problems and sources of support .....	159
6.3 Intentions to seek help from ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources of support .....	171
6.3.1 Potential predictors of help-seeking intentions .....	172
6.3.2 Intentions to seek help from ‘outside’ sources of support .....	180



6.3.3 Intentions to seek help from prison staff . . . . .	183
6.3.4 Intentions to seek help from prisoners . . . . .	190
6.4 Conclusion . . . . .	196
 <b>Chapter 7 – Seeking help from Listeners and experiences of Listener support . . . .</b>	<b>198</b>
7.1 What prisoners know and think about Listeners . . . . .	199
7.1.1 What prisoners know about Listeners and how they find out about them . .	200
7.1.2 Positive and negative perceptions of Listeners . . . . .	205
7.2 Intentions to seek help from Listeners . . . . .	211
7.3 Actual help-seeking from Listeners . . . . .	220
7.3.1 Seeking help from Listeners . . . . .	220
7.3.2 Patterns of usage of Listeners . . . . .	233
7.4 Willingness to become a Listener . . . . .	239
7.5 Experiences of ‘being listened to’ by Listeners . . . . .	244
7.5.1 ‘Tipping points’ and ‘catharsis’ . . . . .	245
7.5.2 Peer empathy and understanding . . . . .	251
7.6 Conclusion . . . . .	256
 <b>PART 3: LISTENERS IN PRISON . . . . .</b>	<b>258</b>
 <b>Chapter 8 – Being a Listener and doing Listener work . . . . .</b>	<b>259</b>
8.1 Becoming and being a Listener . . . . .	260
8.1.1 Motivations to volunteer as a Listener . . . . .	260
8.1.2 Learning to listen: the selection and training of Listeners . . . . .	266
8.1.3 Being a Listener: volunteering as ‘doing time’ . . . . .	270
8.2 Doing Listener work . . . . .	276
8.2.1 Supporting prisoners and maintaining confidentiality . . . . .	278
8.2.2 The boundaries of Listener support . . . . .	284
8.2.3 Dilemmas of doing Listener work: dual roles . . . . .	292
8.2.4 Tension and conflict with prison staff . . . . .	300
8.3 Conclusion . . . . .	305
 <b>Chapter 9 – Gatekeepers: prison staff and the Listener scheme . . . . .</b>	<b>307</b>
9.1 Prison staff and prison work . . . . .	308
9.2 The ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners . . . . .	312



9.2.1 ‘Listener status’ versus ‘prisoner status’ . . . . .	313
9.2.2 Confidentiality and signposting . . . . .	322
9.3 The ‘value’ of Listeners: time . . . . .	326
9.4 Staff responses to help-seeking . . . . .	334
9.5 Conclusion . . . . .	342
<b>Chapter 10 – Peer support and seeking help in the prison environment . . . . .</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>References . . . . .</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Appendix – Chapter 5 (A5) . . . . .</b>	<b>420</b>
A5.1 Link between the research questions and the quantitative and qualitative data . . . .	421
A5.2 Questionnaires for prisoners . . . . .	422
A5.3 Semi-structured interview schedules for interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff . . . . .	488
A5.4 Letter from the NRC 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2008 . . . . .	491
A5.5 Letter from the NRC 5 <sup>th</sup> August 2009 . . . . .	494
A5.6 Response to the NRC 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2009 . . . . .	496
A5.7 Responses made to the points raised by SCOP 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2009 . . . . .	502
A5.8 Information sheets and consent forms . . . . .	505
<b>Appendix – Chapter 6 (A6) . . . . .</b>	<b>515</b>
A6.1 Contact intensity with the ‘outside’ scale . . . . .	516
A6.2 Contact with the ‘outside’ and individual/career variables . . . . .	517
A6.3 Levels of self-reported help-seeking intentions scale . . . . .	522
A6.4 Types of problems, help-seeking preferences and individual/career variables . . . . .	523
A6.5 Intentions to seek help from people on the ‘outside’ scale . . . . .	529
A6.6 Intentions to seek help from prison staff scale . . . . .	530
A6.7 Intentions to seek help from prisoners scale . . . . .	531
A6.8 Confidence and mastery . . . . .	532
A6.9 Prisoner proactivity scale . . . . .	534
A6.10 Personal relationships with officers . . . . .	535
A6.11 Personal relationships with prisoners . . . . .	538
A6.12 Perceptions of prisoner-officer social relations . . . . .	541
A6.13 Perceptions of prisoner social relations . . . . .	542



<b>Appendix – Chapter 7 (A7) .....</b>	<b>544</b>
<b>A7.1 Sources of knowledge about Listeners and individual/career variables .....</b>	<b>545</b>
<b>A7.2 Prisoners' ideas about the role of the Listeners and individual/career variables ...</b>	<b>549</b>
<b>A7.3 Analysis of views towards Listeners in each prison .....</b>	<b>553</b>
<b>A7.4 Positive and negative perceptions of Listeners scales .....</b>	<b>554</b>
<b>A7.5 Intentions to seek help from Listeners for different problems and individual/career variables .....</b>	<b>556</b>
<b>A7.6 Intentions to seek help from Listeners scale .....</b>	<b>561</b>
<b>A7.7 Relationships with wing officers .....</b>	<b>562</b>



## List of tables

Table 5.1 – Characteristics of the four prisons visited . . . . .	110
Table 5.2 – Demographic characteristics of the prisoner survey sample . . . . .	114
Table 6.1 – Types of contact with people on the outside . . . . .	151
Table 6.2 – Help-seeking intentions: types of problems and sources of support . . . . .	161
Table 6.3 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from ‘outside’ sources of support . . . . .	181
Table 6.4 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from prison officers or staff . . .	184
Table 6.5 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from prisoners . . . . .	191
Table 7.1 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners . . . . .	203
Table 7.2 – Positive and negative perceptions of Listeners . . . . .	207
Table 7.3 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from Listeners . . . . .	216
Table 7.4 – Prisoners’ reasons for not talking to Listeners . . . . .	221
Table 7.5 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners of prisoners who have not talked to them . . . . .	222
Table 7.6 – Help-seeking intentions of prisoners who have not talked to Listeners . . . .	223
Table 7.7 – Intentions to seek help from ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources and use of Listeners . . . . .	224
Table 7.8 – Multivariate models: actual help-seeking from Listeners . . . . .	228
Table 7.9 – When prisoners talked to Listeners . . . . .	234
Table 7.10 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and problems taken to Listeners . . .	235
Table 7.11 – Feelings after talking to Listeners . . . . .	237
Table 7.12 – Multivariate models: willingness to become a Listener . . . . .	241
Table – A5.1 – The linkages between the research questions and the data generated by quantitative and qualitative methods . . . . .	421



Table A6.1 – Descriptive statistics for the contact intensity with the outside scale . . . . .	516
Table A6.2 – Contact with the outside and age . . . . .	517
Table A6.3 – Contact with the outside and gender . . . . .	518
Table A6.4 – Contact with the outside and first language . . . . .	518
Table A6.5 – Contact with the outside and ethnicity . . . . .	519
Table A6.6 – Contact with the outside and country of birth . . . . .	520
Table A6.7 – Contact with the outside and prior imprisonment . . . . .	520
Table A6.8 – Contact with the outside and sentencing status . . . . .	521
Table A6.9 – Descriptive statistics for the level of self-reported help-seeking intentions scale . . . . .	522
Table A6.10 – Help-seeking intentions and age . . . . .	523
Table A6.11 – Help-seeking intentions and gender . . . . .	524
Table A6.12 – Help-seeking intentions and first language . . . . .	525
Table A6.13 – Help-seeking intentions and country of birth . . . . .	526
Table A6.14 – Help-seeking intentions and prior imprisonment . . . . .	527
Table A6.15 – Help-seeking intentions and sentencing status . . . . .	528
Table A6.16 – Descriptive statistics for the intentions to seek help from people on the outside scale . . . . .	529
Table A6.17 – Descriptive statistics for the intentions to seek help from prison officers or staff scale . . . . .	530
Table A6.18 – Descriptive statistics for intentions to seek help from prisoners scale . . .	531
Table A6.19 – Correlates of help-seeking: confidence and mastery . . . . .	533
Table A6.20 – Descriptive statistics for the prisoner proactivity scale . . . . .	534
Table A6.21 – Descriptive statistics for the personal relationships with officers scale . . .	536
Table A6.22 – Correlates of help-seeking: personal relationships with officers . . . . .	537
Table A6.23 – Descriptive statistics for the positive personal relationships with prisoners scale . . . . .	539
Table A6.24 – Correlates of help-seeking: personal relationships with other prisoners . .	539
Table A6.25 – Descriptive statistics for the prisoner-officer social relations scale . . . . .	541
Table A6.26 – Descriptive statistics for the perceptions of prisoner conflict scale . . . . .	542
Table A6.27 – Descriptive statistics for the perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale . . . .	543
Table A7.1 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and age . . . . .	545
Table A7.2 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and gender . . . . .	545
Table A7.3 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and sentencing status . . . . .	546



Table A7.4 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and ethnicity . . . . .	547
Table A7.5 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and first language . . . . .	548
Table A7.6 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and country of birth . . . . .	548
Table A7.7 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and age . . . . .	549
Table A7.8 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and gender . . . . .	549
Table A7.9 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and prior imprisonment . . . . .	550
Table A7.10 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and sentencing status . . . . .	550
Table A7.11 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and ethnicity . . . . .	551
Table A7.12 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and first language . . . . .	552
Table A7.13 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and country of birth . . . . .	552
Table A7.14 – Views towards Listeners in each prison . . . . .	553
Table A7.15 – Descriptive statistics for the positive perceptions of Listeners scale . . . . .	554
Table A7.16 – Descriptive statistics for the negative perceptions of Listeners scale . . . . .	555
Table A7.17 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and age . . . . .	556
Table A7.18 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and gender . . . . .	556
Table A7.19 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and first language . . . . .	557
Table A7.20 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and ethnicity . . . . .	558
Table A7.21 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and country of birth . . . . .	559
Table A7.22 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and prior imprisonment . . . . .	559
Table A7.23 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and sentencing status . . . . .	560
Table A7.24 – Descriptive statistics for the intentions to seek help from Listeners scale . . . . .	561



## List of figures

Figure 6.1 – Prior imprisonment and contact intensity with the outside . . . . .	158
Figure 6.2 – Levels of help-seeking intentions and gender . . . . .	167
Figure 7.1 – Level of intentions to seek help and actual help-seeking from Listeners . . .	225
Figure A6.1 – Distribution of the contact intensity with people on the outside scale . . . .	516
Figure A6.2 – Distribution of the level of self-reported help-seeking intentions scale . . .	522
Figure A6.3 – Distribution of the intentions to seek help from people on the outside scale . . . . .	529
Figure A6.4 – Distribution of the intentions to seek help from prison staff scale . . . . .	530
Figure A6.5 – Distribution of the intentions to seek help from prisoners scale . . . . .	531
Figure A6.6 – Distribution of the confidence item . . . . .	532
Figure A6.7 – Distribution of the mastery item . . . . .	533
Figure A6.8 – Distribution of the prisoner proactivity scale . . . . .	534
Figure A6.9 – Trust in prison officers . . . . .	535
Figure A6.10 – Distribution of the personal relationships with officers scale . . . . .	536
Figure A6.11 – Trust in other prisoners . . . . .	538
Figure A6.12 – Distribution of the positive personal relationships with prisoners scale . . . . .	539
Figure A6.13 – Distribution of the prisoner-officer social relations scale . . . . .	541
Figure A6.14 – Distribution of the perceptions of prisoner conflict scale . . . . .	542
Figure A6.15 – Distribution of the perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale . . . . .	543
Figure A7.1 – Distribution of the positive perceptions of Listeners scale . . . . .	554
Figure A7.2 – Distribution of the negative perceptions of Listeners scale . . . . .	555
Figure A7.3 – Distribution of the intentions to seek help from Listeners scale . . . . .	561
Figure A7.4 – Distribution of the relationships with wing officers item . . . . .	562



## List of acronyms

ACCT	Assessment Care Custody Teamwork
CI	Circular Instruction
F2052SH	Suicide and self-harm care plan, predecessor to ACCT
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
HMPS	Her Majesty's Prison Service
LIT	Listener Initial Training
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
RPSO	Regional Prison Support Officer
SASU	Suicide Awareness Support Unit
SCG	Safer Custody Group
SCOP	Safer Custody and Offender Policy
SPC	Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
WEMWBS	Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (Tennant et al, 2007)
YOI	Young Offender's Institution



## **Chapter 1**

### **An introduction to peer support and seeking help in prison**

[T]he prison experience for the prisoner in the main consists of enforced idleness and an obligation to conform to behaviour which primarily is aimed at maintaining the smooth operation of the institution. In short, prisons conspire to create model prisoners rather than model citizens. (Erwin James, 'Foreword' to Edgar, Jacobson & Biggar, 2011: 3)

Today, the voluntary sector engages with the criminal justice system in relation to a wide array of concerns, for example: substance misuse, education, victim support, domestic violence, family relationships, gang activity, race equality, and spiritual or faith issues, to mention but a few. Work consists of a variety of forms such as: advice, counselling, advocacy, practical support, mediation, arts/theatre participation, and information. The Third Sector Research Centre (2011) estimates that there are approximately 1743 organisations specifically concerned with offenders, and over 18,000 concerned with offenders among other groups. Whilst undoubtedly government's interest in the voluntary sector has intensified during the last two decades, under both New Labour and Coalition governments, voluntary sector involvement with offenders and prisoners is not a recent development. Historically the voluntary sector has supported the most marginalised groups (Silvestri, 2009; Smith, 1995; Stern, 1994). It is therefore not surprising that voluntary sector organisations have worked in prisons, renowned for imprisoning the most marginalised and vulnerable in society (Bryans, Martin & Walker, 2002: 163), although this engagement has not been straightforward. Whilst some organisations



have lobbied for prison abolition, the reform and resettlement of offenders has continued to be a dominant concern for voluntary efforts during the twentieth century. Voluntary organisations have become a means through which government attempt to legitimise prison regimes and services available to offenders (Bosworth, 2007; Faulkner, 2006). Despite the fact that approximately half of prisoners go on to re-offend when released from prison (Prison Reform Trust, 2011: 26), as James (above) asserts, much of what goes on inside the prison walls is more about maintaining order of the establishment, and less about assisting prisoners with their problems, or helping them to desist from crime. Volunteering has been portrayed as a mechanism of ‘reducing re-offending’ (NOMS South West, 2008: 2; Zimmeck, 2010), which has been a pre-occupation of the government’s ‘National Offender Management Service’ (hereafter referred to as NOMS) since its creation in 2004 (Cheliotis, 2006). The government has promoted and expanded volunteering opportunities for prisoners which are claimed to foster ‘active citizenship’. A particular type of volunteering, ‘peer mentoring’ or ‘peer support’, has received significant attention. ‘Peer mentoring’ is an umbrella term that describes a wide range of relationships, support systems and contexts, but which are grouped together on the basis that their approach involves offenders assisting other offenders by drawing from shared experiences and perspectives. However, the popularity of peer mentoring and peer support with government has not arisen in response to robust evidence supporting claims that it fosters ‘active citizenship’ or achieves ‘reduced re-offending’. Not only that, but it is questionable as to whether voluntary sector and official conceptions of reform are congruent.

Samaritans has been working in prisons for approximately three decades, and leading a peer support scheme known as the ‘Listener scheme’ since 1991. Samaritans provides confidential emotional support across the UK via phone, email, face-to-face and by letter.<sup>1</sup> Whilst Samaritans is advertised as an emotional health charity, it is historically linked to supporting

---

<sup>1</sup> See: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).



the suicidal, and it was this cause that prompted the organisation's creation in 1953.<sup>2</sup> Samaritans volunteers visit prisons to select, train and support prisoners to provide confidential emotional support to other prisoners. The trained prisoners are known as 'Listeners' and operate according to Samaritans' policy and practice by providing a caller-centred, non-judgemental, non-directive, and confidential listening and emotional support service. Essentially, Listeners are enlisted to do the work of Samaritans in prison. In 2010, 123 Samaritans branches were supporting 158 prisons across the UK, and Listeners supported prisoners in over 90,000 contacts (Samaritans, 2011a).

Under current penal conditions there are many 'training programmes', 'offending behaviour programmes' or 'cognitive behaviour programmes' in operation, many of which originate from the discipline of psychology (Haney, 2005). These types of programmes regard prisoners as passive agents subjected to techniques designed to modify thinking and behaviour. Samaritans however, has maintained the descriptor 'Listener scheme'. This reflects the fact that it is not an aim of Samaritans to change the behaviour of prisoners who become Listeners, or the behaviour of prisoners who use Listener support. In fact, prisoners who wish to become Listeners are not excluded from participation on the grounds of a lack of willingness to engage in offending behaviour programmes (Prison Service Order 2700). Therefore the term 'scheme' is adopted over 'programme' in this thesis to remain consistent with Samaritans' use of the term and highlights the tensions that voluntary organisations face engaging in prisons where the aims and approach of their services potentially clash with the objective and working practices of the Prison Service. Furthermore, not only is little known about the contradictions that arise when prisoners attempt to engage as citizens, a substantial body of knowledge about the implications of peer support for volunteers, who share the same pains of imprisonment and experience of subordination as those they support, does not yet exist. Prisoners who become

---

<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.samaritans.org/about\\_samaritans/governance\\_and\\_history/samaritans\\_history.aspx](http://www.samaritans.org/about_samaritans/governance_and_history/samaritans_history.aspx) and chapter 3 for further information.



Listeners are expected to adhere to Samaritans' policy of confidentiality. This means that the nature and content of their conversations with their 'callers' is not shared with staff or other prisoners.<sup>3</sup> This causes tension and conflict with prison staff who have a duty of care for the well-being of prisoners, and goes against the grain of Prison Service approaches that centre on risk assessments and information sharing, particularly with respect to suicidal and self-harming prisoners (see Samaritans, 2001: 15; Snow, 2000; Snow & Biggar, 2006).

The special and unique nature of the prison environment has long been recognised by prison sociologists. Prisons are characterised by power imbalances and a lack of control, and autonomy over taken-for-granted everyday aspects of life (Fitzgerald & Sim, 1982: 55; Liebling, 2004: 345), where everything that takes place is highly visible to a large number of people. The prison walls and other symbols of security, such as closed windows, locked gates and barbed wire, reinforce this (Goffman, 1961; Armstrong & Griffin, 2003: 577). Prisoners are subjected to a different and distinctive way of life forged 'inside' the prison walls (Scott & Codd, 2008: 11). Despite the recognition of the coercive and punitive nature of the prison environment in the prison literature, claims about the benefits of the introduction of peer support schemes are made without appreciation of the potential challenges and dilemmas posed by the social and structural conditions of the environment. Moreover, the tendency to focus on matters such as 'risk assessment' and 'suicide prevention' fails to take into account the help-seeking preferences of prisoners, their strategies of seeking help, and how relationships are formed in help-seeking and support-giving. Very little at all is known about help-seeking in prison, however the small amount of research that has considered help-seeking rests on an assumption that sources of support are generally available and unproblematic; from this perspective a lack of willingness to seek help is seen as 'maladaptive', and should be addressed by encouraging take-up, hence placing responsibility on the individual.

---

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 3 for a full outline of this policy and the small number of exceptions to confidentiality.



Thus, the preceding discussion highlights that the introduction of peer support in prison postulates that prisoners can be active agents and responsabilised, and that the prison setting is not a problematic environment in which to achieve this. This doctoral research sought to explore the abovementioned issues, dilemmas, challenges and gaps in knowledge by analysing the operation of the Listener peer support scheme in prisons. The study investigated the following research questions:

1. How do prisoners use the Listener scheme in their patterns of coping and help-seeking?
  - a) How does Listener support compare with other sources of help and support in prison?
  - b) In which ways are prisoners' usage of the Listener scheme embedded in the general features of, and acceptance of the scheme within, the wider prison 'community'?
2. How does the Listener scheme operate within prisons, and how is it perceived by various groups of the prison 'community' (prison staff, prisoners, and Listeners)?
3. What do Listeners identify as the effects and outcomes of their engagement as peer supporters in prison?

The research sought to explore who uses peer support and why, how peer support is used, how staff respond to and facilitate peer support, and how peer supporters conduct their work. An approach drawing from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies was adopted. The quantitative component – a survey of prisoners (n=331) – enabled an understanding of prisoners' use (and non-use) of peer support in the context of their overall patterns of help-seeking in prison to be explored. The qualitative component – semi-structured interviews with prisoners who had talked to Listeners (n=14), Listeners (n=16) and prison staff (n=12) –



generated data on how the Listener scheme is perceived, experiences of Listener support, and how the scheme operates in prisons. These data were obtained from 4 prisons across England, including two men's prisons, one women's prison, and a young offender's institution (18-12 year olds).

This thesis is split into three parts. Part 1 provides the background to help-seeking and peer support in prison. Chapter 2 traces the political development of increasing use of the voluntary sector as a provider of services, and in particular how peer support and mentoring schemes have been championed as a cost-effective tool for 'reducing re-offending' despite the lack of clear and robust evidence to support these claims. Chapter 3 moves on to outline the development of the peer support scheme that is the focus of this study – the Listener scheme – supported by Samaritans. In chapter 4, the literature on prison 'communities', coping and survival, help-seeking and volunteering is explored and critiqued, and the benefits of using the Listener scheme as a means through which current knowledge can be expanded is discussed. Next, chapter 5 details the methodological approach adopted, and the challenges faced 'getting in' and 'getting along' with the research, such as the 'stonewalling' encountered with research governance procedures. The data subsequently presented in parts 2 and 3 are the outcome of a protracted series of negotiations, which highlights above all else, the politicised nature of peer support and volunteering in prisons.

Part 2 of this thesis provides a more nuanced understanding of help-seeking by prisoners, and their use of Listener peer support. This is achieved primarily by exploring the data obtained from the survey of 331 prisoners across the four establishments visited. The first chapter of this part (chapter 6) builds a picture of prisoners' help-seeking preferences and intentions for different problems, and explores predictors of help-seeking to 'inside' and 'outside' sources of support. Chapter 6 uncovers the 'strategic' nature of help-seeking and highlights the 'risky'



nature of seeking help in the prison environment, particularly where conflict between prisoners is perceived. This provides the context in which seeking help from Listener peer supporters takes place. This chapter analyses predictors of help-seeking intentions and actual help-seeking from Listeners and further to this, explores patterns of usage of Listener support. Finally qualitative accounts of prisoners who have talked to Listeners are examined to identify the circumstances under which prisoners seek help from Listeners, their experiences of talking to Listeners, and the outcomes of receiving Listener support.

In part 3, the discussion moves from a focus on ‘help-seeking’ to consider ‘peer support’ in greater depth. Here the qualitative data generated from the individuals with responsibility for running and facilitating the Listener scheme – staff and Listeners – are probed. First, chapter 8 considers Listeners’ accounts about the meaning of their Listener role and work, and the challenges and ambiguities they face, as they conduct their voluntary work in the context of the prison environment. In particular it is asserted that the degree to which Listeners are ‘empowered’ through their volunteering is questionable. This finding is accentuated by the accounts of prison staff presented in chapter 9, which highlights the gatekeeping role of staff with respect to granting prisoners access to Listeners, and facilitating Listener movements to see their ‘callers’. Part 3 draws attention to the challenges posed by operating peer support schemes in prison for prisoner volunteers, and how the boundaries of policy and practice are ‘stretched’ in response to the prison context they operate under.

Chapter 10 is the concluding chapter of this thesis and discusses the implications of the challenges posed by the prison environment for peer support work in prison.

.



# **PART 1**

## **BACKGROUND**

The first part of this thesis provides the political, research and methodological context for the current study. Chapter 2 examines the political backdrop to the research and explores the government's relationship with the voluntary sector, with specific reference to peer support schemes in prisons. Following this, chapter 3 outlines the development of the peer support scheme that is the focus of this study – the Listener scheme – and introduces some of the challenges and dilemmas posed by operating a peer support scheme in prison that are investigated in this thesis. An overview and critique of the literature with respect to help-seeking, peer support and volunteering follows this. This critique identifies that there is a common tendency to focus on the abilities and activities of individuals, and as a result research has often failed to problematize the prison environment or take into account its impact. Finally, a contextualised account and discussion of the methodological approach, and challenges that were encountered in the process of obtaining clearance to conduct the research is provided.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Public policy, the voluntary sector and peer support in prison**

[A]s successive consultations and ministerial reports make clear, despite inclusive political language about the value of the sector's role as the critical conscience of public policy, the de facto, official conception of the voluntary sector is that of biddable service deliverers. (Corcoran, 2009: 32)

This chapter explores the relationship between the government<sup>1</sup> and the penal voluntary sector. Whilst voluntary sector engagement in prisons is not a new phenomenon, government has prompted a qualitative and quantitative change in how the voluntary sector has been both encouraged, and required, to engage with the state when working with offenders and prisoners. The series of challenges this poses for the penal voluntary sector are discussed, particularly with reference to issues of independence, professionalism and responsibility. Finally, the use of 'mentoring' and peer support in the reform of offenders is explored. Despite its popularity with the government, there is very little sound empirical evidence of the benefits of 'mentoring' and 'peer' approaches, and moreover the measurement of outcomes, what is defined as an outcome, and who defines the outcome, is a highly contentious issue. It is argued that this context poses a number of problems for voluntary organisations' work in prisons. In particular there is a need to understand more fully the reality of volunteering by prisoners, and how

---

<sup>1</sup> Most of the developments discussed in this chapter transpired under New Labour. However there are considerable continuities (as well as discontinuities – see section 2.4) under the current coalition government.



prisoners and staff engage in volunteer schemes, before claims that it is the answer to re-offending, suicide prevention, or any other outcome, can even begin to be verified.

Throughout this chapter, the term ‘voluntary sector’ has been adopted to refer to organisations, formed under a specific cause, that are (theoretically) independent of the public and private sectors, engaged in work without profit-motive, that are self-governing and organised, and reliant on voluntary contributions and membership. Whilst the term ‘penal voluntary sector’ is increasingly used in the literature of voluntary sector involvement in the criminal justice system, as Corcoran (2011: 33) notes, “it remains a descriptive rather than theoretically rigorous concept or empirically quantified entity.” Therefore, when talking about the ‘penal voluntary sector’, this places emphasis on those particular organisations which engage with offenders, victims, or their families, or who are volunteering in criminal justice settings. Although it is recognised that many of these organisations employ paid staff and do not rely on volunteer labour alone, volunteering nevertheless constitutes a central activity (HMPS/Clinks, 2001: 2; Kendall, 2003:215). Adopting the term ‘voluntary sector’ therefore aims to stress the voluntary nature of the work conducted and it is adopted in this thesis in favour of alternative terms such as: charities, non-government organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), or the third sector to mention but a few. Some of these terms are more inclusive and bracket together a broader range of organisations and groups. However, this thesis is primarily concerned with notions of volunteerism, and the operation of a voluntary peer support scheme in prison, thus the selected terminology is consistent with this. Whatever term is selected, it is important to acknowledge that it encompasses a very large and heterogeneous body of organisations that vary considerably in terms of size, scope, structure, activities, methods, income and professionalism (Crowe, Dayson & Wells, 2010: 29; Taylor, 2005: 199). As this chapter will demonstrate, government policy and its engagement with the sector have served to make this picture even more complex.



## **2.1 The relationship between government and the voluntary sector**

Whilst historically the voluntary sector's focus has primarily been seen in terms of a response to gaps in state provision, in supporting marginalised groups, and campaigning for reform, there has been a shift in this relationship during the twentieth century, which accelerated during New Labour's time in power from 1997 to 2010. 'Social partnership models' depict the government, voluntary sector and private sector as three distinct entities (Powell & Guerin, 1997; Robinson, 1997: 59), however New Labour's notion of partnership has sought to submerge the voluntary sector in a quasi-market in the delivery of services to offenders (see Home Office, 1998). This section begins by considering the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector prior to New Labour coming into power, and how government continued and significantly enhanced state engagement with the voluntary sector. It will consider specifically how policy had positioned the voluntary sector as a provider of public services and put the sector in competition with the private and public sectors. Finally, some of the dilemmas that these new contractual relationships and market forces pose for the voluntary sector, such as its independence, stability and professionalism, will be discussed.

### **2.1.1 New Labour, crime and communities**

During the 1970s and 1980s government became increasingly concerned about social welfare issues and welfare provision expanded by the 'welfare state'. However, Wolch (1990) contends that the expansion of state welfare provision did not result in a reduced need for voluntary efforts. Rather, financial cutbacks, combined with inflation and unemployment led to a 'shadow state' of welfare provision by the voluntary sector. Thus the government's and the voluntary sector's objectives were drawn increasingly closer and the state increasingly relied on the sector as a more cost-effective way of meeting welfare need (Wolch, 1990). During



periods of economic strain in the 1980s, the voluntary sector became increasingly reliant on state funding which came with obligations and responsibilities, such as monitoring the effectiveness of their services and developing more coherent and organised working practices. Brenton (1985: 111) described organisations during this period as “walking a precarious tightrope” between independence and becoming a tool in delivering government responsibilities and it is claimed that the sector’s focus was diverted away from marginalised groups (Middleton & Lloyd, 1992: 1). Walking the tightrope was only going to become even more precarious in the years that followed.

The Conservative government sought to foster the growth of the voluntary sector further during the 1980s and 1990s through numerous funding incentives. Kendall (2003: 24-6) shows that the voluntary sector as a whole made a significant shift during the 1990s towards a greater reliance on state funding. Furthermore, during the second half of the 1990s the numbers of paid employees by voluntary sector organisations rose to a much greater extent than the increases seen in the private and public sectors (Kendall, 2003: 35). Kendall points to the increase in paid employees as evidence for the tendency towards increasingly organised and professional working practices across the voluntary sector. Thus, it is evident that the relationship between the government and the voluntary sector has become increasingly formal and professional, particularly in the last two decades.

New Labour’s ‘tough on crime’ stance positioned themselves as *the* party of law and order during the 1997 elections (Sim, 2009: 75; McLaughlin & Muncie, 2000: 172; McLaughlin, Muncie & Hughes, 2001). Crime and punishment are emotive topics among the general public, popular culture and politicians (Sparks, 2007: 73). As Stern (2002) notes, the public and media are not as supportive or concerned with penal reform as they are punishment. Politicians are particularly aware of the punitive edge to the general public’s attitude and preferences for the



use of prison as punishment (Carlen, 2001a: 134; Rumgay, 2007: 231). Not only did the tough stance on crime play an integral role in winning votes for Labour, Sim (2009: 103) notes that “the threat of detention and the unrelenting use of confinement were pivotal to New Labour’s vociferous law and order drumbeat in the decade between 1997 and 2007.” As Sparks (2007: 81) asserts, the use of punishment is extremely powerful and politically legitimises state authority. During their power, New Labour oversaw the rise of the prison population from approximately 61,500 to over 85,000; and its sharp and vicious response to the crime of the powerless and social exclusion (Sim, 2009) oversaw the introduction of 1036 imprisonable offences (Scott & Codd, 2010: 1), and also the introduction of ‘Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection’ (IPP) which gave the state power to hold an individual indefinitely until their perceived ‘risk’ had reduced.

Under New Labour, it was clear that ‘activating civil society’ under what was known as the ‘Third Way’, was at the core of the changes that were to follow (Giddens, 1998: 78). Concerns about crime were a strong undercurrent to justifications for the need to create individuals who were governed through community bonds, ties and obligations. This was based upon a nostalgic image of the past, of a ‘lost community’, and a need to reinstate democracy and civic values (Sim, 2009: 83). Thus, citizens were viewed as active and responsible agents (see Rose, 1996) who would tackle crime and social exclusion (Seyfang, 2003). Communities are similarly ‘empowered’ under the auspices of government, as the ‘welfare society’ replaces the ‘welfare state’. Government also sought to prompt community involvement through the use of partnerships in the voluntary sector:

In contemporary appeals to ‘community’ and ‘partnerships’, crime control is no longer conceived as the sole duty of the professional police officer, or other criminal justice agents. Rather, it is becoming more fragmented and dispersed throughout state



institutions, private organisations, the public. Responsibility for the crime problems, according to current governmental strategies, is now everyone's. It is shared property. (Crawford, 1997: 25)

In 1998 the 'Compact on Relations between the Government and VCS' was published, and Prime Minister, Tony Blair, reinforced notions of democracy and community development to promote partnership working between government and the voluntary sector based on their 'complimentary roles'. This served to enhance the role of the voluntary sector, and began a process of mainstreaming the voluntary sector into policy.

At this time 'social capital' was claimed by government to be a positive and powerful influence in communities to achieve cohesiveness and engagement (Faulkner, 2005; Hall, 1999; Kendall, 2003: 129) through volunteering and developing trusting networks and communities.<sup>2</sup> Zimmeck (2010) suggests that the government sought to enhance civic engagement and volunteering among specific groups, for example young people (see also Taylor, 2005: 121). Given the government's later focus on volunteering by prisoners and offenders it is clear that volunteering was being used not only to provide a resource to the community, but also in an attempt to foster civic values among groups at risk of (re-)offending.

### **2.1.2 The state and the 'penal voluntary sector'**

Several years after New Labour came into power, attention was increasingly paid to the role of the voluntary sector in work with offenders and the criminal justice system. During the last decade a flurry of publications and policies have appeared, all of which point to the role of the voluntary sector as providers of a range of services linked to goals of 'reducing re-offending'

---

<sup>2</sup> This view however overlooks evidence that has suggested that social capital might be used for illicit as well as communitarian goals, for example Grix (2001: 197-8) suggests that members of the mafia organised crime networks possess particularly high levels of social capital.



above all else. For example, ‘Getting it Right Together’ (HMPS, 2001: 4-5) places emphasis on ‘mobilising’ community resources, providing prisoners with an opportunity to ‘give something back’, and the positive effects of ‘purposeful work’. A desire to engage with the voluntary sector was claimed in this publication to be symbolic of the high regard the Prison Service holds for the sector and their expertise. Indeed, for voluntary organisations, the increased attention from government was in part a recognition of the work they conduct in supporting marginalised groups after years of being ignored or treated with contempt (Corcoran, 2008: 36; Martin, 2007: 41). Some feel this represented a major ‘philosophical’ step in governmental thinking and awareness of the work that the voluntary sector conduct (Etherington & Passey, 2002: 25), or as a means of protecting and supporting the voluntary sector (Morgan, 2008: 15). Whilst in some ways this apparent recognition of the contribution made of the voluntary sector by government appears to represent a very positive development, the changes that were to come posed a series of dilemmas and challenges for the voluntary sector as a result of the way the government wished to utilise and deploy their expertise and services.

A report by Lord Carter (2003) marked a particularly significant turning point in the state’s relationship with the voluntary sector and how offenders were to be managed as they proceeded through the criminal justice system. Carter proposed ‘joining up’ prison and probation services under the umbrella of ‘offender management’ and promoted modernisation as a ‘new’ and ‘better’ approach to tackling crime (Sim, 2009: 75). It has been argued that ‘modernisation’ represents “an amalgam of managerialist, communitarian and authoritarian populist ideas” (McLaughlin & Muncie, 2000: 169). Additionally Carter (2003: 34) emphasised the benefits of competitive tension. The Carter report acted as a catalyst for exposing the voluntary sector to market forces to a greater extent through a ‘contract culture’. In response to Lord Carter’s recommendations, the government further promoted ‘civil



renewal’, ‘active citizenship’, and volunteering by extending the role of the voluntary sector as a cost effective provider of services (Active Community Unit, 2004; Home Office, 2003). Here we also see a greater focus on the performance indicators and measurement than before (Scott, 2007: 66). Furthermore, stemming directly from the Carter report, and with very little consultation, the ‘National Offender Management Service’ (hereafter referred to as NOMS) was created in 2004 (Hough, 2006: 1). It is evident that the actuarial ‘risk’ based strategies were a core concern of NOMS whose aim was to ‘protect the public’ and ‘reduce re-offending’ (Brownlee, 1998; Cheliotis, 2006; Sparks, 2007: 88). In the years that followed however, it was apparent that rather than being the ‘joined up’ service that Carter had envisaged, NOMS became more of a symbolic brand and administrative umbrella for the ‘business’ of managing offenders.

NOMS’ commitment to managing risk and punishing offenders was cemented in its ‘Five Year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending’ (NOMS, 2006a). Here, the government promoted the use of community sentences so that offenders could be visibly observed ‘paying back’ their communities (see also Home Office, 2006). In a somewhat contradictory stance however, prisons were still very much promoted as places for protecting the public by responsibalsing and reforming offenders (Scott, 2007: 64). By 2005 approximately a quarter of adult offender services were delivered by the private and voluntary sectors (NOMS, 2006c). Subsequently, the government has persistently promoted, and encouraged the involvement of the voluntary sector under a ‘contestability’ framework where a range of services could be commissioned to a range of providers (Home Office, 2003; 2006; NOMS, 2005; NOMS, 2006b; NOMS, 2006c; NOMS, 2007a; NOMS, 2007b; Ministry of Justice, 2008; see also the 2007 Offender Management Act). Thus, a mixed economy for the provision of services across the criminal justice system, which could be commissioned from the public, private and voluntary sectors, and closely regulated and monitored by government,



had successfully been created (Faulkner, 2007: 137). Common themes in official commissioning discourse also included: getting ‘value for money’ in the delivery of services; using commissioning to respond to local need; using competition to prompt providers to improve performance; increasing the visibility of offender reparation; bringing government and communities ‘closer’; tackling crime ‘together’; and demonstrating ‘impact’. Government departments, and individual prisons, appointed individuals to oversee relationships with voluntary sector organisations, and the publication of the ‘Voluntary Sector News’ by NOMS advertised funding opportunities and ‘success stories’ of partnership working. More administrative and organisational changes ensued in 2007 when the ‘Ministry of Justice’ was formed even more rapidly than NOMS had been. This effectively split matters related to the criminal justice system from the Home Secretary, to a Justice Secretary (Gibson, 2008: 15) with a stated aim to provide a more cohesive criminal justice system of the courts, prisons and probation. The objective to reduce ‘re-offending’ continued to prevail as a dominant ideology.

Despite the use of competitive tension and market forces, ‘partnership’ was a core aspect of the vocabulary used by the Labour government to describe its relationship with the voluntary sector (Etherington & Passey, 2002: 18; Newman, 2002: 9). However, as Vennard and Hedderman (2009: 237) maintain, a *true* partnership is based on principles of team work, respect, shared efforts and common goals. Shared objectives, elicited through the formation of a contractual agreement in the delivery of services, do not necessarily reflect notions of partnership (Vennard & Hedderman, 2009: 237). The instrumentalism of government’s approach to the voluntary sector has produced a situation where there are very few opportunities for organisations to engage as *true* partners (Corcoran, 2010: 247; Faulkner, 2006: 91; Third Sector Research Centre, 2010: 9). Thus, ‘partnership’ and ‘contestability’ are terms that offer very little clarity on the nature of the working relationships and are inherently contradictory:



The concept [of contestability] – and exactly what it might mean in practice – was and remains ill-defined. At its mildest, contestability seems merely to be a synonym for the process of market testing rather than for the specific outcome of privatisation or contracting out. [...] At its strongest, it seems to be about the engineering of a mixed economy of provision, which intentionally and systematically destroys the near-monopoly of the public sector, in order to institutionalise a permanently competitive – and in the government's terms more desirable – environment. (Nellis, 2006: 55)

Therefore, as Tomlinson (2005: 1170) contends, when we talk of a 'good partnership' we must pose the questions – For whom? And in what way is it good? The discussion that follows debates more closely some of the dilemmas and difficulties voluntary sector organisations face under this climate.

## **2.2 Dilemmas of the mixed economy of penal service provision**

Whilst the focus of this chapter is the voluntary sector, it is helpful to first consider the wider debate on involving 'outside' or 'private' organisations (i.e. belonging to civil society or business), in delivering services traditionally seen as a state responsibility. The privatisation of services in prisons, and of prisons themselves, marks a distinctive development in the provision of services formerly seen as the domain of the state. Private companies have been enlisted to build and run immigration detention centres since the 1970s yet have received surprisingly little attention or debate. Privatisation gained momentum during the 1990s where private companies supplied food, transportation, and education for prisoners. Following this, from 1992 onwards, private companies also began building *and* managing prisons, and were also able to bid against the public sector to manage existing establishments. Privatisation was afforded a number of justifications, for example: cost effectiveness; generating innovative



ideas and technologies; designing prisons to be less painful for prisoners; establishing a positive culture not as resistant to change and reform (an issue associated with the ‘Prison Officer Association’ resistance in public sector prisons); motivating the public sector to improve standards through competition; and finally, as Mehigan and Rowe (2007) note, greater flexibility as a consequence of fewer bureaucratic demands and obstructions by operating independently of the state machinery.<sup>3</sup> Their popularity with government is demonstrated by the fact that there are currently eleven privately managed prisons across England and Wales including a privatised state prison since November 2011 (HMP Birmingham).

The introduction of privately managed prisons generated a great deal of debate (for example see Chan, 1994; Christie, 1993; Genders, 2002; McDonald, 2001; Mehigan & Rowe, 2007; Ryan, 1994; Ryan & Ward, 1989; Shichor, 1998; 1999; Sparks, 1994; Taylor & Pease, 1989; Weiss, 1989). This debate revolved around the following areas of concern: how private prisons could be regulated and monitored; structures of accountability, particularly with regards to the use of force; whether private prisons really were more cost-effective, or if the savings resulted in lower standards and hence ‘uneven justice’ for prisoners across England and Wales; what measures of performance should be used or developed; and finally how ethical it was for a private company to profit from, or make a business out of, punishment. This final point has continued to be a concern, because for example, private companies will profit through the increasing number of prisoners. This acts as a disincentive to turn them from a life of crime (Genders, 2002: 288). Alternatively, private companies may be motivated to rehabilitate prisoners, or perform more legitimately if provided with incentives to do so (Liebling, 2006a: 429; Taylor & Pease, 1989: 191). Part of the failure of this debate however is to fully recognise the atrocities, abuse, mistreatment, poor practice and appalling conditions that have been observed in public sector prisons (e.g. see Fitzgerald and Sim, 1982; Stern, 1989) and therefore

---

<sup>3</sup> This final point was certainly highly visible when negotiating access with the private and public sector prisons for the current study – see chapter 5.



concerns over the evenness of justice, the use of force, and measuring performance are applicable to the use of imprisonment more generally and not just those that are privately managed. It is poignant that recent research by Bryans (2007: 73) highlighted that governors felt privatisation did not drive up standards across the Prison Service as a whole, but in fact has a much more local effect by prompting an establishment to improve when its legitimacy is questioned. Therefore, whilst there are clearly some benefits in the logic of privatisation, they are unlikely to be as wide-ranging as the government claim them to be and moreover, prisons are problematic institutions and weapons of punishment, regardless of by whom they are operated.

The involvement of the voluntary sector in the delivery of services in the criminal justice system has generated comparatively less debate, although it is now starting to build momentum (see Corcoran, 2008; 2009; 2011; Hooper, 2002; Martin, 2004; Silvestri, 2009; Third Sector Research Centre, 2010; 2011). At first this might seem understandable as the voluntary sector is primarily motivated by philanthropic concerns, and not by profit. In fact, increasing the involvement of the voluntary sector is claimed to result in more legitimate and accountable systems and institutions by bringing together civil society and the state (Dahlberg, 2005: 741-2). Furthermore, ‘outsiders’ can have positive effects on the working cultures of institutions by humanising them, challenge practice, promoting a more caring environment, and improving channels of communication. Relatedly, the emphasis on ‘end-to-end’ offender management and ‘joined-up’ services is supported by getting voluntary organisations to provide support to prisoners that could continue after their release (Clinks/HMPS, 2001: 4; Prison Service Order 4190). These benefits, however well-intentioned, do not mean that we should not debate the ethical, practical and financial implications of voluntary sector involvement in the criminal justice system and in the delivery of penal services. The points below highlight some of the key areas of concern and issues in need of further exploration.



***Professionalism, measurement and performance***

The first, and most frequently noted concern, is the degree to which the current climate prompts the voluntary sector to ‘professionalise’. Voluntary sector organisations have been required to create more formalised structures, increase and develop record keeping activities, create role descriptions and objectives, or ‘mission statements’, employ staff, become more image conscious, seek accreditation for training, and engage in evaluative activities. There is no doubt that the ‘magnetic pull’ of funding has stimulated pursuits towards professionalism across the voluntary sector (Corcoran, 2009: 32; as feared by Ryan & Ward, 1989: 101). The New Labour government has placed emphasis on the importance of organisations adhering to professional standards and formalising their services when working with offenders (NOMS, 2006a). Additional pressure is placed on the voluntary sector to adopt a ‘what works’ emphasis by establishing measures and indicators of effectiveness’ and ‘performance’ (HMPS/Clinks, 2001: 15; Liebling, 2006a) to prove their value and increase the likelihood of securing funds. The focus subsequently becomes the pursuit of quantitative measures that demonstrate desirable outcomes (or outputs). As highlighted in the foregoing discussion, the voluntary sector has significantly expanded the number of paid staff in order to attend to administration, composing bids, advertising, and providing operational support for example. Deakin (1995: 62) observes that:

most organisations have taken on board the lessons of the management revolution of the 1980s and kitted themselves out with all the paraphernalia of the enterprise culture: mission statements, logos, personal identification with tasks, ‘passion’ (even obsession) for excellence.



However it is important not to overstate this response. The Third Sector Research Centre (2010) notes that many voluntary organisations are highly skilled in this area by having to routinely apply for funding from a variety of different sources. It is apparent that the government's relationship with the voluntary sector has served to speed up this process and encourage professionalism among some organisations.

The voluntary sector has not professionalised or adapted to the more prominent role government has given to them in an even manner. Larger organisations are much better placed to compete and develop their work, whereas smaller organisations are much more vulnerable and much less likely to realistically compete for funds unless they join up with similar organisations for example (Charity Commission, 2007; Corcoran, 2008: 37; Martin, 2004: 25; Nellis, 2007: 57). This highlights how government approaches claimed to embrace and encourage civil society to flourish, act counter to this. Attempts to bring the sector into policy 'mainstream', and a lack of recognition of its heterogeneity, has an adverse effect on smaller organisations who may provide niche services to marginalised groups. The effects could mean that specific groups or areas are marginalised further and 'squeezed out' (Silvestri, 2009).

### ***'Mission drift' and independence***

Voluntary organisations (and indeed civil society) are theoretically claimed to be effective when independent and separate from the state machinery and free from political influence (Fliners, 2004: 902; Hadenius & Ugglä, 1996). Closer, more contractual and controlled relationships could threaten the 'identity' of the sector (Silvestri, 2009). Concern has been expressed about organisations narrowing or altering their focus to obtain state funding, or even linking themselves to offender populations simply to be eligible for funding (Martin, 2004: 25; Silvestri, 2009; Third Sector Research Centre, 2011: 19). The competition for funds further



reduces the diversity and scope of the voluntary sector as it increasingly moves towards those that are more likely to achieve funding. The degree to which volunteering is ‘voluntary’ is also threatened by contractual relationships (Martin, 2004: 25; Rungay, 2007: 244). Whilst voluntary sector organisations have responsibilities and lines of accountability in place with respect to service-users, their communities and donors, these structures are imposed and determined more rigidly through working with the state. Hooper (2002: 104) suggests that:

To over-managerialise them [voluntary organisations] could not only be demotivating, but deny them the most important quality they have – a non-statutory, experienced, confidential and caring listening ear which transcends the institutional setting and enables the prisoners and their families to benefit from services and support which they may not be able to access elsewhere.

Of course, as highlighted earlier, there is the chance that the government or public sector agencies might be influenced by voluntary organisations encouraging positive values and working practices through closer working relationships (Silvestri, 2009). However, the closer working relationships threaten the independence of voluntary organisations; such independence enables them to actively lobby and campaign for reform (Stern, 1994: 244; Neilson, 2009). Codd (2008: 169) contends that:

The danger is that charitable organisations which work in partnership with prisons and government agencies may fear being silenced or feel they have to be cautious in their criticism of policies and practices in case essential funding, collaboration or co-operation is withdrawn. There needs to be maintenance of a critical voice which independently questions these issues.



***‘Whistleblowing’ and participating in a market of punishment***

There are concerns that voluntary organisations will be drawn away from more caring functions, towards playing a role in the punishment of offenders. This raises questions about whether the government is simply shifting responsibility for the supervision and reform of offenders through contracts to alternative service providers (Bryans, Martin & Walker, 2002: 169). Rumgay and Cowan (1998: 135) note however that “it is not inevitable that professional acculturation will suck voluntary agencies ever deeper into the coercive management of their clients.” There is nevertheless concern and an ethical question about how involved voluntary organisations should become involved in the delivery of punishment, in ‘whistleblowing’ on clients who fail to turn up for appointments (Bryans, Martin & Walker, 2002: 165; Minkes, Hammersley & Raynor, 2005: 256; Women in Prison, 2006: 4), and the degree of information sharing between partners (Crawford, 1997: 110). This debate had also been taken one step further by concerns about voluntary sector organisations participating in a market or punishment (Silvestri, 2009), or even delivering punishment, brought to the fore by Nacro bidding to operate a prison (Neilson, 2009; see also Corcoran, 2011: 31) and Catch 22 and Turning Point partnering with the private company Serco to run two new prisons (Third Sector Research Centre, 2010: 12). Hence, not only might civil society be responsible for reforming offenders, formerly seen as the responsibility of the state (Garland, 1996: 453; Hannah-Moffat, 2000: 513-4), but they might also be responsible for punishing them. The extent to which reform and care are compatible with punishment is highly contestable (see chapter 9). It is notable that the type of engagement encouraged is focused on aims such as re-offending, yet no consultation on other forms of engagement with the sector on matters such as criminalisation or the rising prison population has taken place (Martin, 2007: 41). The danger is that through greater involvement of the voluntary sector, prisons are legitimatised and seen as places that can successfully rehabilitate offenders (Sim, 2009: 105-7) despite the fact that



there is very little evidence to suggest that they do, or even can ‘work’ (Scott & Codd, 2010; Sim, 2009).

### ***Funding myths***

Whilst organisations pursue funding in order to provide a more stable and long-term service, winning a contract or bid does not automatically equate with financial security. Firstly, funding will be provided for a limited time only, and therefore the security it affords is questionable. Furthermore, organisations heavily reliant on state funding are rendered particularly vulnerable during budget cuts (Crowe, Dayson & Wells, 2010: 30). It is claimed that voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system in particular are more reliant on state funding (Third Sector Research Centre, 2011: 20) presumably because donations are less forthcoming from the general public for this area of work. Moreover, as Corcoran (2011: 38) observes, the majority of ‘outsourced’ funds have been awarded to private companies running prisons, providing electronic tagging devices and prisoner escort services, and it is unlikely that this level of spending will be mirrored with voluntary sector providers. Secondly, whilst volunteering is not intended to replace paid positions (NOMS, 2007a), putting the sectors in competition with one another does not signify collaboration, partnership and complimentary roles, as much as it does a pursuit for cheaper alternatives for service delivery. The supply of ‘voluntary’ or ‘free’ labour is claimed to enable voluntary organisations to provide cost-effective, or ‘cheaper’ services (Marton, 2007: 41). However, the extent to which the voluntary sector actually offers more cost effective services is questionable (Ryan & Ward, 1989: 82) since, for example, the cost of conducting evaluations is no cheaper for the voluntary sector than for the public or private sectors.



***Operational issues at the ‘ground level’***

Governors, who are faced with inspections and audits, and meeting the requirements of ‘Key Performance Targets’ are under increasing pressure to engage with organisations who help them to meet these targets and standards (Bryans, Martin & Walker, 2002: 169) despite the fact that they feel important outcomes and operation are overlooked by such targets (Bryans, 2007: 83-4). Pressure from policy can also lead to making paid staff feel that their work is not valued (Rumgay & Cowan, 1998: 130) or that the more enjoyable and fulfilling aspects of their role are being outsourced (Holland, 2000: 22). From the voluntary sector perspective, policy changes provide an opportunity to access traditionally very difficult to reach populations such as prisoners. However, volunteers visiting prisons have reported being met with hostility and opposition by staff, often arising from conflicting cultures, practices or policies (Hooper, 2002: 97; Newman, 2002: 9) but often justified in terms of security risks posed. Certain prisons might be particularly ‘closed’ to outside interest or interference (Hooper, 2002: 93). Different prisons have different processes that will influence how outside organisations are received and how they are able to conduct their work. It has furthermore been reported that organisations sometimes experience difficulties in recovering their expenses from particular establishments (Corcoran, 2011: 41). Despite the problems that might be experienced at the ‘ground level’, very little attention has explored these more local impacts.

The discussion so far has debated justifications in policy for mixed markets in penal services generally, but has only touched upon the support for unpaid work and volunteering by offenders and prisoners themselves. The final part of this chapter considers in greater detail the type of voluntary sector engagement that this thesis investigates – the provision of opportunities for prisoners to volunteer by supporting or mentoring peers.



## **2.3 Peer support, mentoring and volunteering by prisoners**

In the context of the foregoing discussion, the use of ‘mentoring’ and ‘peer’ systems of guidance and support has been championed by new Labour as a resource to be utilised when building cohesive communities and fostering social capital (Philip & Sprat, 2007: 17-18; 27). Policy under this government and its predecessor clearly saw a link between a lack of familial support and supervision and pathways of crime. It follows that the provision of a guide and positive role model may serve to counter these effects (Home Office, 2006; Porteous, 2007: 20). Mentoring and befriending have been increasingly fostered and promoted by government since the 1990s (Zimmeck, 2010), and more recently have become increasingly encouraged among offender populations (NOMS South West, 2008: 2) particularly with respect to ‘peer’ support or mentoring. Neoliberal policy has placed strategies of ‘responsibilisation’ at its core and ‘peer’ approaches are one such example of this (Garland, 1996; 2001; see chapter 4).

Mentoring has become one of the core ways in which the government has championed its approach to issues of re-offending, addressing gaps in public sector provision, and sourcing cheaper alternatives to state provision. Too often policy refers to mentoring as a monolithic practice. In fact mentoring or support networks may or may not involve a ‘peer’ element (i.e. offenders helping offenders) and might refer to a broad spectrum of activities such as education, counselling, emotional support, practical support, role modelling, advice, or guidance provided by a range of different mentors who might be volunteers, paid workers, professionals or former prisoners for example. Furthermore, mentoring and peer support might occur inside prisons, or might begin upon release to facilitate the resettlement process. ‘Mentoring’ therefore is more of an umbrella term that describes a wide range of relationships, support systems and contexts. Peer schemes in prison come in a variety of forms including support based groups based on mutual help like Alcoholics Anonymous, or self-harm support



groups, where the group supports each other and they face the problem together. In fact the use of peers stems from the 1960s and 1970s where ‘recovered’ substance misusers began to counsel and support alcoholics and addicts (White, 2000). Other examples include: ‘peer mentoring’ where reformed offenders offer guidance to those making efforts to turn their lives away from crime; the Insiders scheme, run by the Prison Service where prisoners act as a source of information about prison life, particularly to newcomers and first-time prisoners; the ‘Toe by Toe’ scheme, led by the Shannon Trust, where prisoners assist one another to improve literacy skills and reading ability; or the topic of this study, the Listener scheme, in which prisoners act as a source of confidential emotional support to other prisoners. Whilst the value of these schemes is acknowledged in policy discourse and through anecdotal accounts, there is very little empirical evidence as to the outcomes or benefits of peer schemes. Despite this NOMS is planning to offer some form of mentoring or peer support to all offenders across England and Wales (NOMS, 2011). The following discussion therefore assesses current knowledge on mentoring and peer support strategies and problematizes the government’s use of it given its enormous political and instrumental value.

Evidence in non-prison settings with non-offender cohorts suggest that mentoring and peer support can benefit individuals by: alleviating depression (Pfeiffer et al, 2011); improving attitudes and behaviour related to substance misuse (Black, Tobler & Sciacca, 1998; Parkin & McKeganey, 2000: 302); improving academic achievement (Hayashi & O’Donnell, 2004: 4); reducing the negative effects of bullying (Naylor & Cowie, 1999); enabling young people to resolve their own problems without professional assistance (Walker & Avis, 1999: 576); and fostering an environment of ‘care’ (Naylor & Cowie, 1999). Moreover, a number of positive effects have also been observed for the peer supporters and mentors themselves including: enhanced confidence, empowerment, skill development, and becoming better able to manage



their own problems (Cowie et al, 2002: 460-1; Shiner, 1999: 560-1; Parkin & McKeganey, 2000: 306).

Evidence of the outcomes of mentoring and peer support with offender populations is mixed. By far the most consistent finding is the effect that it has on peer supporters themselves in terms of enhancing their confidence, altering their self-perception, enhancing communication skills, and improving behaviour (Blair, 2006; Pollack, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Hunter & Boyce, 2009; Taylor, 2008) and in fact it is suggested that peer mentors or supporters might benefit more than those they support (Adair, 2005: 20). However, any longer-term effects have yet to be identified through research as prisoners are released into a hostile and challenging environment with limited future prospects.

When a prisoner is released, he returns to the very different conditions presented by the free world, where he must structure his own life, choices are required, many aspects of the environment are highly variable, and the range of possible behaviours is much greater than in prison. Whatever is learned in prison is mostly no longer applicable, because of the difference between the environments. [...] Good intentions notwithstanding, to expect criminal offenders to change their behaviour on the outside while confined to a cell is at best chimerical. (Zamble & Porporino, 1988: 154)

That does not mean that supporting others is a pointless activity for prisoners and released prisoners to engage in, but it does reinforce the fact that prisoners leave the prison walls only to “face another brick wall”<sup>4</sup>. More evidence is needed to address the experiences of prisoners post-release in order to realistically assess the potential long-term effects of mentoring as it

---

<sup>4</sup> These are the words of a Listener talking about his prospects on release.



appears unlikely that prisons can enable prisoners to lead “a good and useful life” on release (Fitzgerald & Sim, 1982: 55).

Peer support is founded upon the principle that people have something to offer each other which cannot be provided by professionals (Farrant & Levenson, 2002: 9; Philip & Sprat, 2007: 55). Thus, peer support is claimed to be beneficial to prisoners and offenders who prefer sources of support that are not primarily associated with ‘the system’ (Blair, 2006: 7; NOMS South West, 2008: 12; Parkin & McKeganey, 2000: 301). For example peers may have more insightful and realistic ideas about how to assist one another (Devilly et al, 2005: 223). Furthermore, more trusting and open relationships might be fostered between peers which could facilitate self-disclosure for particularly sensitive topics (Brannon & Larson, 1991; Fletcher, Sherk & Jucovy, 2009: 32) and reduce isolation in prison (Pollack, 2004: 702).

Whilst fostering a positive relationship has been identified as central to the impact mentors or peer supporters might have on offenders (Fletcher, Sherk & Jucovy, 2009; Hayashi & O'Donnell, 2004; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2007; Maguire et al, 2008; McClanahan, 2007), there is very little evidence that it is effective with certain outcomes (Brown & Ross, 2010: 33). For example research has found that: it has little effect on improving family relationships (Philip & Sprat, 2007: 45); could put prisoners under enhanced levels of distress through taking on the burden of supporting their peers whilst experiencing their own issues; mentoring does not necessarily offer a ‘cheaper’ alternative to state or private provision despite the use of volunteer labour (Porteous, 2007: 22); it may not impact on problems of an emotional nature (Hayashi & O'Donnell, 2004: 6); finally, and importantly, given government's fixation with this outcome, it may not impact on longer-term rates of re-offending (Philip & Sprat, 2007; Porteous, 2007: 22) and could in fact slightly increase the risk of re-offending (Blechman et al, 2000). It is, furthermore, not clear whether prisoners in fact favour peer based support systems



over professional sources (see chapter 4; Devilly et al, 2005: 229-31). Peer networks can equally be used for illicit as opposed to socially accepted purposes (Deville et al, 2005: 233). Overall, Jolliffe and Farrington (2007) conclude that the most ‘methodologically sound’ studies find no effects of mentoring at all. Even a review of mentoring studies conducted as part of a ‘scoping exercise’ by NOMS South West, suggested that evidence was at best mixed, and at worst suggestive of only short term change – if any – for mentees (NOMS South West, 2008; see also Porteous, 2007).

The difficulty with the above research is that it is difficult to attempt to operationalise outcomes like ‘re-offending’ (Collins, 2011; Fox & Albertson, 2011). Furthermore, official conceptions of a ‘successful’ ‘outcome’ might be different to voluntary sector organisations’ conceptions. Research needs to ask – What benefits are being looked for? What is a ‘benefit’? Whom should benefit? How is benefit assessed? Furthermore, this thesis asserts that a more balanced consideration of both positive and negative outcomes and issues that arise in the operation of peer mentoring and support schemes is needed. The narrow government-driven focus on quantitative outcomes, normally associated with rates of re-offending, overlooks important questions such as how prisoners feel about peer sources of support, reasons why they choose it or not, their experiences of peer support, how (or indeed if) peer support is facilitated by staff, how peer supporters conduct their work, and the issues they encounter. The current study therefore advocates an approach where the operation of a scheme supported by a voluntary sector organisation can be analysed considering the perspectives of service-users (prisoners), peer supporters (Listeners) and prison staff.



## 2.4 Conclusion

The weakness of the chain arises not from its weakest link but from the sum total of the weakness of every link. (Fox & Albertson, 2011: 410)

The strategy adopted by the New Labour government towards the voluntary sector, and the use of peer support and mentoring across the criminal justice system, is thought to be problematic on a number of levels, not least because of the lack of evidence that exists to support claims that it ‘works’. Successive governments encouraged the development of relationships based on ‘partnership’ when in fact they created a market of penal service provision via mechanisms of contestability. Rather than valuing the nature, character and work of the voluntary sector, governments have attempted to engage with the sector as providers of public services (Rumgay & Cowan, 1998: 127; Zimmeck, 2010: 97). Arguably, one result has been that rather than fostering a cohesive, trusting and more active civil society, government has extended the firm grip and scope of the state machinery (Ryan & Ward, 1989: 91) by attempting to co-opt cheaper providers and using voluntary organisations’ philanthropic goals to legitimise institutions, such as prisons, as places that can foster active citizenship among criminal populations.

The bulk of the current research took place between 2006 and 2010 when New Labour were in power. Since 2010 a new coalition government of Conservative and Liberal Democrat composition has taken over. Like its predecessor, the coalition government appears to be ingraining professionalism, competition and performance further through ‘payment by results’; which involves providers being rewarded for reducing levels of re-offending. This latter development threatens to exacerbate the issues and problems highlighted in the foregoing discussion. For example, voluntary organisations may not be able to afford *a priori* evaluations



of their work to set them in good stead in funding bids, and moreover innovative ideas and approaches will not initially have an evidence base to support them. There is also a new and important set of concerns that relate to what monetary value is given to ‘reducing re-offending’, what rates of re-offending will be deemed as rewardable, what measures can be used to assess it, and on what scale research would have to be conducted to robustly assess it (see Collins, 2011; Fox & Albertson, 2011)

Having outlined the political context in which the current doctoral research took place, one point emerges very clearly. The government regards the voluntary sector as a potentially cost-effective and legitimising tool for aspects of service provision, despite a lack of evidence to support hypotheses as to the link between volunteering and reduced re-offending. Moreover, this instrumentalism overlooks the more varied and wider impacts that schemes or projects supported by the voluntary sector have such as providing accommodation, providing emotional support, improving literacy, or the complexities of operating schemes at ground level. This thesis therefore explicitly addresses these issues, among others, using the Listener scheme as an example of such schemes.



## **Chapter 3**

### **‘Reaching out’ and ‘breaking in’: the evolution of the Listener scheme in prisons**

This chapter considers one example of a peer support scheme – the Listener scheme – which is the focus of this study. As outlined in chapter 1, Listeners are prisoners who are selected, trained and supported by Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to prisoners. The account that follows traces the development of Samaritans’ work in prisons. It explores the partnership between Samaritans and the Prison Service and how both organisations have engaged with one another to support prisoners. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the emergence of the current study in the context of scarce and anecdotal evidence of the ‘impact’ of the Listener scheme, and as part of Samaritans’ expanding research activities. The discussion aims to introduce the reader to some of the tensions and challenges that are posed by the operation of the Listener scheme in prisons that are subsequently developed in this thesis.

### **3.1 ‘Reaching out’ and ‘breaking in’**

Unlike many voluntary sector organisations currently engaging with offenders across the criminal justice system whose core focus is offender groups, Samaritans is an organisation whose prison volunteering work represents one branch of activity, albeit a significant one. This first section introduces the working practices and policies of Samaritans and traces the



emergence of its prison ‘outreach’ work. This section further outlines how Samaritans’ involvement with prisons changed from supporting prisoners directly to training prisoners to become peer supporters during the 1990s.

### **3.1.1 Samaritans and prison outreach work**

The work of Samaritans was started in the 1950s by a vicar from London, Chad Varah. This was at a time when suicide was a criminal offence. Varah was concerned by the volume of people who felt unable to open up about the taboo subject of suicidal feelings and wished to offer them a ‘lifeline’ in the form of a safe, confidential space to talk which could help to alleviate these feelings (Varah, 1965). Varah set up a phone line and had drop in sessions for people in need of a listening ear; however the demand quickly grew to the extent where volunteers were needed to give refreshments to people waiting to talk to Varah. These volunteers proved that they could also provide a sympathetic listening ear to people in need and in 1953 became the first ‘Samaritans’.<sup>1</sup> The organisation quickly grew and spread nationally to the extent that by 1976 there were 167 branches across the UK (Forrest, 2003: 13).<sup>2</sup>

Today there are 202 branches and across the whole of the UK providing confidential support via phone, email, letter, face-to-face, mini-com, Typetalk, and text (Samaritans, 2011a: 9).<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Whilst Varah was a vicar, and many of the early volunteers were Christian, the organisation was not run as a religious charity. The philanthropic goals and approach was very much in line with the work of religious and Christian organisations at the time however. The name ‘Samaritans’ was coined by the Daily Mirror who called them ‘The Good Samaritans’.

<sup>2</sup> It is also worthy of note that suicide remained a punishable effect until the Suicide Act of 1961. Johnson (1981) claims that Chad Varah and Samaritans had much to do with putting pressure on government to change the treatment of people who were suicidal and therefore acted as a pressure group as well as a support organisation.

<sup>3</sup> This figure includes ‘brick’ branches where Samaritans emotional support services are provided. It also includes ‘festival branch’ and ‘correspondence branch’ made up of volunteers from across the UK who offer emotional support at festivals, and respond to contacts via letter.



The phone is the dominant form that Samaritans connect with their ‘callers’<sup>4</sup> with 85.2% of all contacts during 2010 made via this method (Samaritans, 2011a). Samaritans also engage in a number of ‘outreach’ activities in schools, at festivals and in prisons. In 2010 there were 14,420 ‘listening volunteers’ and approximately 4,000 additional volunteers involved in other volunteering activities (Samaritans, 2011a). Samaritans was the first organisation to offer a helpline which is open twenty-four hours a day, and the provision of this round-the-clock support remains a priority today. Whilst Samaritans is a UK-based organisation, they receive calls from all over the world where Samaritans’ model of support is unavailable. Statistics collated by Samaritans (Samaritans 2011a: 8) indicate that Samaritans are contacted every 5 seconds. In 2010 Samaritans received 4,957,574 calls in total, over half of which (2,720,970) were ‘dialogue calls’ where a caller felt able to talk. Of those calls where a caller felt able to talk, 20.3% of phone callers, 42.9% of email callers and 52.2% of text callers expressed suicidal feelings.

Samaritans volunteers use a non-directive, active listening approach when engaging with callers, allowing the caller to direct the call and make their own decisions. At the heart of Samaritans’ work is the policy of confidentiality: all disclosures made by callers remain completely confidential. Furthermore, for the large majority of cases, callers remain anonymous as calls are not traced and records kept centre of the nature of the contact rather than detailing identifying information on callers. Whilst there are some exceptions to confidentiality<sup>5</sup> Samaritans is recognised as having a much broader policy of confidentiality than is used in health or counselling settings, and is maintained even after the death of a caller. Furthermore, Samaritans have developed a distinctive approach in engaging with suicidal and actively suicidal callers. During every contact, volunteers are expected to ask ‘the suicide

---

<sup>4</sup> This is the term used by Samaritans to describe their service-users.

<sup>5</sup> Confidentiality would not be maintained for the following: a court subpoena, bomb or terrorist warnings, consent from a caller to pass on information, where a caller appears to be incapable of making a rational decision, where a caller threatens or attacks a volunteer, and if a caller disrupts the availability of the service to other callers.



question’ and attempt to explore suicidal feelings expressed. Ideally however, the aim is to talk to callers before feelings and problems escalate to the point of suicide. Volunteers will also stay on the phone with a caller where an act of suicide is in progress, and until a caller dies if necessary.

Like many other organisations, Samaritans has developed and changed since its inception. Samaritans are significantly less interventionist than in the past, when volunteer ‘flight squads’ would go out to callers who needed assistance and changed their minds about suicide. Whilst volunteers do not physically go out now, they will call an ambulance if the caller wishes. Callers can also visit branches themselves for face-to-face support and Samaritans do engage in a number of ‘outreach’ activities which aim to proactively engage with people potentially in need of support. During 2001-4 their ‘Facing the Future’ initiative prompted the re-branding of the logo and clear statements of the ‘Mission, Vision and Values’. These have also been more recently updated (see Box 1).



*Box 1 – Vision, Mission and Values of Samaritans<sup>6</sup>*

**The Vision**

Samaritans Vision is that fewer people die by suicide

**The Mission**

We work to achieve this Vision by making it our Mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicidal feelings and behaviour.

We do this by

- Being available 24 hours a day to provide emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of emotional distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide
- Reaching out to high risk groups and communities to reduce the risk of suicide
- Working in partnership with other organisations, agencies and experts
- Influencing public policy and raising awareness of the challenges of reducing suicide

**The Values**

We are committed to the following values:

- Listening, because exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options available to them
- Confidentiality, because if people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings
- People making their decisions wherever possible, because we believe that people have the right to find their own solution and telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them
- Being non-judgemental, because we want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection
- Human contact, because giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need and reduces distress and despair

Samaritans are currently publicised as an emotional health charity, but the historical links to support with suicidal distress is still clearly central. It is this link to suicide work that prompted their involvement in prisons. During the 1980s there was a dramatic increase in the number of self-inflicted deaths in custody, and a growing concern and awareness of issues related to suicide and self-harm among prisoners (Biggar & Neal, 1996: 208). Suicide also became a matter receiving increasing attention by academics who began to look at risk factors of ‘self-inflicted’ deaths in custody (e.g. Dooley, 1990; Griffiths, 1990; Lloyd, 1990; Topp, 1979; Wool & Dooley, 1987). Prison suicides had become a “highly sensitive political issue” (Biggar

---

<sup>6</sup> Source: [http://www.samaritans.org/about\\_samaritans/governance\\_and\\_history/our\\_mission.aspx](http://www.samaritans.org/about_samaritans/governance_and_history/our_mission.aspx)  
Retrieved December 2011.



& Neal, 1996: 208) because they raised questions about the role and impact of the institution on those incarcerated there.

A small number of Samaritans branches began working with prisons during the 1980s as part of a broader outreach strategy aiming to target groups most in need of support and least likely to access it (The Samaritans, 1990). Prisoners were a group who were unable to access Samaritans, and did not have readily available listening ears. Kathy Biggar, a volunteer for Samaritans and a probation officer at Wandsworth prison at the time, observed that no one had talked to an actively suicidal prisoner about how he felt; the prisoner indicated to Biggar that he would have felt better if he had been able to talk to someone (Biggar, 1999). Samaritans had long recognised that creating a safe space for individuals to talk was an effective approach to suicide prevention. Not only that, but their non-judgemental approach suggested that they could see beyond the prisoner’s crime and support the person. It was soon realised by volunteers that attempting to foster and maintain working relationships with prisons was no easy task. Many prison governors at first resisted contact and often relationships were described as difficult to manage and maintain (Samaritans, 2011b: 12). Samaritans were attempting to ‘break in’ to a traditionally very closed environment. Moreover, even after suicide was no longer a statutory offence, self-harm remained a disciplinary offence for some time after the Suicide Act (1961) (Posen, 2001), thus continuing to stigmatise expressions of distress or coping mechanisms adopted by prisoners.<sup>7</sup> Biggar (1999: 45) recalled that it took years of “gentle enquiring, negotiating and persevering” at both a local and national level to turn these patchy links into a more formal partnership. In the 1980s volunteers initially engaged with prisons by delivering training and awareness sessions to staff, promoting Samaritans support in prisoner education classes, visiting prisoners, and offering emotional support and training to staff. Two evaluations conducted by Samaritans during the late 1980s

---

<sup>7</sup> Indeed it is arguable that self-harmers continue to be disciplined in less overt ways today, for example by suggesting that they are ‘manipulators’ (see chapters 4 and 9), or by confining self-harmers to ‘strip-cell’ conditions.



revealed that prison outreach work varied greatly in terms of the quality and quantity of contact which volunteers had established with prisoners (The Samaritans, 1990: 3; Samaritans, 2011b: 4).

Studies conducted by several government bodies and working groups raised the profile of suicide in prison as a pressing concern (Home Office, 1984; Home Office, 1986; HMCIP, 1990). The evidence generated through these reports pointed to a need to adopt a new approach towards suicide and move away from the ‘medical model’ whereby medical staff managed the care and treatment of self-harming and suicidal prisoners. Whilst, at this stage, the concept of ‘peer support’ was not yet in existence more widely, Samaritans were increasingly looked towards in relation to prisoners ‘at risk’ (for example see Circular Instruction to Governors: CI 3/1987). By 1990 approximately sixty branches had some form of contact (such as those forms noted above) with their local prisons (The Samaritans, 1990). In May 1991 the ‘Suicide Awareness Support Unit’ (hereafter referred to as SASU) was formed at Prison Service headquarters (Biggar & Neal, 1996: 207). SASU was put in place to oversee the national strategy on prison suicide, to promote good practice, develop training, act as a point of reference for prisons, and offer support after a suicide had taken place. Biggar was seconded to work in a three year post for SASU and Samaritans to develop joint working between the two organisations.

### **3.1.2 Developing and rolling out Listener schemes**

During the late 1970s Sally Casper, a Samaritans volunteer from the USA, was seconded to Samaritans in the UK. During this time she shared her experiences with Biggar about using prisoners as a resource in a scheme called ‘Lifeline’ (see Hogarth, 1984) whereby prisoners supported their peers and worked in a ‘fellowship’ with staff to prevent suicide (Samaritans,



2011b: 8). Biggar wished to introduce something like this in UK prisons. This was prior to government policy promoting ‘active citizenship’ and volunteering among prisoners described in chapter 2, and therefore allowing prisoners to take on such responsibilities or roles was alien to the prison culture. Whilst the idea of using prisoners to support one another was controversial, there was some recognition that prisoners did in fact talk to their peers, that they played a role in prisoners’ adaptation to prison (McHugh, 1999: 21), and that prisoners might prefer to talk to peers in some instances (Snow, 2000). In this sense, the implementation of a peer support scheme would represent the formalisation of a naturally occurring process between prisoners. In 1991 the tragic death of Philip Knight, a fifteen year old remand prisoner at HMP Swansea, charged with stealing a handbag, and the youngest person to have died in custody at the time, set in motion a series of events that was to alter the way the Prison Service approached suicide. This case highlighted the inadequacy of the Prison Service’s approach to suicide. Knight had previously expressed a desire to die and had self-harmed, however, these warning signs had been ignored by staff (Coles & Ward, 1994: 134-5). The ‘traumatic year’ (Davies, 1994: 125) experienced by HMP Swansea, led the governor to trial a peer befriending scheme led by Samaritans, formalising the mechanisms of mutual support that had long been in existence between prisoners, and changing the way Samaritans engaged with prisons and prisoners. Biggar began supporting Swansea Samaritans to introduce a befriending scheme in HMP Swansea. The first group of trained prisoners called themselves ‘The Swansea Listeners’ and the name ‘Listeners’ was eventually adopted nationally.

After the successful introduction of the first Listener scheme, staff and volunteers from the pilot site promoted the scheme through a series of seminars organised by SASU. On the ground level, Samaritans’ efforts at establishing Listener schemes in prison was conducted with varying success; Samaritans were learning to volunteer in a unique and challenging environment (Samaritans, 2011b: 10-12). As a consequence it was found that volunteers were



often inexperienced, and relationships with prison governors and staff proved difficult to establish and maintain. Volunteers were sometimes received with hostility, and were unaware of and sometimes violated security issues. In fairness, these difficulties arose from Samaritans’ lack of knowledge about the prison environment, unclear expectations and different interpretation of arrangements between both parties. Furthermore, the Listener scheme was not easy for prison staff to accept. Staff have a duty of care for prisoners.<sup>8</sup> The policy of ‘confidentiality’ was seen as operating against the grain of established working practices where information sharing is the norm, and knowledge about prisoners is easily obtainable and observable. Since the early days, more co-ordinated efforts at establishing links with prisons have been prompted and supported by guidance materials published by Samaritans (The Samaritans, 1990; 1993; 1998; Samaritans, 2006; 2008). Despite these difficulties the Listener scheme was adopted by prisons at a rapid rate; in 1993 there were 20 schemes in operation and an additional 15 in their early stages, and by 1995 there were 70 schemes, which jumped up to 100 the following year (Samaritans, 2011b: 13-4).

The Listener scheme is the most common way that Samaritans branches engage in prisons. However, where a Listener scheme is not feasible, on grounds of the ages of prisoners for example, Samaritans volunteers might visit prisons to provide confidential emotional support themselves. Governors of young offenders’ institutions (YOIs) holding only ‘juvenile’ prisoners (15-17 year olds) have the discretion to refuse access to Samaritans on the grounds that ‘juveniles’ lack sufficient maturity to become Listeners and are often serving very short sentences thus posing problems for maintaining Listener schemes (Safer Custody Group, no date; Samaritans, 2011b: 29) and undoubtedly the policy of confidentiality is more difficult to accept when it comes to prisoners who are still legally children. Dedicated cordless phones that can be used to call Samaritans and requested by prisoners at any time of the day or night are

---

<sup>8</sup> See Livingstone, Owen and Macdonald (2003: 242) for the legal background to this duty of care.



now available in the majority of prisons. At the time when the current research began, there were 125 Listener schemes across England and Wales<sup>9</sup> and were favoured by the Prison Service as the following statement illustrates: “Establishments should not close down a Listener scheme in favour of another scheme” (Safer Custody Group, no date: 5). By 2010, 123 Samaritans branches were supporting 158 prisons across the whole of the UK. Furthermore, approximately 1,550 Listeners were trained, and Listener supported their peer ‘callers’ in over 90,000 contacts (Samaritans, 2011a). The Howard League (2001b) reported that during a three month period in 2001, Listeners in a female prison were called out 495 times. These figures begin to provide evidence for the demand for listening support among prisoners.

### 3.2 Developing the partnership

At the time of the introduction of the Listener scheme in prisons, the Prison Service was beginning to change its approach from a predominantly ‘medical model’, where responsibility for the care of the suicidal and self-harming was referred to medical and health care staff, to a more multi-disciplinary model where responsibility was shared between departments. This shift was promoted through policy and training materials (HMPS, 1992; 1993). The role of Samaritans and Listeners in suicide prevention in prisons was subsequently consolidated through the Prison Service’s strategy ‘Caring for the Suicidal in Custody’ (HMPS, 1994):

The Prison Service with the support of The Samaritans decided on a fundamental change of direction. The *care* of prisoners required a broader approach in which responsibility was not entrusted only to hard-pressed health care services but *shared* by everyone in contact with prisoners. (Biggar & Neal, 1996: 209. Emphasis in original)

---

<sup>9</sup> The Listener scheme has also been adopted and is widespread in Scottish prisons. Up-take has occurred later, and at a much slower rate in Ireland.



The strategy strengthened the role of peer support mechanisms for prisoners. Forrest (2003) and Hooper (2002) claim that Samaritans had a key role in influencing the awareness of issues related to suicide and emotional support in prisons. This was facilitated by Biggar, in her secondment at SASU, who promoted the work of Samaritans and played a central role in increasing levels of acceptance of the role of Samaritans in prisons (Samaritans, 2011b: 7). By the mid-1990s ‘befriending’ provided by Listeners was seen as a core part of the Prison Service’s Suicide Awareness strategy (Biggar, 1996: 143; McHugh & Towl, 1997: 7). By 1997 it had become policy for prisons to work with Samaritans (Prison Service Instruction 32/1997).

In 1997 Samaritans appointed a ‘National Prison Support Co-ordinator’ to attend regular meetings with SASU to continue dialogue and joint working.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, this co-ordinator is supported by ‘Regional Prison Support Officers’ who provide guidance to Samaritans branches within their region. They also meet three times a year to report to the co-ordinator (Samaritans, 2011b: 16). Undoubtedly the well-organised national structure of Samaritans put them in a good position to engage with and influence the Prison Service. Not only that, but key figures such as Martin Narey, who became Director General of the Prison Service in 1998, were instrumental in advocating the work of Samaritans in prisons.

However, despite policy changes, and the more holistic approach adopted by the Prison Service, the thematic review of suicide conducted by the Chief Inspector for Prisons (HMCIP, 1999), highlighted that suicide was very much still an urgent issue and there were still areas where further improvements were required. That review criticised the use of suicide and self-harm care planning systems (known as the F2052SH) by staff who were charged with having to put prisoners on the care plan rather than actually providing care. The review further recommended the fostering of healthy relationships between staff and prisoners, and prompted

---

<sup>10</sup> This is a volunteer post now known as the ‘Prison Support Facilitator’ and works on a three year rotational basis in line with other volunteer posts for Samaritans.



the Prison Service to vigilantly review its policy of suicide prevention (Livingstone, Owen & Macdonald, 2003: 246). As part of developing its strategy towards suicide, the Prison Service subsequently appointed ‘Suicide Prevention Co-ordinators’ (SPCs) in busy ‘local’ prisons<sup>11</sup> where the rates of suicide and self-harm were particularly high (Liebling, 2007: 434). These co-ordinators oversaw the management of the suicide prevention strategy and were the main liaison point for Samaritans. The new strategy reinforced the multi-disciplinary approach by introducing support from mental health in-reach teams and extending the use of peer support. Situational prevention measures such as the use of ‘safer cells’<sup>12</sup> were used and new screening measures tested. Throughout the aforementioned changes in suicide prevention policy, Biggar and Samaritans were consulted by virtue of their role in SASU. The F2052SH system was replaced in 2004 by ‘Assessment Custody Care and Teamwork’ (ACCT). The ACCT approach was claimed to build on previous systems by attempting to address needs, appointing a ‘case manager’ and undergoing a fuller risk assessment process of prisoners (Safer Custody Group, 2003: 5).

Shortly after the 1999 thematic review, Samaritans conducted a review on ‘Resources in prisons’ (The Samaritans, 2000) which highlighted two main issues. The first problem was one of co-ordination of resourcing. Each Samaritans branch is registered as an individual charity, therefore funding arrangements to cover volunteers’ expenses were agreed between individual Samaritans branches and prisons. Around two fifths of branches were not in receipt of any financial support at all, whilst others were being ‘over-paid’. Moreover it was highlighted that not only was the introduction of the Listener scheme based on the belief of the effectiveness of peer support systems, but further to this, the Listener scheme was a much more cost-effective source of support, as it tapped into a resource readily available within prisons (Samaritans,

---

<sup>11</sup> “Local prisons hold prisoners who are remanded in custody prior to or during trial, convicted prisoners with short sentences, and prisoners awaiting allocation to training establishments.” (Crewe, 2009: 29).

<sup>12</sup> These are cells that reduce the opportunities for prisoners to harm themselves, by reducing the number of ligature points for example.



2011b: 21). The second key point made by this review was that given the scarcity of resources, Samaritans ought to focus their efforts where the rates of suicide were the highest. These were known as ‘Risk 1’ prisons.<sup>13</sup> Both the Prison Service’s strategy, and the review conducted by Samaritans, advocated an approach where efforts and resources were focussed on where they were deemed most urgently required.<sup>14</sup>

SASU, which became the ‘Safer Custody Group’ (hereafter referred to as SCG) in 2002<sup>15</sup>, supported an application by Samaritans to the Active Community Unit to facilitate the on-going monitoring and development of the Listener scheme. The application was successful and the SCG matched the funds obtained, so that Samaritans were in receipt of £93,250 per year for a three year period. The funds were used to conduct and implement the recommendations of an in-house assessment of the Listener scheme in ‘Risk 1’ prisons, known as the ‘Risk 1’ project (The Samaritans, 2001c: 3). Furthermore, two paid employees were appointed to oversee the development, monitoring and training needs of Samaritans’ prison work in the London and Midlands regions (Samaritans, 2004: 11-13). The findings of the ‘Risk 1’ Project (see section 3.3) were digested and disseminated and further guidance material was issued for branches. More training sessions and workshops were held, improvements were made to systems of monitoring through statistical collection of information and putting in place more support systems, and the scheme was advertised to prisoners (Samaritans, 2004). Perhaps the biggest and most significant change was the improvement of the ‘Listener Initial Training’ (LIT) package, a course designed and led by Samaritans to train prisoners as Listeners, which was issued in 2006 after a period of design, consultation and piloting.

---

<sup>13</sup> Prisons were categorised according to four groups from highest to lowest risk: ‘Risk 1’, ‘Risk 2’, ‘Risk 3’ and ‘Risk 4’ prisons.

<sup>14</sup> This ‘triaging’ has not remained a dominant concern for Samaritans’ provision in prisons and currently Samaritans attempt to support Listener schemes wherever possible as long as volunteer resources permit.

<sup>15</sup> Later, in 2008 the Safer Custody Group was once again re-branded as ‘Safer Custody and Offender Policy’ (SCOP) when it became a sub-group of the commissioning and operational policy directorate within NOMS. Even more recently the group has been renamed once more and is currently ‘Offender Safety, Rights and Responsibilities’ (OSRR).



The three year period where Samaritans were conducting and implementing the ‘Risk 1’ project, was mirrored by a three year development program by the SCG to oversee the development of the Listener scheme and extend the use of peer support more widely in prisons. During this period, the Prison Service introduced its own scheme, called ‘Insiders’ which was designed to provide newly arrived prisoners with information about prison life to ease their distress and assist with their adjustment. The SCG also led a ‘women’s peer support project’ designed to improve access to peer support in women’s prisons. The stated intention of NOMS was to extend the use of peer support in areas other than suicide prevention. Later in 2003, Prison Service Order 2700 came into effect and reinforced the multi-disciplinary or holistic approach of the previous decade. Here Samaritans’ support was positioned as a core tool of suicide prevention. When this PSO was revised and re-issued in 2007, whilst support for Samaritans is clearly evident, here we also see that other groups and other peer support schemes are encouraged and viewed more widely as contributing to suicide prevention.<sup>16</sup> It is evident that the Listener scheme was therefore the first scheme to be developed as part of a wider phase of experimentation by the Prison Service with peer support in several areas of prison life. Examples include: Buddies, mental health mentors, Insiders, drug support workers, Citizen’s Advice Bureau workers, and peer education support. That the 2007 PSO also encouraged prisons to formalise their agreements with Samaritans, reflects trends in which partnerships were becoming more contractual and delivery oriented. The contractual nature of the relationship was pushed further through ‘The Volunteering Guide to Prisons’ (NOMS, 2006b: 37) which suggested that contractual agreements between prisons and Samaritans branches were more desirable as they enabled responsibilities and boundaries to be clearly defined.

---

<sup>16</sup> The implications that ‘alternative’ services being tested by the Prison Service in order to introduce competition is inescapable (see chapter 5).



During 2011 this was taken one step further through a national funding contract between Samaritans and NOMS, set for three years. Whilst beforehand funding arrangements were localised, and some funds were provided to Samaritans’ General Office for the development and support of prison outreach work, the new funding framework provides all funding centrally to be allocated to branches in a more even-handed way; there is also a budget for evaluative and development work. Whilst in some senses this seems like a positive step forward, the new contractual funding arrangements highlighted that the continuation of the partnership is dependent on the continued good working relationships with the Prison Service, and the availability of resources (Samaritans, 2011b: 34). Much has changed since the early days of the Listener scheme and many more organisations are prepared to work with prisoners and have managed to establish partnerships with prisons. ‘Listening’ services are also more widely available to prisoners now through a range of counselling services and support groups. Despite Samaritans’ approach and strong links with issues to suicide prevention, there is scope for future competition and exposure to a ‘contestability’ or ‘payment by results’ framework. Moreover, voluntary organisations face pressure to get their training programmes ‘accredited’ (Palmer, 2002; White, 2000: 12) by NOMS so that they are recognised more widely. Samaritans also faces this pressure despite the fact that its training and systems of volunteer support is already valued and well-respected by professionals (Forrest, 2003: 33; Johnson, 1981). This risks assimilating Samaritans into Prison Service structures and could threaten its independence. Indeed, Samaritans’ and Listeners’ work have become “part of the fabric” of suicide prevention in prison (Cooney & Braggins, 2010: 36). This is a significant risk given that Samaritans’ policy of confidentiality clearly separates Samaritan and Listener support from prison procedures, yet simultaneously Samaritans and Listeners have also become part of Prison Service strategies of suicide prevention. This highlights the context in which the Listener scheme operates.



### **3.3 Research and the Listener scheme**

It is widely claimed, on less substantial evidence, that the presence of the Listener scheme and Samaritans in prisons has had a positive influence on policy, improved awareness and training, and it is claimed that it has positively influenced the channels of communication through a culture that encourages talk (Davies, 1994; Medlicott, 2001: 222). This paucity is not unusual in the context of the variability of peer mentoring impacts more widely (Brown & Ross, 2010: 31). There has been very little research specifically concerning Listeners or Samaritans in prisons, and in particular which specifically considers the perspectives of users of the Listener scheme. The discussion that follows reviews existing documented knowledge about the Listener scheme.

Davies (1994), a senior probation officer at HMP Swansea, published his observations and findings arising from a small number of interviews with Listeners and prison staff three years after the Listener scheme was first introduced in the establishment. Davies suggested that the impact of the Listener scheme was wider than could simply be ‘pigeon-holed’ as suicide and self-harm prevention. For example, it freed up staff to focus on other tasks, was claimed to change the culture and attitudes of staff, and staff reported feeling safer having additional measures in place to support prisoners. A series of internal Prison Service reviews, conducted between 1993-1998, (reported by Snow, 2000; Snow and Biggar, 2006) provides some preliminary evidence of some of the potential benefits and risks of the presence of the Listener peer support scheme. The presence of the scheme was described as ‘helpful’ by prison staff; Listeners were reported to have fostered positive relationships with prison staff and they enjoyed an enhanced status among prisoners. However, staff also expressed reservations about the policy of confidentiality and there was evidence that the policy was widely misunderstood. These ‘in-house’ assessments, generated early on in the scheme’s development, placed



emphasis on the instrumental benefit of the scheme for prison staff, aimed at actors and focussed on concrete problems and possible solutions.

The aforementioned ‘Risk 1’ project (The Samaritans, 2001a; 2001b; 2001c) was the largest and most significant evaluation that had been conducted since the introduction of the Listener scheme a decade earlier. That review was conducted by a team mostly consisting of Samaritans volunteers and was supported by the SCG nationally. Observations were made by the project team of positive relationships between dedicated staff and volunteers, and with respect to the perceived benefits to suicide prevention. Despite this a number of issues of concern were highlighted, for example (Samaritans, 2001b: 15-20) prison staff continued to raise reservations over the confidentiality policy and expressed a desire for Listeners and Samaritans to pursue avenues for information sharing. Some Listeners were being paid which undermined the ‘voluntary’ nature of the role. Furthermore, Listeners’ movements to callers were not always facilitated smoothly by staff, or in some instances were deliberately obstructed, and there were examples of breaches of confidentiality in almost a third of the prisons assessed, albeit these were considered to be minor breaches.

The ‘Safer Locals Evaluation’, testing the effectiveness of the abovementioned revised suicide prevention strategy (2002), concluded that the Listener scheme was of greatest benefit to prisoners during the initial phases of custody, where prisoner distress is high as they attempt to adapt to their new circumstances (Liebling, 2007: 436). When the Listener scheme was introduced by the Scottish Prison Service as part of its revised strategy towards suicide in prison, an evaluation of the Listener scheme was included. It was found that Listeners supported a large number of prisoners who had not been identified as at risk of suicide through formal procedures (Power et al, 2003: 116). This finding was taken to suggest that Listener support was ‘complementary’ to, and not a ‘duplicate’ of, support provided by the Scottish



Prison Service. The scheme’s ‘service-users’ did not indicate clear evidence that they felt significantly better after talking to a Listener, although those who were considered at risk of suicide did appear to be more likely to report a positive effect (Power et al, 2003: 124).

Richman (2004) surveyed and interviewed Listeners and prison staff in one establishment. He suggested that the Listener role consisted of wider tasks than simply ‘listening’. Richman also suggested that Listeners who achieved an enhanced status and who had greater levels of engagement with prison staff, could become marginal to the prison ‘community’ arising from a ‘quasi-professional’ status. However Richman did not delve into these issues in any significant depth. Dhaliwal and Harrower (2009) also centred their attention on Listeners and report a small scale piece of research on the impact participation had on the Listeners themselves. Listeners reported a sense of achievement, benefitted from better relationships with staff and other prisoners, reported enhanced self-esteem and confidence, felt they were well respected, and felt that they had become open-minded and better people. These authors also note some of the challenges Listeners face through maintaining confidentiality and recommended additional support and training from Samaritans (see also Farrant, 2005). A small number of reflective accounts by Listeners have been published (Anon, 1999a; 1999b; 2006; Carolissen, 1996; Chinelo, 2010); these accounts suggest that helping others has a profound effect on Listeners, enhances their skills and elicits a sense of satisfaction. Reflections from Samaritans volunteers also suggest that Listeners benefitted personally from the experience (Samaritans, 2011b: 33-4).

The above evidence is patchy, often generated from small-scale studies or in-house reviews and centres on the views of Listeners and staff. The views of prisoners in general, and ‘callers’ have been neglected. The current PhD aimed to provide empirical evidence through a larger national study which included the views of prisoners. As chapter 4 will go on to explore,



understanding how peer support schemes operate can also shed light on some of the challenges and dilemmas that are faced, as well as the potential ‘benefits’ to volunteers and service-users.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

One of the main obstacles in monitoring the ‘impact’ of Samaritans’ support on the outside has been the confidentiality and anonymity of volunteers’ contacts with callers. A couple of early attempts to link the presence of Samaritans branches with reduced rates of suicide in their immediate area proved too problematic due to the complex causes underlying suicide (Cutter, 1979; Forrest, 2003: 87). This complexity means that it would be extremely difficult to disentangle potential causes to establish that one factor had prevented a death. Whilst anonymity is less possible in the prison environment, the confidential nature of the contact Listeners have with their callers means that only very limited statistics on caller rates and numbers of Listeners are held. As Zamble and Porporino (1988) note, it is particularly problematic attempting to evaluate the ‘impact’ of services and interventions in prisons, because of the on-going impact of the prison environment itself. Of course, despite the prevalence of Samaritan and Listener support, self-harm and suicide are still pressing issues in prison. For example, self-harm has increased in high security prisons, women’s prisons and young offender’s institutions between 2001 and 2008 (Brooker, Flynn & Fox, 2010)

Clearly Samaritans and Listeners have a historical link with the prevention of suicide and self-harm in prisons and are structurally situated in policy with ‘safer custody’ and ‘suicide prevention’. Indeed, the official construction of the Listener scheme reinforces the link between ‘prison suicide’ and ‘suicide prevention’ which reduces the use of the Listener scheme to a suicide prevention tool. This approach is in danger of overlooking the potential varied benefits of the scheme and issues that arise in its operation, for example in terms of



relationships between prisoners, relationships between staff, prisoner well-being. It can ignore wider, important questions related to how voluntary work is conducted by prisoners, how it is facilitated and used by staff, and prisoners’ views and use of it. Furthermore, the use of levels of suicide or self-harm also draws attention away from the impact (both positive and negative) of the scheme on Listeners through the role they adopt, and further the role of staff in facilitating peer support. Moreover, the Listener scheme has been designed to be accessible to prisoners seeking support for a wide range of problems, before the situation escalates to suicidal feelings. The objective of this research therefore was not simply to consider the ‘impact’ of the Listener scheme, but to understand how it operates and how the different groups (prisoners, Listeners and staff) engage with it. Certainly, the topics of suicide and self-harm did arise during the course of the interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the impact, and indeed aims, of the Listener scheme is much more wide ranging than can simply be described in terms of the levels of suicide and self-harm (see also Bryans, Martin & Walker, 2002: 170; Corcoran, 2008: 37; Hudson, Maguire & Raynor, 2007: 643). The lack of existing knowledge on peer support as chapter 2 highlighted, and the Listener scheme as this chapter highlighted, illustrates that we need to know more about how these kinds of schemes operate. Whilst, in one respect the Listener scheme can be seen as a mere extension of Samaritan’s work, it equally must not be forgotten that the nature of the prison environment and the prisoner status of Listeners will make Listener work in prisons qualitatively different from Samaritans’ work on the outside. Voluntary work in prison is not the same as volunteering as a free citizen in the outside world. Furthermore, there is a need for research that does not test the ‘impact’ of the Listener scheme by adhering to official constructions that reduce the support provided by Listeners and Samaritans to a suicide prevention tool.

---

<sup>17</sup> One prisoner pulled up his sleeves to show me his scars from his self-harming. One female prisoner was covered in red scars, approximately one inch long on her arms, legs and up her neck. I also witnessed a young prisoner, gasping for air, being brought out from a cell having just been cut down from a noose. These were deeply chilling sights and among my most memorable experiences ‘in the field’.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Help-seeking, peer support and volunteering in the prison ‘community’**

This chapter reviews and critiques the literature on the prison ‘community’, coping with imprisonment, help-seeking and volunteering. It begins by considering both the classic and contemporary literature on relationships between prisoners, and between prisoners and staff. The construct of ‘community’ is challenged in favour of a view that recognises the more ‘atomistic’ and ‘individual’ aspects of prison life. This provides the context in which both seeking help and peer support takes place. Next, the painful, damaging and even deadly aspects of prison are explored by outlining the literature on coping and survival in the prison environment. The small body of literature on prisoners’ help-seeking preferences and activity will be explored in relation to the support from the main groups considered in this thesis – prison staff, prisoners (including Listeners), and people on the outside. The ‘barriers’ to help-seeking are also touched upon; for example prisoners’ ability to reach out for help, the risks associated with seeking help, and how prisons, as places of punishment, elicit a punitive undercurrent to all relationships that occur within it. Finally, the case is made for a need to see prison volunteering as qualitatively different from volunteering in other settings and as worthy of attention in its own right. In particular, the coercive nature of the prison environment raises questions about how ‘voluntary’ volunteering can be in prison. Furthermore, whilst they have not been explored in prison settings to date, the risks of volunteering in general as depicted in the literature are outlined, and the possible implications they might have in the prison environment are considered.



## **4.1 The prison ‘community’**

The prison sub-culturists were concerned with the inner social organisation of the prison, which was seen as a particular kind of society ‘inside’ the prison walls within the wider society on the ‘outside’. Scholars such as Clemmer (1940/68), Sykes (1958), Irwin (1970) and Goffman (1961) aimed to understand how prisoners responded to institutional life, closed off from the outside world, and how relationships inside the prison walls were formed in relation to the power imbalance between staff and prisoners. These studies used ethnographic or observational methods, often taking place within one prison, and largely conducted in America. Furthermore, these early prison researchers often gained access via employment connections with the prison authorities. This discussion outlines the main theoretical submissions and contributions made by these sub-culturists and considers the relevance of this knowledge for prison researchers today.

Clemmer (1940/58: 298) claimed that adaptation to prison life involved a process of ‘acculturation’ known as ‘prisonization’ where the practices and beliefs of the penitentiary culture are adopted by prisoners. According to Clemmer (1940/58: 312) prisoners who became more prisonized were more likely to re-offend, either in prison or after their release. Here then, prison culture is seen as ‘criminal’ as a result of an ‘anti-authority’ stance adopted through the cohesion between prisoners. A number of other prison scholars also placed emphasis on a process of becoming socialised into the culture and norms of the prison environment (Garabedian, 1982; Johnson, 1972: 195; Zamble & Porporino, 1988). That literature outlines how prisoners adopt codes and roles that guide their behaviour. The ‘inmate code’ consisted of a series of rules steering prisoner behaviour and interaction in opposition to staff, thus fostering more cohesive links between prisoners. ‘Argot roles’ reflected the degree of adherence to the code in relation to relationships with prisoners and staff and represented different styles of



adaptation to prison. Therefore roles adopted and codes adhered to, expressed by the degree of loyalty to fellow inmates, and were seen as an attempt to alleviate the painful and depriving nature of the prison experience (Clemmer, 1940/58: 152; Sykes, 1958: 85). Whilst not all prisoners fully adopted the inmate code, and the degree of adherence to it was not static over time, it was nevertheless considered an influential force on prisoner behaviour (Irwin, 1972: 190) and moreover a useful framework for understanding relationships in prisons.

Goffman (1961) described prisons as ‘total institutions’ in that they are all-encompassing and reach every aspect of an inmate’s life with judgement, monitoring and regulation. Self-determination is suppressed and inmates are reduced to a state of dependency and compliance. Upon entry to prison, inmates are subject to a ‘deep initial break with past roles’, cutting them off from the world outside via a ‘mortification process’ (Goffman, 1961: 24-5). This was described as a process that involves the removal of identity through the issuing of standard clothing, and measures taken to enforce compliance by removing power from prisoners and standardising their behaviour (Clemmer, 1940/58; Goffman, 1961: 25; Irwin, 1970). Furthermore, the process is ‘degrading’ in that punishment is synonymous with infantilisation (Goffman, 1957/1999: 321/13; de Vigiani, 2007: 123) and therefore reinforces the removal of any former status from the individual. This process is therefore symbolically as well as instrumentally significant in the transition from ‘outside’ to the ‘inside’ world.

The sub-cultural literature established a clear link between the ‘total’ and ‘punitive’ environment and the subsequent nature of relationships. For example, Sykes (1958) suggested that prisoners are deprived of: liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relations, autonomy and security. These deprivations or ‘pains of imprisonment’ shaped interactions in prison by driving prisoners towards ‘solidary’ or group organisation.



the greater the extent of “cohesive” responses – the greater the degree to which the society of captives moves in the direction of inmate solidarity – the greater is the likelihood that the pains of imprisonment will be rendered less severe for the inmate population as a whole. (Sykes, 1958: 107)

‘Solidarity’ or a sense of common purpose is one of the most prominent themes in this literature. A number of authors placed emphasis on the social distance, and the unequal power relationships between prisoners and staff (Cohen & Taylor, 1972; Goffman, 1961; Jacobs, 1977; Sykes, 1958). The primary role of prison staff is custodial, and prisoners are generally thought to be held against their will. Sykes (1958: 90) concedes that inmates were ‘polarized’; in other words, they appear in opposition to prison officers in order to get along with their peers. Therefore, the concept of solidarity is used to illustrate how inmates organise themselves into collective groups relative to their position in the institutional hierarchy. Likewise, Goffman (1961: 57) found evidence of ‘fraternization’ in response to the repressive nature of the institution, under a kind of common sympathy, however he suggested that this did not necessarily always lead to group solidarity among inmates, as there were also divisive forces at work. Sykes too was careful not to overstate prisoner solidarity:

The population of prisoners does not exhibit a perfect solidarity yet neither is the population of prisoners a warring aggregate. Rather it is a mixture of both and the society of captives lies balanced in an uneasy compromise. (Sykes, 1959: 83)

Nevertheless, Sykes felt that solidarity was a powerful, cohesive force among prisoners that influenced interactions in prisons.



Clemmer (1940/58: 113-129) found evidence for the formation of groups based upon common interest and loyalty, however, despite this claimed that approximately two fifths of the men in the prison could be described as not being integrated, and formed more superficial relationships with one another. Mathiesen (1965: 122-3) also observed evidence of bonded groups in prisons. However he suggested that these groups only existed temporarily, were vulnerable to disruption, and the majority of inmates could still be described as independent. Mathiesen (1965: 133) did find some evidence of norms of loyalty among prisoners, but they did not automatically result in the formation of groups defined by solidarity and cohesiveness. Instead prisoners lived in a more ‘atomized’ and individual state. Mathiesen (1965) went on to argue that inmates challenged staff actions and decisions in circumstances where they believed staff were not acting legitimately. This, he termed ‘censoriousness’ and suggested that it:

makes staff members feel that their distribution of benefits and burdens is illegitimate, whereupon their decision-making is changed in a way desirable from the view point of inmates. (Mathiesen, 1965: 150-1)

Therefore ‘censoriousness’ was essentially a response to the subordinate situation prisoners are in and an attempt to regain power and exert influence. Mathiesen’s argument is subtly different from Sykes in that Mathiesen’s form of solidarity was more instrumental for prisoners as they endeavoured to control their environment, whereas Sykes’ solidarity was more expressive to other prisoners as they adapted to institutional life.

In the late modern prison, prisoner solidarity has to a large extent been counteracted by atomising influences. One such source of atomisation is the ‘Incentives and Earned Privileges’ (IEP) scheme, making the costs of ‘solidary resistance’ high (Crewe, 2009: 230) as prisoners are deprived of luxuries such as TV and time out of cell if they do not comply with the prison



rules. The presence of drugs has also served to erode trusting relations between prisoners as prisoners may also benefit personally by informing on the illicit activities of other prisoners, which serves to reinforce the individual nature of pursuits inside (Crewe 2005b: 467; 2006; 2009: 231). The contemporary literature (for example see Crewe, 2009: 364) therefore supports Mathiesen’s (1965) view that relationships between prisoners are better described in more individualistic terms. However, the capacity for prisoners to act collectively in opposition to authority is nevertheless an ever-present threat. Here then, we see that opposing forces are present and come to the fore in different situations:

Staff-prisoner relations are marked by both inter-dependency and conflict. Similarly, prisoners themselves are a highly differentiated body of people whose relations with one another incorporate a variety of tendencies towards co-operation, and antagonism. (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 181)

Whilst then, in the sub-cultural literature, a ‘community’ of prisoners is presumed to exist inside the prison walls as a consequence of the isolation from the outside world (Irwin, 1972: 193), the degree to which it can be considered a ‘community’, characterised by trust, solidarity and cohesiveness is questionable.

Despite contemporary evidence, the word ‘community’ is still favoured. However, its use, both in prison research, and non-prison research is problematic because it implies cohesiveness and solidarity. As Clark (2007: 2) explains, the use of the word ‘community’ in criminology is problematic:



The idea of community is a confusing concept. It encapsulates issues of identity, and belonging, similarity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, place and time, processes such as modernization, and has been considered both a spatial and social phenomenon.

Therefore the definition of what constitutes ‘community’ and to what degree notions of ‘community’ are implied needs to be extremely clear in any study adopting the term. Furthermore, it is important not to assume that ‘community’ exists at all:

Just because people might dwell in the same geographic space does not mean they have any ties either to that space, or to other people around them; geographical propinquity does not mean social communality. (Clark, 2007: 5)

Whilst Clark was referring to communities in general, these claims are equally applicable in the prison environment. It is important not to presume that prisoners are a ‘community’ simply because they are held collectively together and are bound to the same location. In fact, there is much to operate against this as they are held in prison against their will, with people with whom they would not necessarily choose to associate with on the outside. In light of the evidence of the tensions of prison life, and the evidence for both solidary and divisive mechanisms between prisoners, the notion of the prison ‘community’ has been over-emphasised and needs to be deconstructed. Prison scholars such as Crewe have begun to work some way towards this. For example, he outlines a new way in which we should understand prisoners as a group:

Collectively, they are an aggregate rather than a ‘community’. The standardization of their experiences means that they have common interests, but not social solidarity as such. Their atomization has not been absolute and their world has not disintegrated into



a state of granular anomie, but it has crumbled into a range of apathetic social cells with few collective bonds. (Crewe, 2009: 455)

Therefore, when talking about the prison ‘community’ the atomized and self-interested nature of prisoner social relations must be borne in mind, whilst also exploring the specific circumstances under which prisoners form social relations with one another and the nature of these social relations. Prisoners might be thought of as a “special kind of community” (Liebling, 2004: 462) where cohesive forces and relationships vary over time and are not static.

Simon (2000: 287) notes that the classic sub-cultural literature helped to carve out a place for the study of the inner life of prisons, and highlighted the relevance of social theory to the study of the social organisation of the prison. However, after the initial surge of these studies, there followed a decline<sup>1</sup> to which Simon (2000) urged researchers to respond. Hence, Crewe (2009) returned to the ethnographic approach adopted by early prison sociologists and considered the importance of policy and its influence on the nature of social relations that occur inside and across the prison walls. Crewe devised a ‘typology’ of adaptive types;<sup>2</sup> like early theorists, Crewe (2009: 220-1) warns of the changes prisoners exhibit over time and how rarely prisoners can be neatly categorised as being of a particular type. Moreover, Crewe (2012: 34) has also posited that the ‘inmate code’ is more a guide and description of ideals, rather than reflecting actual behaviour by individuals. Therefore whilst prisoners might adhere to particular codes and exhibit different modes of adaptation, evident in how they interact with prisoners and staff, we cannot neatly categorise prisoners into particular boxes. This begins to reveal the complexities of prison life and how prisoners negotiate their way through it. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Which Simon (2000) has attributed in part to political ideologies attempting focus on topics more worthy of attention by researchers; for example the ‘fear of crime’ and sentencing trends. Furthermore, in the UK, gaining access to conduct research in prisons is fraught with difficulties and researchers have a political obstacle course through which to carefully negotiate their way (see chapter 5).

<sup>2</sup> Crewe (2009) suggested that prisoners can be ‘Enthusiasts’ (p157-167), ‘Pragmatists’ (p167-179), ‘Stoics’ (p179-191), ‘Retreatists’ (p191-200), or ‘Players’ (p200-220).



classical prison literature remains relevant for prison research today. This literature placed emphasis on the degree to which, and success with which, prisoners interact with others (for example see Power, McElroy & Swanson, 1997). Therefore networks and relationships are still a focus of study, even if the role of solidarity has been largely discredited as the dominant explanation of the nature of social relations between prisoners.

The two core topics of this thesis – help-seeking and peer support in prison – take place within the context of the prison ‘community’ and therefore offer a portal through which to consider relationships in prison. One might hypothesise, for example, that the presence of peer support might foster a sense of solidarity among prisoners, given that prisoners are helping each other to cope and solve problems. On the other hand, in the process of providing support, Listeners are given greater access around the establishment, and are likely to be observed by prisoners interacting with prison staff. This latter activity can foster mistrust or inhibit peer relations in the prison ‘community’. The policy of confidentiality that Listener peer supporters adopt raises interesting questions about the nature of their relationships with staff and prisoners, the degree to which they are successful or unsuccessful in fostering trust (from both prisoners and staff), and what their ‘position’ is in the prison ‘community’. How Listeners are viewed by prisoners and staff is likely to influence whether, and how, Listener support is sought out by prisoners. This thesis considers the forces of the relationships with prisoners and staff, and the influences of the perceived prison ‘community’ on help-seeking by prisoners in general, and in their willingness to seek help from Listeners.

## **4.2 Survival in prison**

As Scott and Codd (2010: 99) contend, “prison has always been deadly”. Nothing evidences this more clearly than the high rates of suicide and self-harm among prisoners. Prisons are



places where individuals are sent as punishment, and there is therefore a punitive undercurrent to all interactions that occur within it (Medlicott, 2001: 205). Hence the predominant tone of imprisonment symbolises ‘punishment’ and not ‘care’, ‘help’ or ‘support’. Whilst an exhaustive account of the coping and survival literature is not feasible here, the following discussion highlights some pertinent issues in relation to how prisoners are claimed to cope (or not) with the prison environment.

#### **4.2.1 Survival**

Prison environments are particularly special and unique settings in which to live, work and conduct research in (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 228). Security remains the overarching priority above all other concerns and penal power gives prisons a very distinctive and punitive ‘tone’ (Liebling, 2004: 135).

Prisons are meant to be uncomfortable, to be much less than desirable. Nowadays, however we also strive to make prisons (a) not flagrantly inhumane and (b) not psychologically harmful. And to the extent that officials are humane, they may want prisoners to be conducive to self-betterment. Most of all, society wants prisons to be *secure*, so as to keep inmates dependably inside. That goal determines the isolated location, quarantined insulation, and fortress architecture of prisons and shapes their “custodial staffing patterns”. (Toch, 1992: 7)

Research conducted in this field reminds us of the painful and destructive nature of imprisonment, the ‘deadening sense of confinement’ (Clemmer, 1940/58: 248), the inhibition of feeling and emotion (Liebling, 1994: 6), the forced dependency, the lack of control over taken-for granted aspects of everyday life (Fitzgerald & Sim, 1982: 55). Prison is therefore



both challenging and painful, and prisoners must engage in a task of ‘survival’ as they negotiate their way through the environment.

It is now widely recognised that prison conditions have improved significantly since the days of ‘slopping out’,<sup>3</sup> which was been driven by the ‘decency agenda’ adopted by the Prison Service in the late 1990s. Prisoners now have greater access to telephones and since approximately 2002 in-cell televisions have become more widely available to prisoners. Alongside these developments, prisoners’ expectations about the conditions they will tolerate and the facilities they have available have grown over the years. Prison staff are very aware of the capacity of prisoners to resist if conditions do not meet their expectations (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 303).

The content and strength of legitimating beliefs radically affects all parties in a system of power relations and only legitimate social arrangements generate normative commitments towards compliance. (Sparks & Bottoms, 1995: 48)

In this sense, the hold that an institution has over its captives is both ‘contested’ and ‘contingent’ (Corcoran, 2006: 225; see also Bosworth, 1999: 156). Wilson (2003: 420-1) found that many young black men in prison “kept quiet” and did not make use of the formal complaints system when they were aggrieved. In times of crisis however, the response would be to “go nuts” when no other option seemed feasible. Whilst the quality of the physical environment in prison has no doubt been bettered over the years, Liebling (2007: 442) argues that imprisonment still has a profound effect on prisoners psychologically, as a result of the ‘firm grip’ of the mechanisms of control adopted by prisons; additionally national trends

---

<sup>3</sup> ‘Slopping out’ is the practice of emptying a bucket of human waste, necessary before the introduction of in-cell sanitation.



indicate that prisoners are being held in custody for longer periods resulting in a more prolonged exposure to the prison environment.

Prison, then, is painful and depriving, and the punitive nature of the architecture, the routine, and interactions with prison staff result in many aspects of prison life having enhanced or symbolic meaning. For example, prisoners are highly visible the majority of the time and no 'space' in prison is neutral (Matthews, 1999: 27) or uncontrolled (Medlicott, 2001: 84). Prisoners therefore have to spend a significant amount of time managing how they portray themselves to others (Clemmer, 1940/58: 100-1; Jewkes, 2002; Sparks et al 1996: 177).

Prisoners *felt* their way through the world as much as they scrutinized it consciously.

For many prisoners, the requirement to be constantly alert was one of the most stressful and brutalizing aspects of imprisonment. (Crewe, 2009: 421. Emphasis in original)

Prisons, therefore, are special kinds of environments where the consequences of communication, self-presentation and relationships are enhanced.

Suicide is a fact of prison life and can be seen as a manifestation of the pain imposed. Prisoner suicide raises questions about the impact of the prison environment and the restrictions imposed by imprisonment on the psychological well-being of those subjected to it. Currently, across England and Wales, around three prisoners die by suicide every two weeks (Scott & Codd, 2010: 88). Suicide in prison reflects a failure of the Prison Service to detain its prisoners *and* to care for them.

[W]henver the state takes a person into *its* custody then the state is responsible for the care and wellbeing of that person. If, for whatever reason, that person dies, there can



hardly be more dramatic proof of the state’s failure to meet that responsibility. (Biles, 1994: 17. Emphasis in original)

Prisoners effectively become the ‘property’ of the prison; suicide and self-harm provides evidence of an inability to control that property. Suicide is a reminder that in prison, prisoners have ample opportunities to take their own lives; this is unnerving, since in a ‘total institution’ it should in theory be easy to prevent. In reality, not every death is preventable and most now accept that truly ‘self-determined’ prisoners will eventually succeed in taking their lives (Liebling, 1992). It reminds us that there are now ‘dark corners’ and unsupervised periods where prisoners can exercise agency (Groves, 2004).

Attitudes towards the suicidal in custody become more complicated when it comes to those prisoners who have committed the most serious crimes, such as serial killers like Harold Shipman, well-known because of the vast numbers of patients he killed as a doctor. Even the Home Secretary at the time, David Blunkett, could not hide his true feelings when he heard that Shipman had ended his own life:

You wake up and you received a phone call – Shipman’s topped himself. You have to think for a minute: is it too early to crack open a bottle? (David Blunkett, quoted in *The Guardian*, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2004)

Whilst the response by some was to ‘celebrate’, others felt that Shipman had ‘won’ and ‘escaped’ his punishment. Wilson (2005: 20) notes that this outrageous response to a death in custody by such a senior figure emitted a confusing message about views towards the suicidal in prisons, and this was at a time when the rate of self-inflicted deaths was approximately two



deaths per week – an astonishingly high and worrying figure. This incident reminds us of the highly emotive and controversial nature of prisoner suicide.

Research on suicide in prison has centred on attempting to identify risk factors that can assist with suicide prevention. One of the most robust findings in this area is that the initial phase of custody, in particular the first few days, is a particularly high risk time for suicide (Liebling, 2006b; Topp, 1979). This can be explained by the initial removal from existing social networks where support would normally be available, but which imprisonment breaks, damages, or puts on hold. During these early stages prisoners have not yet established whom to trust and need time to learn about the correct or appropriate sources of support. Indeed, any move to a new environment within the prison system – for example to a new cell, a new wing, a new prison – has also been claimed to increase the risk of suicide (Crighton, 2006 as cited in Scott & Codd, 2010: 97; Jacobson et al, 2007: 43). Furthermore, rates of suicide are higher among life sentence prisoners (Liebling, 1999a: 294); this can be explained by a difficulty to come to terms with the length of the sentence stretching out ahead of them, problems in coming to terms with the implications of their crime, and the potential loss of contact with friends and family. It has also been suggested that prisoners on remand have an elevated risk of suicide (Wool & Dooley, 1987). Remand can be experienced as both physically and psychologically punishing for those prisoners awaiting trial or sentencing (Howard League, 1999) during a period of great uncertainty. Self-harm is more prevalent among female prisoners (Howard League, 1999), and suicide is more prevalent among male prisoners (Wilkins & DeVille-Almond, 2003); although it is important to note that the suicide rate among women prisoners may be underestimated because of the comparatively small body of research that has considered suicide among female prisoners specifically (Liebling, 1994). Suicide in prison has also been linked to drug and alcohol withdrawal (Backett, 1987), and a previous criminal history (Griffiths, 1990).



Studies have shown that suicides are most likely to take place during the night, or at times when prisoners are locked in their cells with time to reflect alone (Dooley, 1990; Inch, Rowlands & Soliman, 1995: 167; Medlicott, 1999: 216-220). Liebling and Tait (2006: 113) maintain that for suicidal prisoners, the time spent out of their cells can be crucial because it provides an opportunity whereby they can specifically seek out help and support from prison staff and maintain contact with people on the outside. Prisoners who die by suicide are more likely to be single than married or in a relationship (see Wilson, 2005: 33-4). It is also suggested that suicidal and self-harming prisoners are unlikely to be socially integrated and more likely to experience negative interaction with their peers (Dear et al, 2001: Wilson, 2005: 33-4). Hence social integration and interaction emerge as prominent themes in this literature.

Whilst this literature has made a significant contribution to our understanding of suicide and self-harm, any ‘profile’ of the ‘at risk’ prisoner is undermined by exceptions to the rule; many deaths occur that do not match with these so-called predictors. There is no simple or easy method of identifying an individual who will attempt suicide or who will self-harm and frequently such individuals have not been identified by prison staff as at risk and are not under any care planning system to support them. Even if the Prison Service became better at identifying prisoners at risk of harming themselves, there are limits to the degree of action that can stop the self-determined prisoner before it becomes inhumane (Posen, 2001). Furthermore, this literature has served to reinforce the idea that suicidal individuals can be detected, diagnosed and treated (Medlicott, 2001: 13) yet we have no evidence to suggest that this is the case.

Suicide attempts and acts of self-harm might be seen as communicating desperation, a need to be heard, or a cry for help; rarely do staff respond to them as such (Liebling, 1992). Instead, such acts are more likely to be seen as an attempt to get attention, manipulate (Howard League,



1999; Howard League, 2001a: 9), or access help from specialist staff (Wool & Dooley, 1987: 300). Related to this is the societal view in general concerning the perceived abnormality of suicide itself. Suicide in fact has been claimed to be “as ancient as man himself” (Rosen, 1975: 3; see also Pritchard, 1995); for example in ancient Greek times, suicide was seen as both a rational and reasonable response to dreadful circumstances (Posen, 2001). Therefore:

Suicide should not [necessarily] be viewed as a bizarre act of self-destruction. People who attempt or commit suicide use their own unique logic and style of thinking in reaching the conclusions that taking their own lives is the only way to solve their problems. (Hayes, 1995: 436)

Hayes highlights that suicide, in certain circumstances, may be viewed as a problem-solving strategy. Self-harm and suicide are largely misunderstood, not just in prisons but by society as a whole (Howard League, 2003). Many still see it as a “mental illness and do not recognise self-harm as a coping mechanism” (Howard League, 2001a: 9) and do not see suicide as a response to the prison environment (Coles & Ward, 1994: 140). Instead, suicide and self-harm are often thought to evidence an individuals’ *inability* to cope (Coles & Ward, 1994: 140; Scott & Codd, 2010: 92).

There are a number of problems with the preventative approach to suicide and self-harm adopted by the Prison Service. First of all, the dominance of a ‘pathological’ model of suicide and self-harm means that attention is drawn to the act of suicide or self-harm itself and the form of treatment prisoners need. Secondly, simply physically preventing self-harm may drive an individual to become more determined, or to use alternative, more lethal methods (Biles, 1994: 21; Ivanoff & Schmidt III, 2006: 90). Additionally it may enhance feelings of isolation, desperation and reinforce the reduced status of prisoners. Some individuals need more than



medication, segregation and physical prevention: they need to be heard. Prison takes away not just liberty, but *control* over inmates’ own existence which leads to feelings of helplessness – the prisoner has removed from them the dignity and responsibility to lead their own life (Dooley, 1994). It is important not to forget that self-harming, in part, is an expression of the power residing in an individual (Wilson, 2005: 69). The Howard League (2003; McCarthy, 2003) advocates an approach towards self-harm that endorses the ability of prisoners to have a right to self-determination as opposed to techniques of physical prevention. One such example is a ward in a hospital setting dedicated to self-harmers known as the ‘Crisis Recovery Unit’.<sup>4</sup> When the ward was created in 1990, staff attempted to physically prevent self-harm – however, they decided that they were ‘fooling themselves’ (Crisis Recovery Unit, no date: 4) because the problems that caused the residents to self-harm were not being addressed and self-harm continued. As a result, a philosophy of tolerance ensued. Each resident is to own their problem and take responsibility for their self-harm. The unit therefore represents an innovative and unique approach in creating a safe but not restricted or judgemental environment for self-harmers through allowing them to own their own coping strategies alongside techniques designed to enhance communication.

As explored in Chapter 3, the Samaritan-led Listener scheme has formed an integral part of the Prison Service’s suicide and self-harm prevention policy. This is on the basis that:

Effective peer support contributes to suicide prevention in the widest sense by helping create a safe, decent and healthy environment, with positive prisoner-prisoner and staff-prisoner relationships, where problems can be voiced and addressed, anxiety alleviated rather than exacerbated and supportive relationships can flourish, thereby

---

<sup>4</sup> This unit is located at the Bethlem Royal Hospital in Kent.



ensuring that both prisoners and staff feel safer and better supported. (Snow & Biggar, 2006: 155)

The use of peer support therefore aims in part to address a gap in former strategies that placed emphasis on the assessment of prisoners as opposed to listening to prisoner concerns. Whilst it is not the intention of this research to link the Listener scheme to the incidence of suicide and self-harm, the established link of the scheme as part of suicide prevention strategies in prison must be borne in mind when considering, for example, how prison staff view the scheme, the kinds of work that Listeners are called upon to conduct, and views of Listener support by prisoners.

#### **4.2.2 Coping with imprisonment**

Having considered the harsh and punishing nature of the prison environment, and the most serious manifestation of the impact of the environment on those individuals subjected to it, the discussion now turns to consider coping with imprisonment more generally. Prisoners’ ability, or indeed inability, to cope with the prison environment has been the focus of much research conducted in the fields of psychology, psychiatry and sociology. However Liebling (1999a: 285) notes that it is the sociological literature that has emphasised the more damaging and severe aspects of the prison experience – an emphasis has not been reflected to the same degree in the psychological literature. This is reinforced by Medlicott who posits that:

Much psychiatric, clinical and psychological research has in the past seemed ambivalent about the qualitative *place* aspects of prison. Instead of focussing on the characteristics of the place, and on the forced interaction of prisoners with prison, which prisoners identify as sources of stress and pain, such research often focuses on



attempts to quantify particular psychological characteristics of the prisoners themselves, in order to measure their success or failure to cope with an environment which has not been methodologically recognised as qualitatively problematic. (Medlicott, 2001: 29. Emphasis in original)

Furthermore, the dominance of psychology in this field has led to the focus on, and the measurement of, more negative elements such as ‘depression’, ‘hopelessness’, ‘pessimism’ and ‘anxiety’ (for example see Beck et al, 1974). This is hardly surprising given the high occurrence of symptoms of depression and anxiety among the prisoner population identified by a wealth of research (such as Zamble & Porporino, 1988), and this quite rightly raises concern and requires attention. However, more recent research has begun to consider a concept of ‘well-being’ that considers the positive aspects of mental health (see Tennant et al, 2007; see also Liebling, 2004: 307 for a discussion of measuring well-being in the prison context). By focussing on the more positive aspects of well-being, the attention shifts from the treatment of negative symptoms to the conditions that enable the creation of a healthy environment that in turn might affect an individual’s condition or state of mind.

Some prison scholars have argued that prisoners in fact demonstrated a lack of coping ability on the outside before entering the prison environment (Liebling, 1995; Medlicott, 2001: 147). Liebling (2004: 305) posits that prisoners ‘import vulnerabilities’ from the outside; in other words they brought problems with which they struggled to cope with on the outside, and these were often worsened by the nature and conditions of the prison environment (Borrill et al, 2005: 67; Liebling, 1995). Coping with imprisonment has been found to be associated with the ability an individual has to structure his or her time. For example, Clear & Sumter (2002) found that prisoners who were more committed to, and involved in, religious activities were less likely to be depressed and more likely to be well adjusted to the prison environment.



Furthermore, it has been suggested that involvement in religious groups in prison has additional benefits, such as reducing the likelihood of antisocial or negative behaviour (Kerley, Matthews & Blanchard, 2005), and hence eases the ‘pains of imprisonment’ for the prisoner. This body of research therefore asserts that proactivity is associated with better coping in prison.

The gendered dimension to the literature on the experience of, and coping with, imprisonment by women highlights a number of important distinctions from the experiences of men. It is a well-established fact that due to the small number of women’s prisons across England and Wales, women on average tend to be incarcerated at longer distances from their homes than male prisoners, making contact with their family and friends more difficult. This has also been worsened by the closure of some female prisons, some of which have been ‘re-roled’ as male prisons to ease overcrowding (Corston, 2007: 22). Research on women prisoners in England and Wales, Canada, and the US has shown that the effect of separation from children and family is particularly acute for women (Henriques & Manatu-Rupert, 2001: 11; Rowe, 2012: 109). It is not surprising that the whereabouts and care of their children is a more prominent issue for women than for men (Carlen & Worrall, 2006: 125). Referring to females serving life sentences, Walker and Worrall (2000: 28) state that imprisonment:

has specific meaning for a woman’s self-identity. Losing control over her fertility and her relationships with her children is more than a restriction of her liberty of what she can do. It is a restriction of what, in life outside prison, she had come to view as her being.

Women further experience the pains of imprisonment in particularly acute ways because of the nature of the ‘vulnerability’ they import into the prison environment with them and the lack of



resources within the environment to tackle these issues (Corston, 2007: 11; Liebling, 1994: 5). Women in prison are often seen as having broached the very notion of femininity and prisons have long been places where women are pushed towards restoring their femininity based on gender roles (Scott & Codd, 2010: 35-44). This has led to women being treated in a paternalistic manner, rendering them passive and their problems over-medicalised (Carlen & Worrall, 2006: 121-3). The state of dependency imposed by the prison regime is detrimental to the status of many women for whom abuse and 'victim-status' characterises their past (Henriques & Manatu-Rupert, 2001: 12). On the other hand, where paternalistic approaches are not adopted, women are treated exactly the same as men. This approach grossly ignores the specific needs of women compared with men; as *equal* treatment does not necessarily result from the *same* treatment (Corston, 2007).

The literature on prisoner coping described in this section emphasises the ability and capacity of individuals to cope with an environment that is largely regarded as imposing a relatively uniform experience for all prisoners, although some gender differences are expected. A proportion of this research focuses on the deficits of prisoners and fails to problematize their environment. The section that follows describes the literature on help-seeking by prisoners and argues that this is a more fruitful way of highlighting and exploring prisoners' experiences of coping in prison.

### **4.3 Seeking help in prison**

Help-seeking by prisoners is under-explored in the prison literature, although it is generally assumed that a lack of help-seeking is undesirable. Given that there is very little literature that is directly concerned with prisoners' help-seeking specifically, this review consults the wider literature on help-seeking in non-prison settings and sources of support in prison. The



discussion that follows, therefore, signals to the reader some of the pertinent issues in seeking help from different groups that will be built upon in later chapters of this thesis.

#### **4.3.1 Support in prison**

The issue of ‘social support’ has become a core concern in the research related to the issues of stress, coping, mental health and well-being in non-prison settings (Veiel & Baumann, 1992: 1). Specifically it has been claimed that the support system in place is central to the process of coping and adaptation under conditions of duress (see Hobbs & Dear, 2000: 128) and that social support leads to improved well-being (Wills, 1991: 265). Social support is held to offer feelings of safety and security to prisoners during their time inside (Jiang & Winfree, 2006: 34). Further, social support is claimed in the psychological literature to have a ‘buffering effect’ (for example see Cohen & Wills, 1985; Thoits, 1986). However, one study of suicide attempters found that they did not have depleted social networks (Bille-Brahe et al, 1999). It is, in fact, unclear whether a causal link exists between help-seeking, social support, social integration and well-being. For example, research has found that individuals who perceive greater levels of social support cope better in stressful or distressing situations (Hobfoll & Schröder, 2001: 202). It is suggested that knowing support is available promotes well-being as individuals feel supported (Wills, 1991: 268), and this may therefore lead to reduced help-seeking behaviour (Kessler, 1992). Psychological research has not been able to establish a strong link between social integration and levels of available social support (Wills, 1991: 269). It cannot be claimed therefore that prisoners who are more socially integrated, and will have social support available to them, or will seek help. Nor can it be claimed that seeking help results in improved well-being. Seeking help may even threaten an individual’s self-esteem (Nadler, 1991). Albrecht & Adelman (1987: 26) suggest that people are ‘empowered’ when they are able to maintain jurisdiction over their problems. Receiving social support from others



therefore may be experienced as disempowering. There is a need to understand both the positive and negative effects of social relationships (Song & Ingram, 2002) and help-seeking and how they are linked to well-being (Rook, 1992: 167) and furthermore to recognise that coping may depend to a lesser or greater extent on support from other people.

To provide the context of prisoner help-seeking activity and preferences, it is first necessary to consider the three main groups of support focussed upon in this research: prison staff, prisoners, and people on the outside.

***Staff as a source of support:***

The first group considered here is prison staff. At the heart of prison officer work is ‘people’ (Goffman, 1957/1999: 329/20); and at the heart of the prison system are the relationships prison officers maintain with those people (Liebling and Price, 1998). Such relationships have been described as the ‘glue’ ‘holding prisons together (Liebling & Price, 2001: 77). Prison staff form relationships with prisoners that can be both long-term and characterised by high levels of ‘intimacy’ (Crawley, 2004b: 414). They come into close contact with prisoners who have both complex and challenging problems and behaviour (Stohr et al, 2000: 57). On a daily basis, staff are responsible for the security intentions of the establishment at the same time as the care and well-being of prisoners.

They are heavy with power imbalances and high levels of dependency. Interactions with officers in uniform have huge symbolic meaning. Prison officers may not always see themselves as a source of social support to prisoners. Supportive relationships are constituted *despite*, rather than through, inherently low levels of trust. (Liebling, 2004: 251-2. Emphasis in original)



So, whilst relationships with prisoners act as a lubricant (Liebling & Price, 2001: 92), they are also the route for deploying authority and maintaining control (Liebling, 2000: 335). As Liebling (2004: 345) noted, “staff had the power not to listen, not to respond, not to carry through action”, in other words, they have the power to improve or worsen the experience of imprisonment (Liebling, 2000: 347; Vuolo & Kruttschnitt, 2008: 331). Their actions and responses are therefore extremely important to prisoners (Liebling & Price, 2001: 107-8).

As the foregoing discussion highlighted the classic sub-cultural prison literature placed emphasis on the social distance that exists between staff and inmates. In reality this distance varies: staff with a more traditional stance have been found more likely to keep a distance between themselves and prisoners and are more likely to react with suspicion when prisoners approach them for help (Liebling, 2007: 437). The recruitment of new officers with less traditional views can narrow the gap. However it remains important to note that prison officers have a difficult balance to maintain the appropriate degree of closeness in their relationships with prisoners and that there is tension between their roles of ‘custody’ and ‘care’ (Short et al, 2009).

A gap must exist between officers and prisoners (so that prison can work as a prison) but that gap must simultaneously be narrowed (so that the prison can *flow*). (Liebling & Price, 1998: 4. Emphasis in original)

Officers have been observed to manage relationships with a great sense of mastery (Hay & Sparks, 1991: 3). However, when working with complex needs and complex people, staff may be unable to understand and support those individuals (Cortson, 2007). The Howard League (2009) has argued that being a prison officer should become a profession, much like the route



into social work for example, which involves a university degree. This, the Howard League claims, would realign priorities so that the care of prisoners was of more central importance.

In recent years scholars have paid increasing attention to the extensive and assorted roles of the modern day prison officer. For example, Crawley (2004a: 95) noted that prison officers conduct roles as parents, mentors, counsellors, teachers, social workers, comedians, psychologists, filing clerks, probation officers, security guards and police officers. Research has identified a number of desirable qualities of officers that lead to improved relationships and more effective communication, for example being approachable, helpful, fair (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 183), emphatic, patient, consistent, mature, communicative, non-judgemental, non-confrontational, observant and compassionate (Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 477). Relatedly, prison scholars have noted that the degree to which prison officers are approachable is reduced by being seen as formal, cold, ‘distanced’, ‘suspicious’ (Liebling, 2007: 437-8; Toch, 1992: 79) and uncaring (Wyner, 2003: 24); in other words, these qualities undermine effective communication and positive relationships (Tait, 2012: 19). Males and females might perceive staff as potential sources of support differently; females are more likely to be subject to formal discipline procedures than males (Prison Reform Trust, 2011: 33). Prisoners and staff agree that their relationships have both instrumental and normative functions; that is, they make the prison experience more humane, yet are also of material and practical benefit for prisoners (Liebling & Price, 2001: 91-2; Stewart, 2004: 8-9). Despite the recognition by the Prison Service of the centrality and importance of staff-prisoner relationships, policy has largely failed to reflect and guide staff on what the ‘right’ relationship consists of and how it can be established (Liebling & Price 2001: 76). Undoubtedly this is a predicament created by the conflicting aims of security and



rehabilitation that staff are expected to accomplish simultaneously (see chapter 9). The brief analysis above raises important issues with respect to the use of relationships to maintain control *and* to care for prisoners. The punitive tone to these relationships is likely to impact on the use prisoners make of staff as sources of support.

***Prisoners as a source of support:***

The second group inside the prison walls who are a potential source of support is other prisoners. Living in close proximity to other prisoners could be claimed to be a significant pain of imprisonment, yet it is equally a “consolation” (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 176). Prisoners spend a great deal of their time in close proximity to one another; prisoners therefore are arguably a readily available or accessible source of support. Support from prisoners can be grouped into two main types – informal support and support from organised peer support schemes such as the Listener scheme. The literature, whilst emphasising notions of ‘solidarity’ has also drawn a distinction between the idea of friendship and solidarity. Sykes (1958) suggested that solidarity is about the ability to act collectively, whereas trust and support are more evident in friendships. By definition, friendship implies reciprocity and not a relationship based entirely on personal or instrumental gain (Allan, 1998: 600). Friendship is considered a relatively rare kind of relationship among prisoners, and prisoners are reluctant to use the word ‘friendship’ to describe relationships with their peers. Greer (2000) suggested that even when female prisoners formed friendships in prison, a degree of mistrust was nevertheless an inherent aspect of the relationship and served to protect them from the vulnerability that arises through ‘trust’. Despite this, relationships that form between women prisoners are claimed to hold greater significance and occur more frequently than among male prisoners (Jiang & Winfree, 2006; Larson & Nelson, 1984; Pollack, 2004: 704), where ‘doing your own time’ appears to be the predominant theme. Despite these trends in women’s



imprisonment, the notion of ‘doing your own time’ is still evident in women’s accounts (Greer, 2000: 462). Nevertheless, Crewe (2009: 334) suggests that prisoners are likely to recognise that their peers may be struggling to cope or experiencing emotional difficulties under the surface and feelings of empathy and sympathy were nevertheless not uncommon. Whilst friendship is rare then, there is some evidence for emphatic identification. However it is important to note that all prisoners’ relationships, whether deemed friendship or not, are monitored by prison staff, and if an assessment is made that particular relationships are undesirable, an intervention may be to move prisoners to forcibly break particular relationships that have formed (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 273). Prisoners then do not always have a choice over with whom they associate, and their social relations are monitored, controlled, or even prevented by prison staff.

As well as the informal mechanisms of support between prisoners, there are also the formalised mechanisms via peer support and mentoring schemes such as the Listener scheme. As chapter 2 outlined, the term ‘peer support’ can encompass a vast array of different activities, from befriending, to providing practical assistance, advice, guidance, or information, to mention but a few. Moreover, peer support relies heavily on the benefits of ‘similarity’ between the supporter and the supported, and attempts to build upon and formalise naturally occurring supportive relationships (Cowie & Wallace, 2000: 9). Prisoners are claimed to be potentially very beneficial sources of support for one another because by virtue of their own experiences:

Peer support is based on the belief that people who have faced, endured, and overcome adversity can offer useful support, encouragement, hope, and perhaps mentorship to others facing similar situations. (Davidson et al, 2006: 443)



It has been suggested that prisoners are more likely to feel helped and supported if they have higher levels of social interaction with other prisoners (Hindman, 1971). It has been claimed that peer support mechanisms foster a sense of ‘community’ among prisoners through the greater ownership they have by taking charge of their own problems and resolving them together (Farrant & Levenson, 2002: 33).

With reference to the focus of this thesis, the Listener scheme, one of the main perceived advantages is that Listeners understand their peers’ problems with empathy. An excerpt from a study of a comparable scheme in Canada, illustrates how poignant the ability to empathise can be:

A SAM [peer supporter] showed up to talk to an inmate who had been ‘cutting up’.

The SAM was a lifer and told the inmate “We need to talk.” As he did, he pulled up his own sleeves to show his scars. The inmate agreed to see him. (Hall & Gabor, 2004: 24)

This is a particularly powerful example. Listeners might have direct experience of the problem of their caller, and not only that but they live with those whom they support. This position may aid their understanding of their peers, their ability to reach out to them, and increase the willingness of prisoners to seek help from them. Whilst there appears to be a number of advantages to peer support, both formal and informal, it is important to remember that not all peer networks are supportive and beneficial, they can also be harmful and counter-productive (Hayashi & O’Donnell, 2004: 10). Seeking help from other prisoners may be ‘risky’ because it exposes vulnerability or weakness to others. Furthermore, in the prison setting, prisoners encounter a number of dilemmas when considering turning to fellow prisoners for support. These dilemmas will be explored throughout this thesis. Attention will also be drawn to the



equally problematic aspects of making use of peer support mechanisms as well as their potential benefits.

***People on the outside as source of support:***

The third main group who are a potential source of support to prisoners are friends and family on the outside. Criminological research has reinforced the view that contact with friends and family on the outside is a matter of high priority and importance for the majority of prisoners. The separation from friends and family on the outside can be experienced as a particularly acute pain of imprisonment (Liebling, 2004: 306).

Contact with people on the outside can be highly significant to prisoners, by providing a connection to the life that they have been physically removed from, as well as fostering feelings of ‘normality’ (Jewkes, 2002: 154). People on the outside might be a source of hope, encouragement, emotional support, financial or practical assistance, and a lifeline as prisoners face the realities and difficulties of prison life. Nevertheless, contact with the outside can facilitate the maintenance of familial roles such as parent, sibling or child (Mills, 2005; Mills & Codd, 2007), helps prisoners to keep ‘up-to-date’ with the outside world, and may prevent prisoners from becoming institutionalised (Codd, 2008: 25). Prisoners deemed at risk of suicide report that family contact is important (Liebling & Tait, 2006: 13); this suggests that prisoners value support from their family. A link has been established between the quality of relationships prisoners have with people on the outside, and their subsequent levels of health and well-being (Bille-Brahe et al, 1999). It has further been suggested that family contact facilitates prisoner coping (Gibbs, 1982; Mills, 2005), that it has a strong bearing on prisoners’ quality of life (Liebling, 2004: 325) and can facilitate desistance (Codd, 2008: 30; Mills & Codd, 2007). However, it is important to remember that prisoners with higher levels of well-



being may actively seek out and foster better relationships with people on the outside, therefore there is an issue of causal direction when it comes to claims made by the above research. Nevertheless, contact with the outside might become a lifeline and heavily influence prisoners’ mood (Harvey, 2005: 245).

Relationships with people on the outside might in fact be strengthened through “renewed expressions of love and courtship” (Scott & Codd, 2010: 145). On the other hand, some find contact with the outside world painful (Toch, 1992: 73), and decide to cut themselves off to avoid the pain (Cohen & Taylor, 1972: 71). Prisoners may find it easier to separate themselves from people on the ‘outside’ and focus on their lives ‘inside’. They may also be acutely aware of the difficulties and hurt their family are experiencing as a consequence of their imprisonment making it difficult for both prisoners and their families (Condry, 2012; Scott & Codd, 2010: 153). The painful effects of imprisonment on the families of those imprisoned is an area that has been largely neglected in research (although see Codd, 2008). Therefore, both contact, and a lack of contact, can be a source of pain for prisoners during their time inside (Lindquist, 2000: 434; Mills, 2005). Further to this, relationships with people on the outside are an aspect which is difficult for prisoners to manage given that the relationships are ‘on the other side of the boundary’ (Harvey, 2005: 245) and prisoners suffer from reduced autonomy and influence not only with respect to their lives inside the prison walls, but also with regards to outside matters. Once again then, we see that a potential source of support for prisoners is only accessible if facilitated by staff who are gatekeepers to them.

This review of the literature on potential sources of support shows that whilst theoretically prisoners can seek help from prison staff, prisoners and people on the outside, that there are nevertheless factors which might influence their willingness and ability to pursue that support as a result of the manner through which the prison environment shapes or restricts



relationships. We now turn to consider the very small body of literature on help-seeking specifically.

#### **4.3.2 Help-seeking by prisoners**

As highlighted in this discussion, the coping and survival literature tends to focus on risk factors, prevention techniques and the provision of support. It makes the assumption that if support is there it will be used, and that the support is unproblematic. This overlooks the constricted and visible nature of the prison environment, which heavily influences all actions that take place within it. Only a very small number of studies directly concerned with prisoner help-seeking preferences exist. A small number of studies have considered prisoners' preferences for staff or professional sources compared with their peers. As Chapters 2 and 3 showed it is frequently conceded by researchers, policy makers and service providers that peer support may appeal to those who do not feel able to approach, or are disaffected from, formal mechanisms of support (for example see Philip & Sprat, 2007: 49; Soloman, 2004: 395). It could be argued that prisoners who prefer peer support do so because they prefer 'reciprocal' to 'hierarchical' relationships (Davidson et al, 2006: 446-7; White, 2004: 3). Furthermore it may be the case that the nature of the support they desire is not obtainable from staff (Farrant & Levenson, 2002: 9), or more credible from peers (Devilly et al, 2005: 231; Soloman, 2004: 395). Cahill, Jessell & Horne (1979) found that prisoners overall indicated a preference for professional counsellors. However, the authors also found that prisoners preferred peers for particular kinds of problems towards which peers were more likely to be sympathetic based on their common experience, such as problems relating to release. Prisoners also tended to seek professional help for other issues such as substance misuse. Indeed one of the key benefits of peer support that has been identified is the specialist, expert knowledge peers have of making the system work for them given their first-hand experience (Soloman, 2004: 397). A study by



Hobbs and Dear (2000) found that prisoners were unlikely to turn to prison staff for help, particularly for issues that could be associated with suicide or self-harm. Prisoners reported a general reluctance to seek help from prison staff, although they are more likely to seek help for more practical problems than emotional problems (Hobbs & Dear, 2000). Hall and Gabor (2003) evaluated a Canadian project, comparable to the UK Listener scheme, and found that inmates favoured talking to their peers, since they were unlikely to trust prison staff. One former Listener in England suggests that:

Inmates have always listened to each other's qualms, worries and fears. Invariably this has taken place when inmates shared a cell, walked together on the exercise yard, worked together in the workshops or where and whenever it was desired. When such concern is demonstrated one would expect confidentiality to be a vital ingredient in this process of care and support. A breach of confidence will lead to disastrous consequences but since inmates had little intention, if any, to share their problems with the very people who locked them up, the concern for another in confidence became very much an everyday aspect of life in prison. In fact the bond of trust, confidentiality and concern amongst prisoners is a 'tradition' that is very much alive. (Carolissen, 1996: 150)

However, Devilly et al (2002: 229) note that there is a lack of evidence in the literature that prisoners do in fact prefer more informal, peer-based support over more professional/staff based sources. The above research also draws attention to the need to investigate help-seeking preferences in relation to the nature of the problem and the type of support prisoners need at the time, for example whether emotional support or practical help.



Some studies have suggested that certain groups of prisoners are more likely to seek out emotional support. For example, younger prisoners are more likely than adults to turn to prison staff for emotional support, but overall prisoners tend to turn to staff for practical help more frequently than they do for emotional support (Liebling, 2007: 431). It has been suggested that ‘vulnerable’ prisoners express a greater need for support than others and seek more ‘therapeutic’ relationships with staff (Liebling & Tait, 2006: 108). Research in prison and non-prison settings has shown that help-seeking activity decreases as people get older (Gourash, 1978: 414) and women are more likely to seek help than men, particularly for emotional as opposed to instrumental forms of support (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Nadler, 1991: 292; Williams, Nooney & Ray, 1987: 381). The lower rates of help-seeking by males may be explained by a societal expectation that males should deal with their problems themselves (Samaritans, 1999: 5). Therefore, seeking help in some ways could pose a threat to an individual’s identity, independence, self-esteem (Nadler, 1991: 295-301) and pride (Clegg, Bradley, & Smith, 2006). Midlarsky (1991) suggests that whereas helpers can be perceived as able, good people, the helped can be perceived as less able, subordinate, or as victims. Prisoners, especially men, do not want to be seen as ‘weak’ (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2000: 380), less ‘masculine’ (Crewe, 2009: 282), less ‘hard’ (James, 2006: 19), or as psychologically ‘deficient’ (Kenemore & Roldan, 2005: 18). These factors therefore reduce the likelihood that prisoners will seek help.

The foregoing analysis of the literature is limited by a lack of reference to the problematic nature of the prison environment and the influence this has on both relationships and the nature of interactions within it. In particular, the symbolic meaning of interactions with others means that prisoners rely on the information available to them through what they see and hear to make assessments on trustworthiness, helpfulness, and supportiveness. Crewe (2009: 307)



notes that prisoners used their observations and experiences with their peers when making decisions about who to form connections with and or trust and the nature of the environment:

it inhibited opportunities to gauge personality and sincerity; it encouraged artificial behaviour; it effaced information about past behaviour and social credentials; and it provided limited guidance to future conduct.

In general, few prisoners say that they have made ‘friends’ in prison and trusting another prisoner is inherently ‘risky’ (Cohen & Taylor, 1972: 63; Jewkes, 2002: 150). Establishing trusting or solidary relationships with other prisoners is problematic because of the ‘criminal’ or ‘deviant’ nature of other prisoners (Mathiesen, 1965: 141), and moreover because of the aforementioned use of penal policy to undermine solidaristic forces. Trust, after all, is in part about an assessment of the likelihood, or degree of predictability, of a positive engagement or result (Evans, Fraser & Walklate, 1996: 376; Liebling, 2004: 248). As Liebling (2004: 241) suggests, both trust and distrust are core features of the prison environment; distrust is customary (see Greer, 2000 for an account in a women’s prison setting) and trust has to be earned and developed over time. Prisoners enter in relationships in a ‘guarded’ manner on the understanding that an element of risk is inherently present (Liebling, 2004: 243-4). The Prison Service encourages prisoners to prove compliance with the prison regime and rules by informing on the deviant acts of others (Crewe, 2005a: 181-2). In this sense, prisoner distrust is built into the very practice of prisons. Prisoners recognise that whilst caution is advisable, a degree of interaction and trust is necessary to ease the pains of imprisonment and pass the time (Crewe, 2009: 305; Liebling, 2004: 246). Prisoners are more likely to establish affiliations with other prisoners with whom they are connected by geographical region on the outside (Crewe, 2009: 310) as this similarity forms the basis of something to build upon, or they may have heard of each other by reputation. Research in non-prison settings has identified a link between



trust and the disclosure of problems to others (Wheless & Grotz, 1977). The high levels of distrust inhibit prisoner relations and limit the opportunities for prisoners to form relationships where the disclosure of problems is likely. ‘Trust’ is therefore a concept which is “loaded and constrained in the prison context” and is “uneven” (Liebling 2004: 241).

A number of scholars have identified generally low levels of help-seeking from staff by prisoners, for example prisoners in the US have been found to seriously under-report the predatory sexual behaviour of other inmates (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2000). In another study, less than half of prisoners experiencing one or more of a variety of problems (including emotional problems, disabilities, relationships with others, employment, accommodation, substance misuse or coping with their imprisonment) were found to have sought help (Williams, Nooney & Ray, 1987: 381-2). A study of male prisoners found that they were less likely to seek help for suicidal feelings than for other emotional problems (Deane, Skogstad & Williams, 1999; see also Carlton & Deane, 2000). Others have suggested that the nature of the prison environment inhibits prisoners from ‘opening-up’ about feelings and problems (Borrill et al, 2004: 7). A thematic review on mental health uncovered that prisoners were distrustful of doctors and this hindered their disclosure of emotional difficulties (HMIP, 2007: 40). Furthermore prisoners were wary of being given the label of having a mental illness. They exhibited distrust in authority figures, which was linked to difficult experiences from their childhood (ibid.). There are also potential repercussions of asking for help. For example, prisoners who requested a peer supporter in a Canadian prison were immediately placed on suicide watch and their actions closely monitored (Hall & Gabor, 2004: 21). Other instances have been recorded of prisoners being placed in ‘strip cells’ (Inch, Rowlands & Soliman, 1995; Toch, 1992). The ‘treatment’ and ‘prevention’ orientation of staff, as a consequence of the influence of medical and psychological models of support, therefore appears to constrain prisoners’ help-seeking activity towards them.



It is important when considering prisoners’ help-seeking activity, to also consider briefly their ‘inactivity’ too. Whilst the focus of this study was prisoners’ help-seeking preferences with respect to different sources of support for different problems, it must be remembered that there are additional constraints that relate to prisoners’ ability to communicate and make themselves heard. Scholars have acknowledged the difficulty that prisoners have in communicating their emotions and problems when they are most in need (Inch, Rowlands and Soliman, 1995: 167). In other words, instead of articulating their problems verbally, self-harm or aggression may become a medium through which they communicate their distress to others (see Smith, 2002: 210; Wyner, 2003: 24). Some problems may also be extremely personal in nature and also cause prisoners to refrain from ‘opening up’ (Borrill et al, 2005: 65). A particularly poorly recognised and under-researched aspect of coping is the idea of coping by ‘withdrawal’. In a review of both the American and British prison literature, Adams (1992: 986-7) concluded that prisoners largely prefer to manage their problems on their own and are reluctant to seek assistance or support. This emphasises the more ‘solitary’ nature of imprisonment (Rowe, 2012: 113) and experiences of ‘doing you own time’. Coping had tended to be conceptualized in terms of a process where the source of the problem, or the response to the problem, is altered by the individual (Hobfoll & Schröder, 2001: 202). Therefore coping is seen as an ‘active’ process. A number of prison scholars have made links between assumed mechanisms of withdrawal that in fact are evidence of prisoners exercising agency (Bosworth, 1999: 126; Corcoran, 2006; Smith, 2002). Toch (1992: 252) described ‘niches’ which involved prisoners controlling their environment in order to cope. For example, this might involve favouring particular areas within the prison, where higher levels of control over contact with others, privacy, and activities occur. These are strategies adopted by prisoners to minimise exposure or ‘escape’ from the more stressful aspects of the prison environment. Toch (1992: 254) suggests that the creation of ‘niches’ enables prisoners to “monitor, restrict, and govern” their activities and feelings. A lack of help-seeking may not therefore equate to poor coping by the prisoner.



Indeed, more recent research suggests that finding a ‘retreat’ or ‘escape’ from mainstream prison life is associated with well-being (Liebling, 2004: 306). Despite these promising insights, the majority of the literature concerned with coping, help-seeking and suicide in prison views ‘withdrawal’ as maladaptive. For example Dear et al (2006: 133) note that much research suggests that self-harmers are not as adept at coping as those who do not self-harm, and Wilson et al (2005: 15) contend that the purpose of researching help-seeking serves to produce information that should lead to increased help-seeking activity.

Goldsmith & Parks (1990) offer a useful framework for understanding the “strategic and risk-based” strategies that individuals adopt when considering seeking help. Their research, based in a non-prison setting, suggests that seeking help involves a conflict between a desire to talk (for example to offload, to get practical help or information), and the ‘risks’ of seeking help (such as being viewed negatively, burdening others, trust). In order to minimise risks, these authors suggest that people strategically select a source of support (ibid: 108); situations where the risks are higher elicit more ‘strategic’ help-seeking (ibid: 113). They further suggest that individuals use a cocktail of strategies in their help-seeking including avoidance of negative effects, ‘supporter’ selection’ and engaging in periods of ‘openness and closedness’. What is being described here is how people act as ‘gatekeepers’ for their own problems. Therefore:

The communicative options that people exercise in facing this dilemma are more extensive than a simple choice between seeking or not seeking support. (Goldsmith & Parks, 1990: 116)

In fact, help-seeking has been described as ‘involving on-going dialectics of benefits and costs’ (Addis & Mahlik, 2003: 10). This perspective calls into question the predominant view of a lack of help-seeking as maladaptive. Prison is not a ‘uniform experience’ (Liebling, 1995:



183). Yet there is still an emphasis on creating uniform and acceptable responses by prisoners for example by being responsive, communicative, active, and seeking help (Zamble & Porporino, 1988: 99). This makes problems more difficult to deal with (Liebling, 2012: 65). A greater understanding is required about how prisoners choose from the available options, what problems they take to them, and what facilitates or hinders help-seeking in the context of the prison.

This third part of the literature review has explored the assumptions made in the literature about prisoners’ use of support during their time inside. Overall the literature tends to overemphasise the limitations, shortcomings of prisoners as barriers to help-seeking, rather than the structural-environmental and problem-driven nature of help-seeking. Later chapters in this thesis enable a more nuanced understanding of help-seeking by prisoners to be achieved, one that is not based on clinical or psychological models where a lack of help-seeking is seen as pathological.

#### **4.4 Volunteering by prisoners**

The final section of this review of the literature considers an area that is only just starting to draw significant attention from prison scholars, volunteering by prisoners. The review that follows frames prisoner volunteering within the overall context of neo-liberal strategies of responsibilisation and ‘beneficial’ work. It then raises questions about the ‘voluntary’ nature of ‘volunteering’ in an environment where there are coercive expectations about how prisoners should choose to serve their time. In other words, whilst volunteering activities for prisoners are claimed to provide opportunities for ‘empowerment’, ‘autonomy’ and adopting ‘responsibility’, the very nature of the prison environment, and the expectations that are imposed, undermines these aspirations.



#### **4.4.1 Neo-liberal strategies of responsibilisation**

As chapter 2 identified, strategies of responsibilisation place the offender as the driver of their own recovery and desistance project. Volunteering has been seen as a core mechanism for this. These neo-liberal strategies use market forces or competition to improve economic efficiency, and responsibilise individuals or communities through mechanisms of self-reliance and self-governance. Generally, prisoners are expected to engage in prison life and work, and keep themselves occupied. The Prison Service views a lack of participation in work and activities in prison as undesirable, or even punishable (Fitzgerald & Sim, 1982: 63). This is significant given that many prisoners have not had steady employment prior to their incarceration (Simon, 1999: 184). Engaging prisoners in work and activities has the added benefit to the Prison Service of keeping prisoners busy (Simon, 1999: 107), thus acting as a mechanism of control of the prisoner population. Prisoners’ activities therefore need to be considered in relation to the coercive environment that surrounds them.

The notion of prisoner work and activity is not new; indeed, the early prison reformers such as Howard promoted the disciplinary effects of prison labour (Simon, 1999: 2). Prison work has been used by prisons to achieve a multitude of ends:

[A]t different times work in prisons has been valued in terms of: teaching prisoners the virtues of labour; their moral regeneration; softening the pains of confinement; maintaining prisons; enabling them to run commercial enterprises with cheap labour, or at least keep down their own costs; building public works; punishment and deterrence; control and discipline; imparting vocational skills; instilling work habits; ‘treatment and training’; and simply keeping prisoners occupied. (Simon, 1999: 183)



Whilst prison work has traditionally involved seemingly tedious activities that are low skilled, and manual in nature, prisons have been concerned with engaging prisoners in more ‘constructive’ activities since the early 1990s (Simon, 1999: 16). This is the result of a growing concern to rehabilitate prisoners to enable them to lead useful and law abiding lives on their release (Maguire & Raynor, 2006: 20). One former prison governor has argued that prisoners’ participation in activities, particularly those that involve a degree of responsibility, has symbolic value:

Giving people responsibility, or allowing them to retain it while in prison, means accepting that they are not wholly bad or wholly dangerous, or wholly irresponsible, though that is what the adversarial court process may have shown when finding them wholly guilty. (Pryor, 2001: 1)

Some have argued however that many of the work opportunities for prisoners act in opposition to the above goals and benefits through the poor pay, the exploitative nature of the work, and a lack of any meaningful connection with outside employers and society at large (Black, 2008; Crook, 2007; Simon, 1999).

With reference to volunteering specifically, offenders tend to have low levels of civic engagement and prison reinforces their lack of citizen status further (Behan & O’Donnell, 2008: 334; Crook, 2007). It is problematic, in the prison environment, to see any engagement by prisoners in activities such as work, education or volunteering, as truly ‘voluntary’. This is particularly problematic for ‘volunteering’ which, by definition, involves time being given ‘freely’ (Wilson, 2005: 215). Volunteering is ‘sold’ to prisoners as a route for recouping citizenship (Gibson, 2008: 45). But as Bosworth (2007) and Faulkner (2006) have noted, this is a strategy of governance; power can be exercised through creating more stable and controlled



prison environments but it is legitimised through notions of citizenship which cloaks the issues related to the painful and damaging effects of the prison as if there is “nothing significant or unusual about penal institutions” (Bosworth, 2007: 80). This approach is grounded on the notion that guidance and encouragement to self-govern are favourable to ‘treatment approaches’ (Sparks, 2007: 86) which infantilise or pathologise prisoners. Whilst on the surface, then, it might seem like a positive move forward, the main priority of the Prison Service continues to be that of containment and governance, over and above the aim of rehabilitation (Crowe, 2001: 116). Volunteering by offenders thus is promoted on grounds of ‘empowerment’ and ‘citizenship’ but prisoners are not deemed as citizens as evident by the persistent denial of the right for prisoners to vote (Cheney, 2008). Moreover, the security and regime priorities of prisons will always overshadow the treatment of prisoners as citizens (Carlen, 2002; Faulkner, 2005: 305).

Furthermore, there is an inherent tension between ‘empowerment’ versus ‘responsibilisation’ (Hannah-Moffat, 2001: 176). The concept of the empowerment shifts responsibility to prisoners to become ‘self-reliant’ (Hannah-Moffat, 2001: 172; Pollack, 2004: 703):

[T]he choice of rehabilitation or reform has become the individual prisoner’s sole responsibility. The prison is merely expected to provide the arena for such personal decisions while warehousing inmates securely. (Bosworth, 2007: 68)

The ‘choices’ prisoners make, and the paths they have available to them are heavily determined by the state (Hannah-Moffat, 2001: 173). Thus, the degree to which any activity in prison can be seen as fully voluntary and without motive for enhancing chances of parole, or receiving more privileges inside, is questionable:



The prisoner is governed through the expectation that she will rationally choose to engage in self-governing strategies to minimize her risk 'to the good order of the institution' and to avoid situations and behaviours that are 'risky'. (Hannah-Moffat, 2000: 186)

Prisoners are expected to respond to incentives to make progress in their prison sentence and to enjoy access to greater levels of goods and quality of life in the prison. Not only that, but taking part in accredited training programmes, greatly enhances their chance of progression as they journey through the prison system. This has had the effect of coercing prisoners down a particular route, and as Crewe (2009: 224) suggests, allows "prisoners to feel responsible for making choices and resolutions that, in reality, they could barely refuse." For those who are already marginalised and victimised, for example as is with the case for many women prisoners, their 'choices' become even more problematic. As victims of abuse or domestic violence, they are now being told to 'give something back' through volunteering and repair themselves. It is also the case that prisoners with severe mental health issues are unable to respond to strategies of responsibilisation and may suffer adverse consequences as a result. These strategies therefore emphasise the importance of individuals, and make assumptions about the ability of individuals to respond. Furthermore, they do not consider the importance of the context, i.e. the prison environment (Haney, 2005: 79).

It is rare that prisoners are afforded positions with any "*real* responsibility" (Simon, 1999: 112. Emphasis in original). Peer support, and likewise self-help, is often presented as an 'empowering' experience for those individuals who experience it, which is claimed to arise from the ability of individuals to resolve their own problems (Habermann, 1990: 224), rather than a passive role where they are 'treated' in a traditional medical model or paternalistic



approach (White, 2004: 4). In the particular context of the prison, the notion of 'empowerment' is particularly problematic because:

Most prisoners find themselves steeped in a prison culture with a gubernatorial regime and authoritarian structure that allows little individual responsibility and yet tries to instil it. In an institution that diminishes individual choice and independent action, it is difficult to encourage the individual to become a responsible actor. (Behan & O'Donnell, 2008: 333)

Hannah-Moffat (2001) reported this incongruent state of affairs in Canadian women's prisons, she notes that "the choices women are empowered to make are censored and predetermined by the wider penal structure. Women in prison are allowed those limited choices that the *administration* deems to be meaningful and responsible" (ibid.: 173. Emphasis in original). Thus true choice is removed, prisoners are disempowered and self-determination is undermined (Bosworth, 1999; Carlen & Worrall, 2004: 75; Hannah-Moffat, 2000).

A consequence of neo-liberal strategies is that they encourage prisoners to demonstrate compliance and reform through engaging in particular activities to achieve parole or gain employment (Hannah-Moffat, 2000: 523; Philip & Sprat, 2007: 60). Thus, 'opportunities' are in reality 'obligations' (Crewe, 2009: 454). Crewe describes the implications of the rehabilitative ideal under New Labour:

It has authoritarian as well as humanitarian features. It is more paternalistic than maternalistic, more pushy than caring, and more prescriptive than liberal. It insists on compliance and demands reform, and it rewards conditionally. [...] It is tight and intrusive, yet in some ways imperceptible; its grip is firm and enduring, yet its



character is soft and light; and while its scope is wide, its source is diffuse. [...] Instead of direct regulation, it affords space where autonomy can be exercised, albeit in limited forms, and ‘responsible behaviour’ can be exhibited. (Crewe, 2009: 448)

#### **4.4.2 The effects of volunteering on the (prisoner) volunteer**

The literature in non-prison settings highlights that volunteering holds particular significance for certain populations, for example older people, who may struggle to come to terms with losing former roles as parent, employee and productive member of the community (Bradley, 1999-2000; Kim & Pai, 2000); it is therefore feasible to suggest that this may also be the case for prisoners. In fact, the activities prisoners engage in during their confinement can hold a high level of importance for them and can strongly influence their overall experience of their time inside (Liebling, 2004: 314). Whereas volunteering is likely to constitute a part-time activity for people on the outside (Pearce, 1993: 37), for prisoners, such volunteering is likely to hold greater prominence in their daily routine, both practically and symbolically. Prisoners are not what are considered to be typical examples of volunteers as they do not tend to be educated, middle class and female (Wilson, 2000). Volunteering is predominantly an activity seen as linked to middle class backgrounds (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2003), higher household incomes, higher levels of education (e.g. see Bekkers, 2005; Freeman, 1997; Wilson & Musick, 1999: 261), and age (Pattie et al, 2003).

A wealth of research in non-prison settings, and some in prison settings, exists on the potential benefits of volunteering for volunteers themselves, and a slightly smaller corpus considers the effects of peer support and self-help groups (see chapter 2). This body of literature presents an overwhelmingly positive view of the outcomes of volunteering. For example, research has found that the benefits of volunteering and mentoring include: counteracting depression (Kim



& Pai, 2010; Musick & Wilson, 2003); improving mental health in general (O’Shea, 2006: 275), particularly among the elderly; promoting well-being (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001) or positive moods (Midlarsky, 1991: 246); higher levels of happiness and health (Borgonovi, 2008; Krause, 2009); enhancing confidence and self-esteem (Biggar, 1996: 147; Farrant & Levenson, 2002; Habermann, 1990: 226; Kim & Pai, 2010: 86; Midlarsky, 1991: 242); providing a source of meaning or direction in life (Hall & Gabor, 2004: 22; Midlarsky, 1991: 241); developing skills and a sense of mastery (Pollack, 2004: 703); improving communication (Cowie et al, 2002: 454); fostering positive behaviour (Blair, 2006: 6); facilitating embeddedness in social networks (Midlarsky, 1991: 247; Soloman, 2004: 397-8; Wilson & Musick, 1998); and distracting individuals from their own problems or predicament and assisting in the coping process (Blair, 2006: 7; Midlarsky, 1991: 240; O’Shea, 2006: 276). However, many of the above variables could equally be antecedents to volunteering as well as outcomes (for example see Wilson, 2000). Furthermore the positive effects of helping behaviour will vary according to the activity which the individual is undertaking, with some more likely to result in a positive mood than others (Salovey, Mayer & Rosenhan, 1991: 221). Krause (2009) posits that a key factor is the degree of dedication to, or embeddedness in, the activity concerned.

Activities may serve as a distraction from the prison environment, or from other problems they are experiencing. Moreover, participation provides prisoners with more time out of their cells, potentially more freedom of movement around the establishment, greater levels of interaction with others, and a break from the prison routine. Certain activities provide opportunities for prisoners to learn new skills, acquire knowledge, and further themselves. Finally, it is important not to overlook the other ‘rewards’ or ‘incentives’ in place that may prompt prisoners to engage, for example: respect from staff or other prisoners, extra visits, early release, and more freedom within the prison walls. Volunteering is a forum through which the



individual might express their identity (O'Shea, 2006). It has been suggested that for prisoners, however, the image they portray to others may be much more superficial:

[W]hile it may be possible for prison inmates to assume certain outward characteristics in order to help them fit in with aspects of the prison culture, such traits are likely to be little more than a façade, constructed to mask the real personality beneath. (Jewkes, 2002: 44)

Activities in prison therefore present an opportunity for prisoners to *express* their identity, or to *present* qualities of a desirable identity to others. As the previous section highlighted, the government clearly limits the choices prisoners have available to them and provides incentives to participate in activities that exhibit these qualities. The Prison Service therefore considers a lack of participation as highly undesirable.

Desistance from crime has been claimed to be linked with offenders' feelings of self-worth (Farrall & Calverley, 2006: 102), and the degree to which their identity is 'prosocial' (Kenemore & Roldan, 2006: 8). This, it is claimed, serves to narrow the gap between the offenders and 'respectable society' (Farrall & Calverley, 2006: 106). Volunteering is considered a form of 'active citizenship' (Edgar, Jacobson & Biggar, 2011; Farrant & Levenson, 2002). In particular, volunteering in roles that allow the offender to use their former life of crime or experiences of imprisonment, allows the individual to construct a new identity based on reform by drawing from their prison experiences, which others can learn from (Brown, 1991). It has been described by some as the "trying on of a conformist identity" (Uggen, Manza & Behrens, 2004: 265). Many offenders express a desire to 'give back' (Maruna, 1997: 85). Maruna (2001: 117) described how embarking on generative pursuits, such as self-help groups or peer support, can serve as a constant reminder to the offender of



their own past, motivating the individual to maintain his or her reformed life. Having had first-hand experience of the circumstances of those they are helping, they find it is an area they can become accomplished in, as a kind of ‘professional-ex’ or ‘wounded healer’:

Their monopoly of an abstruse body of knowledge and skill is realised through their emotionally lived history of shame and guilt as well as the hope and redemption secured through therapeutic transformation. (Brown, 1991: 226)

Indeed, links between the therapeutic as well as ‘pro-social’ dimensions were summarised by one former Listener:

I combined Listening with meditation, reading and writing. They all worked as good stimuli into sussing out my life screw ups and evaluating my existence. Being a Listener presents numerous challenges, but can greatly assist with personal development. I had my own burdens weighing heavily on my back, yet found myself assisting others in the process of lightening their own. In this way, I guess I was a wounded healer. (Chinelo, 2010: no page)

Further to this, by becoming a ‘wounded healer’ individuals are distanced from their ‘offender’ status for example, and become associated with qualities that are linked to a reformed identity (see White, 2000).

There has been much less research about the negative effects of volunteering. However, among the studies conducted to date, ‘burnout’ and ‘stress’ have been associated with volunteering (Lewig et al, 2007; Nesbitt et al, 1996; Ross, Greenfield & Bennett, 1999), either as a result of the drain on time and energy from the volunteering, or because of the emotionally draining



nature of the work. Those for whom volunteering holds particular significance, and who have a number of motivations to volunteer, are also more likely to experience feelings of stress (Kiviniemi, Snyder & Omoto, 2002: 742). Stress is an important risk of volunteering for prisoners and whilst I am not aware of any study to date that directly investigates this, it must be remembered that their status as prisoners means that volunteers have their own problems to contend with, as well as any they take on through their volunteering. Volunteers in non-prison settings have reported 'friction' and 'tension' in working alongside paid staff (Claxton-Oldfield, 2008: 36). In the prison setting, these tensions may be enhanced by the unequal power statuses of prisoners and staff. Finally, Haski-Leventhal & Bargal (2008: 93) have suggested that volunteers find it more difficult to withdraw from their volunteering when an attachment exists with their 'clients'. In prison, it is not just the matter of *attachment*, but also *proximity* to their clients determined by their imprisonment together. Therefore the implications of withdrawal, and the task of withdrawal, albeit even on a temporary basis, or in between volunteering duties, is worthy of further attention.

In the context of the current study, there are pressures that go alongside becoming a Listener peer supporter. Listeners may be called upon to support prisoners for problems with which they might identify, or that could be distressing for them to hear. It is vital therefore that Listeners do not feel emotionally burdened or in a position where they feel they have inappropriate levels of responsibility in relation to their relative powerlessness in prison. Samaritans volunteers on the outside can do their duty at their local branch once a week: they will answer phone calls and emails for the majority of the time, and rarely do they see a caller in person. But Listeners in prison support all of their callers face-to-face, and not only that, but they also live in close proximity to those whom they support and do not have the luxury of going home after seeing a caller. When a prisoner is particularly distressed, two Listeners will even spend the night with him or her. So even though Listeners are still prisoners, and still



experience the same pain and deprivations of imprisonment as their peers, they are still prepared to be a formal source of support to them. This strongly underlines that they have to balance their roles as Listeners and prisoners in the prison environment. Thus, this study explores how those engaged in voluntary work negotiate those conflicting pressures (see chapter 8).

It is clear that Listeners have to be careful how they behave and how they interact with both prisoners and prison staff. Listeners therefore need to be cautious in how they conduct themselves to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the scheme. When they are unsuccessful in balancing their roles, Listeners could become marginal to both groups being neither the same as prisoners, nor as staff and are instead ‘quasi-’ or ‘para-professionals’ (this has been suggested in brief by Richman, 2004; see also White, 2000: 3). This highlights the dual role that Listeners have as an ordinary prisoner *and* as a Listener fulfilling a more professional counselling-related role. It is therefore easy for Listeners to find themselves on the margins of both groups and possibly forming a sub group of their own or leading a more solitary life inside. How Listeners are perceived by staff and prisoners is therefore explored in this thesis, in addition to how Listeners describe themselves and how they conduct their Listener work.

Research on prisoner volunteer work and volunteering as a peer supporter in particular, is still very much in its infancy. The above review of the literature does not lead to the conclusion that volunteering prisoners is purely egoistic, nor purely altruistic. Rather it highlights the need to investigate the motivations and experiences of prisoner volunteering in relation to the special environment of the prison.



## **4.5 Conclusion**

In 2007 it was estimated that approximately one in fourteen prisoners are becoming involved in peer support schemes such as the Listener scheme (Prison Reform Trust, 2007). Despite this there is a dearth of literature that specifically considers it. This review of the literature has demonstrated that whilst the notion of a prison ‘community’ is no longer accepted as the dominant explanation of social relations inside the prison walls, the study of the nature of these social relations in prison remains a primary concern for contemporary prison research, including the current study. By considering the prison ‘community’ as an ‘aggregate’, held together, albeit unwillingly, we can begin to unpack the nature of the relationships between prisoners and between prisoners and staff, and the conditions that are more or less conducive to seeking help from different sources of support.

The dominant discourse associated with suicide in prison is one of ‘prevention’; this is an official discourse that has been reinforced by the numerous scholars who have centred their attention on ‘risk factors’, screening procedures or treatment approaches. Whilst it is not the aim of the current research to reinforce this discourse, nor to link the presence of the Listener scheme with rates of suicide and self-harm (see chapter 3), it is recognised that the scheme is seen as a tool of suicide prevention and this has the capacity to influence how it is viewed, used, and facilitated by prisoners and staff. Research on coping and survival in prison has largely failed to problematise the nature of the prison environment, or question why we are exposing vulnerable people, who are not deemed adept at coping, to such a painful and depriving environment. Simply saying that prisoners are poor at coping also overlooks their patterns of help-seeking activity and preferences. The small number of studies that have explored prisoners’ help-seeking suggest that not only is the relationship with the potential



source of support important, but help-seeking may also be problem-driven. However the evidence is patchy and very little is known about prisoners’ help-seeking overall.

Finally, the literature of volunteering by prisoners, and the government’s efforts to responsabilise prisoners, suggest that prisoners are under pressure to demonstrate that they are active agents in their own change and rehabilitation. This is however concealed by a discourse of ‘empowerment’ and ‘active citizenship’. In reality, prisoners are being governed and coerced into a somewhat false rehabilitation project. There are many potential benefits that may derive from taking part in a variety of voluntary activities, and research in non-prison settings highlights this. However, volunteering in prison is different, not least because of the responsabilisation strategies outlined above, but because these volunteers are not just volunteers, they are also prisoners, and this creates a variety of tensions and conflicts that they have to manage and negotiate in this subordinate position as they conduct their voluntary work.



## **Chapter 5**

### **‘Getting in’, ‘getting along’ and ‘making sense’: methodology, clearance and analysis**

Research is a political act because it involves wielding power, wading in other people’s power and perhaps feeling powerless. (Liebling, 2001: 481)

This chapter aims to provide a contextualised account of the research process to draw the attention of the reader to both the political context in which prison research is negotiated and conducted, and “the *craft* of doing research *in* prisons” (King, 2001: 281. Emphasis in original). In the context of the current project, the research story is an illuminating account of the politicisation of peer support by the New Labour government. Briefly, this chapter outlines the methodological approach of using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and the associated research tools and sampling strategies. Next, the challenges faced when attempting to get in, and get along, are described and discussed. The chapter draws to a close by outlining the strategies and approach adopted when analysing and ‘making sense’ of the data. The account provided aims to be contextualised because as Philips and Earle (2010: 374) contend:

We must be wary of a tendency towards sociologically ‘airbrushed’ accounts, cosmetically enhanced for objectivity in which the awkwardness of the construction is consigned to a methodological afterward. This practice brackets away the subjectivity inherent in human interactions, disguising and diminishing its role in the production of criminological knowledge.



## **5.1 The methodological approach: adopting quantitative and qualitative methods**

The use of a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study, frequently described as a ‘mixed methods’ approach, is becoming increasingly common in the field of social sciences (Bryman, 1992; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Mason, 2006). However, the idea of ‘mixed methods’ encompasses a wide variety of different ways to produce and analyse these data, and there is not always a clear ‘logic’ to how the methods are combined, the order they are introduced, and how they relate to one another in the analysis (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007: 127; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). It is beyond the remit of this discussion to engage in a debate on the merits or drawbacks of the quantitative and qualitative paradigms,<sup>1</sup> rather a rationale of why the methods selected were chosen is provided.

The adoption of both quantitative and qualitative methods in the current study was made in response to the data that was required to answer the research questions (Burgess, 1984 cited in Brannen, 1992: 11). Data on prisoners’ perceptions of peer support, patterns of usage (such as the time of day Listeners were accessed, the types of problems taken to Listeners, and how many times prisoners talked to Listeners) and take-up of the Listener scheme among different prisoner groups were most appropriately generated via a quantitative survey of prisoners. Further to this, Liebling’s (2004) extensive work on the ‘moral performance’ of prisons, highlighted the merit of using quantitative measures to assess the institutional context of prisons, thus moving away from a purely qualitative approach to prison research where the prison experience for specific prisoner populations on a small scale is considered. Assessing the institutional context of prisons therefore could contribute to an understanding of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Although see for example: Hammersley (1992); Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004); Marsh (1982); Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil (2002); Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998).



relationship between the environment and help-seeking or peer support. The survey was also the most efficient method of generating the views of a range of different prisoners who had not talked to Listeners. Additionally it allowed for the ethical identification of prisoners who had talked to Listeners in order to invite them to take part in an interview (detailed in section 5.1.3). The aim of this quantitative element of the research was to provide this valuable data on an extremely under-explored topic where valid and reliable quantitative findings are needed. As chapter 3 highlighted, quantitative measures were attractive to officials in evaluating the impact and outcomes of peer services. These data in particular were therefore seen as beneficial for Samaritans and the Prison Service.

Interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff aimed to elicit an understanding of contact with the scheme by each group (prisoners, Listeners and prison staff) and the realities of operating the Listener scheme in the prison ‘community’.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the qualitative interviews were able to generate data on the benefits and problems associated with the Listener scheme, how the scheme is facilitated, and how it is used, by drawing out the different perspectives and experiences of different groups in the prison ‘community’. Bosworth (1999: 78) notes that there is a tendency for researchers to consider prison staff *or* prisoners, and not both groups within a single study. By adopting an approach bringing together different types of data from different groups of respondents, the aim was to provide a more comprehensive understanding (Bryman, 1988: 137; Irwin, 2006: 3) of the operation of the Listener scheme in prisons. It enabled the experiences and perspectives of these groups to be considered within the overall context of attitudes towards peer support and patterns of help-seeking intentions more generally.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A5, A5.1 for a brief summary of the links between the research questions and the qualitative and quantitative data generated.



The adoption of quantitative and qualitative methods was not to address any inadequacy of a particular research instrument, nor was it about adhering to a particular paradigm. Rather, it was in response to a need to use the appropriate methods when investigating specific questions, and out of an understanding of how the data might stand alone, or together could contribute to a fuller understanding (MacInnas, 2009) of the operation of the Listener scheme in prisons. The methods were therefore primarily complimentary rather than contextualising and aimed to achieve more balanced, useful and informed conclusions (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007: 129). These different types of data generated from different groups were intended to be cross-referenced to test the robustness of key findings. An ‘integrative approach’ was therefore adopted that centred attention on the strengths of different methods for different research questions (see chapter 1), and the rigorous design and implementation of the ‘research tools’, be they quantitative or qualitative (Onwuegbuzi & Leech, 2005; Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004: 14-15). The sections that follow outline each method used and the prison selection criteria.

### **5.1.1 Strategic selection of prisons**

A ‘strategic selection’ approach was adopted to identify potential research sites. The initial aim was to visit a variety of different prisons based on size and level of security, in addition to a ‘young offender’s institution’ (hereafter referred to as YOI), a women’s prison and a privately managed prison. The underlying reasoning behind this strategic selection was to reflect as far as possible the social diversity and specific conditions of the operation of the Listener scheme among prisoners in these different prison settings. As chapter 4 highlighted, the prison literature indicates that there are important differences between the coping and experiences of different prisoner groups (for example with respect to age, gender or sentencing status) that potentially apply to levels of engagement with the Listener scheme. For example, women are



claimed to be more likely to talk about their problems, and more likely to seek support from their peers than men (Bosworth, 1999; Carlen, 1983; Mind, 2007; see also chapter 4). An initial analysis of the statistics obtained from Samaritans and the number of ‘calls’ Listeners take, indicates that the use of the scheme may be lower in YOIs.

However, the prison selection strategy was slowed by considerations of gaining clearance (see section 5.2 of this chapter) and there was no alternative than to become somewhat more conservative and opportunistic than previously intended. Additionally, the experience of negotiating access to private sector prisons was much more favourable compared with the public sector experience. Firstly, private prisons are outside the remit of the NRC clearance procedures, and therefore access can be negotiated locally without obtaining clearance from a research governance body. Secondly, the structural management of private prisons was much more organised and the ‘top-down’ management style meant that once agreement had been obtained from the Director, that access to the prison was subsequently granted. On the other hand, in public prisons, access was much more dependent on individuals lower down in the hierarchy whom the governor would pass my details on to. Two of the prisons were privately managed; access to the female private prison was granted as a direct result of conducting the research in a male private sector prison as they were both managed by the same company.

Table 5.1 shows the characteristics of the four prisons visited. Despite the challenges faced in accessing prisons, four different prisons were visited including a women’s establishment and a young offender’s institution.



*Table 5.1 – Characteristics of the four prisons visited*

<p><b><u>Prison 1</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men</li> <li>• Adult prisoners (with a wing of young offenders)</li> <li>• Operational capacity – 1000</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Remand and sentenced prisoners</li> <li>• Purpose built by private sector</li> <li>• Up to Category B prisoners</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Prison 2</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men</li> <li>• Adult prisoners</li> <li>• Operational capacity 1100</li> <li>• Public sector</li> <li>• Remand and short sentence prisoners</li> <li>• Old Victorian architecture</li> <li>• Any category prisoners</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Prison 3</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Adult prisoners</li> <li>• Operational capacity – 300</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Remand and sentenced prisoners</li> <li>• Purpose built by private sector</li> <li>• ‘Closed’ conditions</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Prison 4</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men</li> <li>• Young offenders</li> <li>• Operational capacity – 500</li> <li>• Public sector</li> <li>• Sentenced prisoners (up to 10 years)</li> <li>• Old Victorian architecture</li> <li>• ‘Closed’ conditions</li> </ul>

N.B. ‘Young offenders’ are prisoners aged 18-21 years, and Adults are aged 21 and over. A young offender will be transferred to an adult male prison when they turn 21 if they will be in prison after they are 22.

The figure of ‘operational capacity’ has been rounded to the nearest 100 and was current for 2007 at the time when access had begun to be pursued.

### 5.1.2 Survey of prisoners

The questionnaire for prisoners consists of a number of questions informed by the literature in prison and non-prison settings. The main topics covered are:<sup>3</sup>

- Individual/career variables
- Knowledge, views and use of Listeners
- Well-being and proactivity
- Contact with people on the outside

<sup>3</sup> A more detailed description of the variables analysed can be found in chapters 6 and 7.



- Help-seeking preferences
- Relationships with staff and prisoners
- Characteristics of the prison environment or ‘community’

In order to develop measures relating to the above topics, a ‘question bank’ was created by conducting a thorough search for surveys containing relevant items. In particular, scales that influenced the development of the questionnaire items were: Liebling’s (2004) scales relating to moral performance in prisons, such as prisoner social life, staff-prisoner relationships, and trust; Toch’s (1992) ‘Prisoner Preference Questionnaire’ informed the development of questions related to preferred sources of help, and problems relevant to prisoners; and Moos’ (1975) ‘Correctional Institutions Environment Scale’ provided a useful series of statements when considering questions on prison ‘community’. Additionally, for one aspect of the questionnaire, a shortened version of the ‘Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale’ (WEMWBS) was used. This measure, developed by Tennant et al. (2007) is designed to measure positive aspects of mental well-being. Help-seeking was one area where quantitative measures have previously been under-developed, and therefore new measures were designed to elicit data on prisoners’ help-seeking intentions. These measures are explored in-depth in chapter 6.

The questionnaire was specifically designed with prisoners in mind given that literacy problems are common among this group. Recent figures suggest that 48% of the prison population have the reading ability, and 82% the writing ability, of an eleven year old or less (Prison Reform Trust, 2011: 64). Further to this, foreign national prisoners currently make up approximately 13% of the total prison population (Prison Reform Trust, 2011: 37), some of whom speak English as a second language or very little English at all. Prison officers mentioned, on a number of occasions, that they were often asked to give out questionnaires to



prisoners which in their view, were poorly designed, used inappropriate language, and obtained poor response rates. It was central, therefore, that the questionnaire provided extremely clear instructions, the style of language was concise and relevant to prisoners,<sup>4</sup> questions were well-spaced and provided in a variety of different formats to engage respondent's interest, only closed 'tick-box' questions were used,<sup>5</sup> and finally more complex 'filter questions' were avoided. With reference to this final point, this decision was confirmed in discussions with a number of prison psychologists who suggested that filter questions were renowned for being unsuccessful with prisoners. Four slightly different questionnaires were created in order to avoid using filter questions with respect to the different contact that prisoners could have with Listeners. The four different questionnaires therefore were for: prisoners who had not heard of the Listener scheme, prisoners who had heard of the Listener scheme but not talked to a Listener, prisoners who had talked to a Listener in the current prison, and prisoners who had talked to Listeners in another prison (see Appendix A5, section A5.2).

The questionnaire was piloted with a small number of prisoners in the first establishment visited. Four prisoners completed a questionnaire and this was followed with an interview. These prisoners were also asked questions about the layout of the questionnaire, the ease of completion, and what they thought about the relevance of the questions and vocabulary to their lives in prison. Furthermore, 'verbal probing' techniques (Willis, 1999; 2005) were used which aimed to elicit information about how respondents understood questions and how they came to decide upon their answers.<sup>6</sup> The interviews revealed that the questionnaire was accessible and well-understood. Respondents took between ten and fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaires, and commented positively on the layout, clarity and length. Two minor issues

---

<sup>4</sup> For example in one question the term 'grass' was used to refer to prisoners who inform on one another.

<sup>5</sup> Despite this a number of prisoners spontaneously annotated the questionnaires with additional comments. One prisoner even wrote me a letter thanking me for my interest in prisoners and in the support they choose to use as he felt it was something that required attention.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on these kinds of strategies of testing questionnaires see: Jobe (2003); McColl, Meadows and Barofsky (2003); and Willis (1999; 2005).



were highlighted. The first relating to a question requiring respondents to indicate what they thought was the role of Listeners; the instructions to this question were made clearer by emphasising that respondents could tick more than one box. Secondly, in items that asked prisoners about their relationship with ‘prison staff’, respondents recommended using the term ‘officers’ as this provided greater clarity about the group staff being referred to and was more relevant to their daily lives inside. The success of the design of the questionnaire is highlighted by the fact that across all establishments approximately 85% of prisoners who agreed to complete a questionnaire in fact returned one.

I distributed the questionnaires myself, visiting each prisoner in their cell, despite staff offers to do so on my behalf. This ensured that I could describe the research accurately and discretely, and out of ear shot from staff and other prisoners. Furthermore, it also provided an opportunity for me to offer help to prisoners, or to deliver the questionnaire verbally to those who felt unable to complete the questionnaire themselves. A systematic random sampling technique was adopted for the survey to capture social diversity.<sup>7</sup> The target sample was based on an assumption that approximately 60% of prisoners would complete and return the questionnaires.<sup>8</sup> The aim was to achieve a minimum sample of 70 completed questionnaires from each establishment.<sup>9</sup> To obtain this figure therefore, approximately 130 prisoners were selected to be approached to take part in the research. In two of the establishments however, staff were able to facilitate the collection of more questionnaires (where 102 and 84 questionnaires were obtained respectively).

---

<sup>7</sup> For example age, ethnicity, country of birth, first language, sentencing status and prior imprisonment.

<sup>8</sup> This was a figure suggested by a member of staff from prison 1 who had been involved in facilitating research on a number of occasions.

<sup>9</sup> This was the figure deemed necessary to enable statistical analyses to be conducted.



Table 5.2 shows the characteristics of the survey sample that was obtained across the four establishments visited. The sampling strategy ensured that the social diversity of the prisoner population was represented for purposes of individual/career comparisons.

*Table 5.2 Demographic characteristics of the prisoner survey sample*

Demographic characteristic		% (n)	n
Gender	Women	22.1% (73)	331
	Men	77.9% (285)	
Age	18-30 years	68.6% (227)	328
	31+ years	30.5% (101)	
Ethnicity	White British	61.9% (205)	329
	White European	4.5% (15)	
	Black	16.6% (55)	
	Asian	9.4% (31)	
	Mixed	4.5% (15)	
	Other	2.4% (8)	
First language	English	90.6% (300)	328
	Not English	8.5% (28)	
Country of birth	Britain	86.4% (286)	330
	Not Britain	13.3% (44)	
Prior imprisonment	Not first time	58.0% (192)	331
	First time	42.0% (139)	
Sentencing status	Un-sentenced	28.4% (94)	326
	Sentenced	70.1% (232)	



### **5.1.3 Interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff**

Interviews were conducted with **prisoners who had talked to Listeners**. These interviews aimed to explore a number of key areas, including: the circumstances under which prisoners choose Listener support; the nature of their contact with Listeners; perceptions of sources of support in prison; views towards Listeners; outcomes and issues associated with seeking Listener support in prison. Prisoners who had spoken to a Listener in their current, or in a previous establishment, were invited to take part in an interview to discuss their experiences; they could indicate their willingness to be interviewed by filling out their details on a detachable page in the questionnaire. A total of 14 interviews were conducted with prisoners across the four establishments.

The interviews with **Listeners** were designed to elicit an understanding of the Listener perspective on: background to becoming a Listener; experiences of training and support from Samaritans; their relationships with staff and prisoners; experiences of supporting prisoners; take-up of the scheme by prisoners and use by staff; and the effects and outcomes of their engagement as peer supporters in prison. Listeners were approached to take part in an interview and were selected often on the basis of availability, but also many of them spontaneously volunteered to be interviewed when I was introduced to them via staff. A total of 16 interviews were conducted with Listeners across the four establishments.

Researchers in prisons do not tend to report difficulty in finding willing research respondents among prisoners. This can be explained by the potential benefits to prisoners taking part in research which include: getting time out of their cell, or off work, alleviating boredom and loneliness, being able to ‘off-load’, and a desire to be ‘heard’, and positive feelings associated with being connected to someone from the ‘outside’ (Bosworth et al, 2005: 257; Sparks,



Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 352). Prisoners “like to be listened to” (Liebling, Elliot & Arnold, 2001: 169) and feel understood (Crewe, 2006: 366). These motivations were evident in the prisoners I interviewed as indicated by the wider subject matter they discussed with me outside my line of questioning such as the feeling of confinement and the injustices they frequently experienced. Listeners, as a subgroup of prisoners, were particularly talkative and articulate, and expressed a desire to talk about their Listener work and role.

The interviews with **prison staff** explored: experiences of working with and facilitating the Listener scheme; views towards Listeners and the scheme; how staff facilitate the operation of the scheme; and the impact of Listener support mechanisms on work patterns and responsibilities. The strategy for the identification of potential staff interviewees was based on the idea that staff were ‘experts’ (Glaser, 1999) in that as staff they had privileged access to information about conducting prison work and facilitating the Listener scheme in different ways. The nature of their expertise therefore was not expertise about the Listener scheme specifically, but as a body of knowledge, shared by staff who have similar experiences and training. Staff could have contact with prisoners (and Listeners) in a number of different ways, for example: managing wings, leading rehabilitation programmes, responding to help-seeking activity, facilitating access to support, providing inductions and working on wings to mention but a few. It stands to reason then, that staff (including officers, senior officers, principal officers, governors, Chaplains, or Psychologists) might have contact with prisoners who request to talk to Listeners, and Listeners in a number of different ways, and that to understand the operation of the Listener scheme, a range of different staff should be targeted (see Braggins & Talbot, 2005 for a similar strategy).

Interviewing staff in prisons is renowned to be difficult. Firstly, staff are working as part of a highly structured regime in prisons, where certain activities occur at designated times across



the whole establishment; therefore there is very little flexibility to take part in research. In reality, higher ranking officers were more difficult to access, and some types were impossible to access due to the research visits being conducted over weekends. This experience is not uncommon. Crawley (2004a: 63) was unable to adhere to her original sampling design of prison staff and had to “seize any opportunity that presented itself.” I adopted a snowballing strategy by actively asking about who had contact with the Listeners and might be willing to be interviewed. Staff introduced me to other staff at lunch times, and when I was accompanied on the wings to distribute and collect questionnaires, I therefore had multiple opportunities to approach staff. A total of 12 interviews with staff were conducted across the four establishments. Their positions included: officers working on induction, residential, lifer and skills and developments wings, senior officers, safer custody managers and a prison Chaplain.

All of the interviews were digitally recorded. Recording the interviews ensured that efficient use of time could be made by avoiding lengthy note-taking. All interviewees were reassured of the safe and confidential treatment of the data and anonymised quotations that could not be linked back to them. Only one interviewee, a member of staff, appeared to be surprised that anyone was willing to be recorded and initially appeared sceptical. I provided assurances of confidentiality and anonymity, and we proceeded with the interview, however I felt that I failed to establish the degree of rapport with this individual compared with the other interviewees.

For semi-structured interview schedules for interviews with prisoners who had talked to Listeners, Listeners and prison staff please see Appendix A5, section A5.3.



## 5.2 ‘Getting in’: clearance and research governance

It is far easier to gain access to study the residents of a remote Alaskan community rather than to study the lives of prison inmates and/or those persons whose task it is to keep them within the prison walls (Patenaude, 2004: 69s).

Prison researchers have drawn attention to matters of accessing prisons as the quotation above highlights. However, researchers have had comparatively little to say about the process of gaining clearance from research governance bodies. This is not surprising given that the proceedings of such bodies are largely hidden from view. Whilst prisons are traditionally very ‘closed’ institutions, this section shows that matters of *clearance* must be considered in conjunction with matters of *access*, and that both involve inherently political processes. In this respect the process of obtaining clearance from the Prison Service’s National Research Committee’ (hereafter referred to as NRC) was a challenging aspect of this project. The discussion that follows aims to bring to the fore the problematic nature, and at times incomprehensible, processes inherent in dealing with research governance bodies.

### 5.2.1 ‘Going the distance’: obtaining research clearance

The Prison Service has specific criteria on the level of clearance that was required to conduct projects of a different scale. To conduct research in single establishment the governor should be contacted; to conduct research in a number of establishments within a geographic region, an application should be submitted to the ‘Area Psychologist’; and to conduct research in prisons in more than one geographical region, an application should be submitted to the NRC.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> This information was retrieved December 2006 from: <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/research/>. However the Prison service website has since been embedded within the Ministry of Justice website and can currently be found at:



However, there was very little information available on how decisions were made, and who made up the NRC. The Offender Health Research Network ran a workshop to assist researchers in seeking clearance from Prison Service and National Health Service research governance committees. At this event I had the opportunity to meet the then Chair of the NRC who offered me advice and commented favourably on the nature of my project.

Prison Service Order 7035 (updated in 2005) outlines the procedures for the research applications and ethics panel. The order endorses an approach which is standardised and formalised; the panel’s primary purpose is to consider the impact of the research on policy and practice priorities (under the ‘what works’ for re-offending framework), and the impact of the research on the establishments themselves, particularly in terms of resources. It was clear from the document that psychologists played a key role in judging applications and in acting as gatekeepers through their role as research contacts at individual establishments (see also Prison Service Order 7030). Furthermore, these guidelines suggest that where a re-submission of an application is necessary, the application should be directed to the original contacts.

At the start of the project the SCG expressed support for the research and were interested in future opportunities to maximize the dissemination of the findings across the Prison Service. The SCG did not express an interest, or attempt to become involved, in commenting on research proposals or applications to the NRC. During the summer of 2008, there was a shift in structure and change in personnel within the Ministry of Justice; the SCG, comprising of civil servants, became the Safer Custody and Offender Policy Group (hereafter referred to as SCOP). At the annual conference of Samaritans, Listeners and the Prison Service,<sup>11</sup> it was indicated to me that my application to the NRC would be referred to SCOP for their advice.

---

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/research-and-analysis/prisons/index.htm>. Furthermore, under current arrangements, all applications, regardless of the scope of the study, must be first sent to the NRC before being passed on to the relevant individual or board.

<sup>11</sup> This is an annual training event held at the Newbold Revel Prison Service training college and has been taking place since the mid-1990s.



Therefore it made sense to send it to SCOP first to get support for the research which would improve the chances of the research obtaining NRC clearance. On 21<sup>st</sup> July 2008 I received feedback from SCOP on the application via a telephone conversation from a civil servant official. The official suggested that I make significant changes to the research design and methodology which had already been substantially developed by this point. In particular the official insisted that the proposal did “not make any new or original contribution to the field” as the research questions were “already answered by policy documents” (such as Prison Service Order 2700) and training workshops available to Prison Service staff. It also transpired that SCOP were resistant to the inclusion of prison staff in the study. It was further suggested that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to interview prisoners in the prison setting. A meeting was arranged for 30<sup>th</sup> July 2008 with SCOP and I attended alongside a representative from Samaritans. At this meeting, the abovementioned concerns were re-iterated and I was encouraged to re-design the research and examine the impact of volunteering as Listeners on released prisoners’ rates of re-offending, which was not an original focus of the research. These early negotiations clearly evidenced the government pre-occupation with re-offending that was outlined in chapter 2.

After discussing the suggestions with my supervisors and the Evaluation Manager from Samaritans, we agreed that the proposed changes to the aims, objectives and the design of the research were not academically feasible as the nature of the questions proposed by SCOP appeared to reflect their preoccupations as to what useful research constituted. However, given some of the points that had been raised, it was decided to revise the application to provide greater clarity for certain aspects. Further to this, I made a number of attempts to identify and contact individuals who could provide me with further information about the processes and procedures under which the NRC makes research decisions. I was advised that having a list of establishments which were willing to grant access for the research would maximize the chance



of clearance being granted, and I subsequently attended meetings at two establishments to discuss conducting the research there. The revised application was approved by Samaritans and submitted to the NRC on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008 and was subsequently informed by the NRC that the application had been referred to their ‘policy group’ for further consideration.

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008, I received a letter stating that the NRC had not granted clearance (see Appendix A5, section A5.4), however, I was invited to submit a revised application addressing a number of points which had been raised by the committee. For example, contrary to the reasons I had clearly explained in the application for not pursuing research objectives related to rates of suicide or self-harm, I was advised to select prisons that were not only all the same (e.g. adult male local prisons), but also based on high rates of self-harm. The committee suggested that the number of questionnaires I had suggested was too low<sup>12</sup> and that the most logical way of dealing with this was to “remove that quantitative element and recast as qualitative in nature”. This was particularly surprising given the government’s preoccupation with quantitative outcomes and given that much of the policy relevant data (for example the take up of peer support among prisoners, perceptions of peer support, staff support for such schemes, how the support from peers is rated) could be generated by the quantitative survey of prisoners. However, the government’s favoured quantitative outcome – rates of reoffending – was not included in the research; this may help to explain the response from the NRC. Nevertheless, the lack of support for quantitative data is surprising. Furthermore, it was suggested that prisoners who had not heard of the Listener scheme should be interviewed to “gauge demand for the scheme and preferences for how such a scheme should be delivered”. This was despite the fact that the number of prisoners who had not heard of the Listener scheme was estimated to be very low, and would be difficult to identify if the quantitative aspect of the research was removed. Subsequently the supposedly separate review by the NRC,

---

<sup>12</sup> Originally I proposed to collect a minimum of 60 questionnaires in each of up to 9 prisons.



turned the initial application down on grounds which were remarkably similar to those of SCOPs, arguing that the rejection was “related particularly to issues of scope and sampling, and consequently the style of the research.” I was further advised to refer back to SCOP for further advice.

During January 2009, I discussed the points raised by the NRC and the appropriate course of action to take with my supervisors and the Evaluation Manager for Samaritans. I also contacted SCOP and was told that they supported the NRC’s points, and offered to provide data about self-harm rates in prisons in relation to the suggestion on prison selection. Furthermore, it was indicated that if I integrated all their recommendations in a revised proposal promptly, that SCOP would support the application in time for the next NRC meeting. Upon further consultation with my supervisors and Samaritans, it was agreed that it was not an appropriate strategy to attempt to prepare a second application straight away, without adequate time to produce considered responses and consult with Samaritans.

At this point a private sector prison was willing to grant me access for the research; private prisons are outside the remit of the NRC and therefore this could be pursued despite the difficulties with the NRC. By proceeding with the research in this establishment, it was reasoned that evidence could be obtained on the robustness of the research instruments, particularly with respect to the quantitative element which the NRC had previously recommended omitting from the research entirely. This could then support a re-application to the NRC. Unfortunately, I had to await security clearance to be processed; this had been submitted in December 2008. This security clearance was finally obtained in March 2009, however, the establishment was undergoing a security audit at that time, and therefore the first research visit to pilot the questionnaire could not take place until the following month, shortly



followed by visiting to conduct the survey and interviews. I also pursued access to other private sector establishments given the success of these research visits.

Shortly before submitting the revised application to the NRC, an advert appeared in the ‘Safer Custody News’.<sup>13</sup> The advert asked for researchers who had conducted research on the Listener scheme to make themselves known to SCOP, where they were in the process of preparing an internal review. This was the first time I had been made aware of the review, and it had not been brought to the attention of Samaritans either. I made contact and the official conducting the review from SCOP asked me to share the preliminary findings from the data obtained in the prison I had visited. At that point, I was informed that SCOP had always been concerned over my independence because the research was supported by Samaritans. This was the first time any such concern had been expressed. The official did not, at this point, express any concern over the validity or reliability of the quantitative or qualitative data. A revised application to the NRC was submitted on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, and an acknowledgement letter received on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009 indicated that the application would be considered at the end of that month.

On 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009, a letter from the NRC was received (see Appendix chapter 5, A5.4) stating that the re-application had addressed many of the NRC’s previous concerns, however, the NRC requested that I provide further information on a number of points to enable a final decision to be made. The NRC still required further justification of the prison selection strategy and still expressed a “slight concern” over sample sizes, clearly acting on SCOP’s “concerns”. The necessity and selection strategy of staff interviews was once again questioned. Perhaps the most perplexing suggestion was to exclude those prisoners who were currently on the ACCT care planning system for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm, and those who were in the

---

<sup>13</sup> This is a NOMS newsletter reporting matters related to suicide prevention, self-harm and violence reduction in prison for example.



“post-closure period” of ACCT. However no information was provided as to what length of time constituted ‘post-closure’. Despite earlier suggestions to select prisons based on *high levels of self-harm*, it was now being suggested that I *exclude prisoners based on their risk of self-harm*. A new suggestion also emerged. The NRC requested that I look at another peer support scheme to serve as a comparison and recommended the Prison Service’s in-house scheme ‘Insiders’. In short, I would get access if I agreed to evaluate the Prison Service’s own scheme as well as the Listener scheme. It was unclear exactly where the NRC felt some of the very detailed explanations that had been provided required further clarification, and the Evaluation Manager for Samaritans was also in agreement. I therefore attempted to contact the Chair of the NRC seeking clarification. Numerous attempts to get clarification failed, as was a request to obtain a copy of the meeting’s minutes relevant to my application.

Having failed to obtain any further information from the NRC by 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009, I had no choice but submit the finalised response letter to the NRC (Appendix A5, section A5.6). I was informed that my letter had been sent to the Chair, and Deputy Chair, of the NRC and that they would respond with a final decision as soon as possible. After two weeks I contacted the NRC and was once again directed to SCOP. My response was to agree to contact SCOP, but also ask how and when a final decision would be made by the NRC. A week later I was informed that I would receive a final decision on 1<sup>st</sup> October after the NRC’s meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September. However, that same day (29<sup>th</sup> September 2009) SCOP requested that I call to discuss my response letter to the NRC submitted on 7<sup>th</sup> September. During the phone call it was suggested that it was ‘strange’ that a ‘local’ prison had not been included in the prison selection. This was despite the fact that the private prison I had initially visited matched this criterion. It was argued that a few minor amendments to the questionnaire (which consisted of the addition of two questions on prisoners’ awareness and use of other peer support schemes at the committee’s request) rendered the data collected redundant. Once again it was suggested that



prison staff be omitted from the study entirely. The new and most bewildering objection however, was that after the length of these negotiations, whether I had sufficient funds to complete the project. I was strongly advised to respond to these concerns in writing before the NRCs meeting the following day (see Appendix A5, section A5.7). On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009, I received a letter from the NRC stating that clearance had been granted.

### **5.2.2 Stonewalling? Experiences of research governance bodies by researchers**

Very few prison researchers have described experiences such as those described in the foregoing account. The well-known study by Cohen and Taylor (1972) on the effects of long-term imprisonment was the result of a lengthy battle with the Home Office (see Cohen & Taylor, 1972; 1975; 1977). At the time I was obtaining clearance a fellow PhD student also experienced problems but had the additional problem of being passed between the NRC and the NHS Research Ethics Committee (see Times Higher Education Supplement, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009). She described the impact on her research as “burdensome and obstructive” and moreover “overly complex.” The end result, as also was the case for me, was to obtain an extension from the university in order to complete the doctoral research. Looking more widely in the fields of criminology, sociology, social work and health research however, enables the identification of a few scattered examples of comparable experiences. In the US context, Yeager (2008) recounts being subject to lengthy negotiations with a research governance committee, being asked questions that were unclear, and new concerns being raised months after proposals were considered without warning. Ruane (2003: 129) reports that “22 months, 17 letters, 20 emails, and at least 10 telephone conversations” frustratingly got her nowhere with the research ethics committee for the NHS.



There is a question about what the role of research governance bodies should be, the power they should have, the degree of transparency in their processes, *and* the duty they have to researchers:

A reply detailing answers to our queries about the latest set of objections has never been received – yet surely a conscientious REC [Research Ethics Committee] would strive to demonstrate openness and transparency? [...] The fact that this was not forthcoming also raises questions about how such committees understand their responsibilities in relation to research that has competed professionally and academically to be supported by public funds (Ruane, 2003: 133).

At their best, research governance mechanisms provide a framework of “a broad range of regulations, principles and standards of good practice that exist to achieve, and continuously improve, research quality” (Prison Health Research Network, 2007: 55). Whilst a degree of confidentiality and ‘closedness’ can serve to safeguard decision making processes from the influence of funders and researchers, that does not mean that committees do not have to provide clear and adequate justifications for the decisions they make (Ashcroft & Pfeffer, 2001). There is the risk that the “cloak of bureaucratic and governmental secrecy” used by politicians (and civil servants advising research governance bodies), obscures “flimsy practices” (Presdee & Walters, 1998: 160).

Whilst the word ‘governance’ in the context of these types of committees is in some respects reassuring, Shaw (2003: 112-3) suggests that it also resonates with ideas of ‘control’ and ‘regulation’. This highlights that research governance is not simply a process where the value of research to current knowledge and the quality and ethics of research is considered, but also its relation to political issues. For prison research, this is particularly significant as the Prison



Service’s ‘hidden agenda’ has been described as extremely forceful (Martin, 2000: 221). It follows therefore that research which may not support this agenda is viewed as a threat or attempts are made to regulate or even prevent it from taking place (Presdee & Walters, 1998). Government has its own ideas about the relevance of research to their political agendas and moreover what constitutes as evidence (Sim, 2003: 252-3). These objections are illustrated in my experiences of being told that the research questions had been answered through conference workshops and policy documents. Given the above, Faulkner (2006: 90) suggests that it is crucial that research is conducted that is independent of NOMS. Whilst SCOP expressed concern over my independence, it was also evident that attempts were being made to ‘steer’ the direction and focus of my doctoral research. Carlen (2001a: 137-8) goes one step further and recommends that criminological researchers should avoid attempting to appease officials by presenting their research as ‘non-threatening’ in order to get access, particularly in prison research which too rarely problematizes the nature of the prison environment itself. Criminologists need to engage in these debates (Presdee & Walters, 1998: 163). Research governance bodies are clearly very powerful, and Trueman (2003) claims that they are subjecting researchers to increasing levels of supervision and monitoring. Criminological prison researchers are presented with additional challenges because the NRC (from what I can ascertain) is largely made up of policy makers, other civil servants and psychologists. This raises questions about the appropriateness of such individuals commenting on research situated within different disciplines.<sup>14</sup>

After 16 months of negotiation, clearance was obtained and the research design and methodology had remained intact, albeit with a small number of inclusions at the NRCs request. The main impact of these negotiations, apart from substantially delaying the completion of the research, was to significantly reduce the number of prisons it was possible to

---

<sup>14</sup> This was particularly evident in one suggestion made by the NRC that I adopt an interpretative phenomenological framework to analyse the qualitative data which is more frequently used by psychological researchers.



visit. Furthermore, I had indicated that I was prepared to visit one establishment to research the ‘Insiders’ scheme as requested by the NRC on the condition that SCOP assist in the selection and access to an establishment. However, as no assistance transpired, this did not go ahead.

It is difficult to make sense of the degree to which the to-ing and fro-ing took place, and of the completely new concerns, many unrelated to the terms of the original research, that were raised at each point of contact I had with the NRC and SCOP. However, there are some indications of some of the political and structural issues that were influencing these negotiations. Firstly, during this time there was a notice on the Prison Service website informing prospective researchers that the application form was in the process of being reviewed. Unbeknown to me at the time, there was also further structural changes being imposed that changed the way research applications were being processed so that they came under the remit of NOMS research rather than a separate entity associated with the Prison Service. When the new information was posted on the website, it stipulated that all research applications, even those to conduct research in a single establishment, now had to go through the NRC. The new application form is clearly headed as NOMS, and although the NRC still appears to be the governing body, it is likely that the make-up of the panel will be more diverse. Moreover, researchers must clearly align their research with one of the NOMS strategic priorities: ‘decency’, ‘diversity and equality’, ‘organisational effectiveness’, ‘public protection’, ‘offender management and reducing re-offending’, ‘security’, ‘maintaining order and control’, ‘physical health’ and ‘mental health’. It appears that I was negotiating clearance at a time when research governance procedures for prison research were monitored closely. Whilst this offers little consolation for the difficulties experienced, it might in part help to explain why the process was so disorienting and why I was pushed to change my proposal. Furthermore, the timing of my applications coincided with government’s use of peer support and mentoring schemes as a tool of reducing re-offending, alongside the promotion of prisoner volunteer



activities. It is therefore extremely likely that the prospect of a (criminological) research project was seen as a threat to a discourse of active citizenship and the positive impact of volunteering that the government was keen to promote.

### **5.3 ‘Getting along’: the ‘messy realities’ of prison fieldwork and ethical issues**

During the planning stages of this research, a wide range of literature was conducted to establish how other scholars had described the research and access experiences. Some accounts were presented in a seemingly objective and scientific manner, as if the research had been conducted (or even administered) in a political, moral, social and emotional vacuum. Other accounts were more personal and reflective stories of how problems were overcome. In particular, some of the more engaging accounts and ‘tales from the field’, that provide a more candid and vivid account, are reserved for an appendix (e.g. see Cohen & Taylor, 1972). It is hoped that the account provided here will overcome to the tendency to provide ‘context free’, ‘smooth surface’ and ‘detached’ accounts (Hughes, 1996: 58; Hughes, 2000: 234). These experiences are not a ‘supplement’ to the story (Kleinman & Copp, 1993); they are a very important part of the story.

[T]he practice of research is a messy and untidy business which rarely conforms to the models set down in methodology textbooks. (Brannen, 1992: 3)

Individuals new to prison research may think that once clearance has been obtained at a national level that access to the individual establishments follows with relative ease. However, they will soon find that gatekeepers can be senior officials, government bodies, prison governors, prison psychologists, prison staff and prisoners. Indeed, this reflects the need to be



aware of, and sensitive to, the many groups who facilitate and take part in the research (Sieber, 1993: 18). I proposed to spend the minimum time necessary in each establishment; the underlying reasoning for this was to cause the minimum level of disruption necessary in each establishment, thus making the research more appealing to the establishments approached (Prison Health Research Network, 2007: 68).

King (2000: 299) argues that conducting research in prison is like ‘peeling an onion’, and that there is a correlation between the time spent in an establishment and the quantity and quality of information that becomes accessible to the researcher. Despite the more limited amount of time spent in each establishment, I was invited to staff meetings, had the opportunity to speak to prisoners hanging around on wings,<sup>15</sup> and spend time with staff in offices and during cigarette breaks. Moreover, visiting each wing to distribute and collect questionnaires, proved to be an excellent way of getting to know an establishment. In addition, a field note diary was kept and updated at the end of each day of data collection, after meetings with establishments, and during the joint conferences of Samaritans, Listeners, and the Prison Service that I attended. Whilst it would be incorrect to assume that these notes formed a key area of data collection, such as would be necessary in projects with an ethnographic, or participant observation design, I did find that documenting experiences in this way facilitated ‘sense making’ of ideas and events at the end of each day. Martin (2000: 225) suggests that the use of field notes facilitates memories and can act as a record of “events and impressions.” These ideas and observation therefore, are tools for contextualising the data which emerged from the questionnaires and interviews.

Prisons are unique places in which to conduct research. The prison researcher must engage with the prison ‘community’ (Sparks, Bottoms, & Hay, 1996: 350-2) and learn about life and

---

<sup>15</sup> I even had the opportunity to have a delicious three course gourmet meal cooked and served by prisoners taking NVQs in catering and hospitality.



work there, because “prison is not the real world” (Martin, 2000: 231). There is a “superficially calm, yet highly charged” atmosphere (Crewe, 2009: 484). Additionally “the senses are immediately bombarded – smells, sounds, visions of expressions, incidents and activities, atmosphere. So much occurs in a moment.” (Liebling, 1999b: 161). Entering a prison can be an extremely daunting experience (Byrne, 2005; Cowburn, 2007: 282). Inside the prison walls, a form of organised chaos ensues; hundreds of prisoners could be walking around during free flow, and officers know their names, where they are going, and if anyone has gone missing. Not only that, but the prison environment, both *between*, and *within*, prisons, varies dramatically, due to the specific history, prison architecture, or culture for example. By visiting prisoners’ cells on every wing, I was able to get a real ‘feel’ and ‘soak up’ the atmosphere in each establishment and was able to strike up conversations with prisoners hanging around on the wings or who were inquisitive about my presence. As an outsider visiting a prison, you stand out and are easily noticed by all prisoners and prison staff (Byrne, 2005).

Prisons are like goldfish bowls – everything that happens is seen and talked about by a large number of other people (Martin, 2000: 225).

There is nowhere to stand on a wing where you are not in the way, or where you blend into the background. There was no moment where I could relax, I was constantly under scrutiny and always being watched and always felt watched; this was particularly the case in the male establishments visited.

I deliberately tried to stand out in order to be noticed as not part of the prison, and to generate interest in the research. This worked because both prisoners and prison staff alike approached me and asked me who I was, and what I was doing there. Whilst I would not go as far as Sparks, Bottoms and Hay (1996: 348), to suggest that researchers look “naïve, ‘green’,



uncomfortable, out of place”, I would suggest that the researcher looks ‘not of this place’ which attracts attention.

In each prison, the members of staff facilitating me were staff from the ‘Safer Custody’ team. In all instances I was welcomed, and the staff were patient and helpful; they had been removed from their normal duties to facilitate the research. When reflecting on the effect of my gender on my research experience and field relationships, a number of salient points made in the literature are reinforced. Firstly, Wolf (1996:1) contends that feminist dilemmas in fieldwork centre upon the issue of ‘power’. This is particularly relevant in male prisons which are examples of environments that are ‘doubly dominated’ by men (see Gruber, 1998: 303) where I was a woman entering a masculine culture and where women are outnumbered by male staff. In addition, I was heavily reliant on staff for even seemingly taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life in the prison setting. They gave me tours of the establishment, took me to all of the wings to access prisoners; unlocked cell doors and introduced me to prisoners; helped to collect questionnaires; introduced me to staff; answered all of my many questions about their work or the establishment; helped me to identify staff to be interviewed; arranged interviews with prisoners; made me cups of tea; unlocked toilets for me. It is not surprising therefore that a multi-dimensional relationship formed with these staff; they became allies, referees, gatekeepers, research assistants, and domestic assistants during my visits.

The effect of my being fairly young and female undoubtedly impacted on my ability to establish a rapport with individuals (see also Genders & Player, 1995). I too experienced the paternalistic and flirtatious responses identified by Smith and Wincup (2000: 339) by male staff and prisoners. In the field women researchers have reported experiencing pressures such as portraying themselves in line with expected gender norms or as claiming to be married (Wold, 1996: 8-11). Women are often seen as friendly and non-threatening to research respondents



(Weitz, 1976 cited in Gurney, 1991: 379). Male interviewees have also been claimed to attempt to control or manipulate the direction of interviews with female researchers, to achieve their own goals of participating in the research process such as off-loading to a sympathetic listening ear, or supressing feelings of loneliness (McKee & O’Brien, 1983: 159); the latter of which was particularly evident among male prisoners. Whilst my female identity could be claimed to assist my interviews with prisoners, it is possible that it could have hindered my rapport with male staff who may not have taken me seriously as a woman. Being a female researcher elicits particular pressures. Portraying femininity can equally assist in relationships and interactions with gatekeepers and respondents (Wolf, 1996: 9). These competing pressures and benefits can at times be contradictory as McKee and O’Brien (1983: 159) note:

[W]e juggled the assertive, dominant and controlled professional stances with the acquiescent, submissive and assenting subordinate roles.

In the field I worked to portray a competent and professional image to staff, yet at the same time, being a young female meant that it was necessary to appear obedient and willing to learn from staff. Both of these strategies, in different situations, ensured staff confidence in me, and reassured them that I did not pose a significant threat to security. I found that with different individuals, different characteristics of myself came to the fore, which Reinharz (1997: 5) describes as a variety of ‘selves’. At times I emphasised my academic researcher qualities, at others I was a sympathetic listening ear, or a young student, or a woman requiring assistance.

Through my prior experience visiting a male YOI as a volunteer for Samaritans, I had developed a ‘thick skin’ to remarks of a suggestive or sexual nature from prisoners. My immunity to such comments became particularly apparent during the research when a young prisoner looked me up and down, smiled, and asked if I was his new cell mate. This did not



elicit any response from me as I was accustomed to overlooking these kinds of comments (see Gurney, 1991: 381). The female member of staff facilitating me at that establishment felt it was an incredibly inappropriate remark to make. Incidents such as these, led me to become increasingly aware of the ‘thick skin’ persona I had developed as a female researcher in a prison setting.

Given that staff were gatekeepers to the prisoners I wished to see, some staff felt that there were certain “things I ought to know” about particular prisoners, normally ones they disliked. This put me in an awkward position of ‘collusive silences’ (Crewe, 2009: 475-6). Like Brookman (1999: 51), I acknowledged that it was necessary to maintain a balance between recognising staff expertise, whilst at the same time, creating a self-image of competence to enable the research objectives to be achieved in the correct procedural and ethical manner. A good rapport was essential.<sup>16</sup> The importance of ‘impression management’ (Smith & Wincup, 2000), the need for a variety of research or personality roles when interacting with different individuals at different times (Bosworth, 1999: 91; Carter, 1994: 33), and maintaining a competent and convincing image (King, 2000: 300), has been emphasised by experienced prison researchers. Whilst some researchers might distance themselves from staff to facilitate more positive relationships with prisoners (Carter, 1994: 31), I had multiple groups with whom I needed to maintain good relationships, and sometimes competing demands in developing and maintaining these relationships. Like Liebling (1999b), I was taken aback by the take-up of the research by prisoners and prison staff, and at times felt quite emotional that people who had been taken into custody, and lived in such an environment, were prepared to talk to me.

---

<sup>16</sup> In the first establishment visited, during the first day of data collection, I slipped over in a staff office which had just been mopped. This became a source of amusement for the officer facilitating me, and broke the ice immediately. The officer even recommended that I try it in other establishments to aid me in establishing a rapport with other officers.



I became quite sensitive to the fact that by visiting prisoners’ cells to distribute and collect the questionnaires, I was effectively visiting their homes, and entering a very small space in which many aspects of life had to be conducted, and as a result a space where a whole range of negative emotions could potentially be felt including anger, frustration, fear, sadness, resentment, regret and longing. Officers however are much more used to entering prisoners’ private spheres, and thought of nothing a waking a prisoner up when he or she was asleep, to talk to me. I quickly had to learn to deal with such situations with sensitivity and was able to explain that I felt uncomfortable intruding on prisoners when they were sleeping. Many prisoners welcomed me into their ‘home’, and cleared a space on a chair or bed, so that I could sit and talk to them. Very few prisoners refused to take part in the research. There were a few instances however, where prisoners refused outright because they had filled out endless questionnaires for psychologists already.

This account of the ‘messy reality’ of conducting prison research begins to flag up the ethical and moral aspects of a researcher’s presence in a place of punishment. It begins to draw attention to a need for the researcher to constantly adapt and respond to issues that arise during the course of the data collection. The discussion that follows considers ethical issues in greater depth because whilst there are many textbook sources that summarise ethical issues under more rigid headings such as ‘informed consent’, ‘confidentiality’ and ‘anonymity’ and so on, it is important to note that ethical issues are strongly interconnected and are matters of an on-going, and sometimes unpredictable, nature. They encompass much more than “jumping the hurdle” of obtaining ethical clearance from the relevant body (Roberts & Indermaur, 2008: 311) or “seeking refuge” behind concepts such as informed consent (Bosworth et al, 2005: 258). Making ethical decisions, and behaving in an ethical manner is not simply a straightforward decision between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ (Bulmer, 2001; Israel, 2004). It is about negotiating the field, and this is particularly the case in prisons where the researcher is



confronted with ethical, moral and emotional dilemmas, as observers of state-imposed pain, around every corner. Therefore, it is more helpful to distinguish between *ethical considerations* in the planning, designing and preparation stages of the research, and *ethical conduct and decision making* in response to issues that arise in the data collection, and the treatment and use of the data.<sup>17</sup>

Prominent in the literature on research with prisoners are concerns of coercion to participate, and capacity to provide informed consent. These concerns are reinforced by the fact that prisoners cannot simply leave, or easily say no to something, as people on the outside can (Smith & Wincup, 2000), and furthermore, their legal status is restricted since they have lost their liberty through their imprisonment. Therefore, careful attention to ethical issues are paramount when conducting research in prisons (Byrne, 2005), and the well-being of all research respondents (both prisoners *and* prison staff) must remain a priority. In terms of my general conduct, and how the research was portrayed, I always made sure that I had the opportunity to explain the research personally and provided an opportunity for questions. All respondents and interviewees were provided with information sheets to keep and were asked to sign consent forms (see Appendix A5, section A5.8). Whilst the interviews were not designed to require an in-depth exploration of emotions, or probe into sensitive areas, it was recognised that talking about their contact with Listeners might remind prisoners of a painful or upsetting time. Therefore all prisoners were offered the opportunity to request post-interview support (for example from a personal officer, counsellor, Chaplain or Listener) as part of the debriefing process. However, no one indicated that they wanted support, and instead appeared to experience a cathartic effect by taking part and sharing their frustrations to a sympathetic listener (see Crewe, 2009: 484).

---

<sup>17</sup> The research met the formal ethical requirements of Keele University and Samaritans’ research ethics guidelines. The British Society of Criminology’s guidance material was also adhered to.



Where prisoners were felt unable to provide informed consent, by myself, or the member of staff facilitating me, they were not approached to take part in the research. However Byrne (2005: 225) suggests that the coercive and punitive nature of the prison environment might call into question prisoners’ capacity to make decisions about taking part in research. This was highlighted very clearly by one particular example. One female prisoner had volunteered to take part in an interview. She was collected and brought to the office and appeared to be a little hostile and gave very short, or one-word answers as I attempted to explain the research. She stated that she was still happy to be interviewed, however I was unable to begin a proper conversation, and she clearly did not feel like talking. Afterwards, I found out that she had an argument with a wing officer very shortly before being brought up to me. Whilst prison staff might be desensitised to these kinds of disagreements through doing prison work, as a researcher, I was acutely aware of these power imbalances.

‘Confidentiality’ holds two important meanings in the context of this research. Firstly, as outlined in chapter 3, Samaritans and Listeners adhere to a strict policy of confidentiality to preserve the privacy of the nature of their discussions with callers. The theme of confidentiality will be explored in this thesis with respect to the qualitative interview data in how interviewees perceived confidentiality, its boundaries, and dilemmas that it raised. Confidentiality in the research context facilitates the process of getting respondents to ‘open-up’ (Israel, 2004: 725; Keats, 2000: 30; Palys & Lowman, 2001); this principle it shares with Listener confidentiality. However, in accordance with Prison Service rules and research guidelines, prisoners taking part in the research were informed that should they disclose any information, which raised concern about theirs, or other’s safety, that I was under an obligation to inform a member of staff. Envelopes were provided to prisoners to place completed questionnaires in and seal to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.<sup>18</sup> These envelopes remained unopened until they had

---

<sup>18</sup> I obtained permission to provide prisoners with pens to complete the questionnaires for them to keep. A small number of prisoners asked if they could have an additional envelope to send post to their families.



been removed from the establishment. The content of the questionnaires and interviews remained confidential and were not discussed with anyone else.<sup>19</sup> All interviewees were reassured of the secure storage of the data and the measures that would be taken to ensure that no quotation could be linked back to them.

## **5.4 ‘Making sense’ of the data: quantitative and qualitative data analysis**

This final section outlines the analysis strategies that were adopted with reference to both the quantitative and qualitative data. However, it is important to note that making sense of the data is not simply a one-off practice, but rather an “iterative process” (Kent, 2001: 77) of reflection, testing, coding and writing – this is applicable regardless of the type of data being analysed.

### **5.4.1 Reflexivity**

I first became involved with Samaritans as a volunteer during my undergraduate degree. In particular I became involved in ‘outreach’ work and visited a Young Offenders Institution for juvenile prisoners (15-17 years old) providing emotional support, because Listener schemes are not deemed feasible this age group (see chapter 3). My interest in prison work was enhanced after meeting the then Regional Prison Support Officer (RPSO) for my geographical region, who very kindly invited me to visit a number of establishments where the Listener scheme was operating. I attended Samaritans’ support meetings with Listeners, and Listener interview and selection days. As a volunteer, I attended the annual conference of Samaritans, Listeners and the Prison Service where through talking to Listeners I was struck by the dedication and enthusiasm they expressed about their Listener work. Having had a proposal of

---

<sup>19</sup> Occasionally a member of staff did ask me about the interviews, the content of them, or what I thought about a particular prisoner. This is where my skills and experience as a Samaritan volunteer were useful, and I could communicate my adherence to confidentiality in a positive manner, and reflect the question back to them; their asking normally meant that they had particular views about an individual.



doctoral research accepted by Keele University, I met with representatives from Samaritans’ General Office to discuss common areas of interest and gaining access. It was fortuitous that Samaritans were in the process of approving a budget for the following five year period, and identified expansion of their research and evaluative activities as a key priority area. In particular, given the scarcity of research on the Listener scheme, they were looking to commission independent research and offered to fully sponsor the research.<sup>20</sup> The following year in 2007, Samaritans’ research activities became considerably more organised through the appointment of an Evaluation Manager. This has since expanded further and currently comprises of a team of staff overseeing and developing research, monitoring and evaluative activities.

The analysis of the data led me also to analyse my position as a volunteer, prison researcher, PhD student and researcher sponsored by Samaritans. I was aware of a need for reflexivity in how I conducted the research and analysis as is indeed good practice in any research project (Adkins, 2003: 332). During the planning stages of the research, I increasingly stepped back from my volunteering duties. To begin with I identified myself to be an extremely dedicated volunteer, and spent a significant proportion of my free time volunteering, fundraising and engaging in outreach activities. As the research proceeded, I became increasingly aware of my dual role as a researcher and volunteer and my different connections with Samaritans. Furthermore, as Samaritans sponsored the research I was in continual consultation with the Evaluation Manager; however, “getting access and funds need not mean that one loses any sense of independence, scholarly judgement or personal integrity.”<sup>21</sup> I do not wish to overstate any position of ‘objectivity’ that I achieved as a result, because as Liebling and Stanko (2001:

---

<sup>20</sup> A Service Level agreement was created between Samaritans, Keele University and myself after I had produced a detailed proposal of the research project. As part of the agreement, I was required to submit quarterly reports to Samaritans on the progress of the research for their intended use, and after the thesis is submitted a final report highlighting the key findings of the research.

<sup>21</sup> Gaining access however was an entirely different matter as noted earlier in this chapter.



424) point out “the assumption is, despite several decades of critique of this position, that such objectivity is achievable” (see also Crasnow, 2008: 1095). Moreover:

Achieving a position that is sensitive to, and takes account of the standpoint of more than one group is a question of research style and method, as well as a question of honesty, responsibility and reflection. (Liebling, 2001: 478)

For a number of reasons I chose not to present myself as a former volunteer for Samaritans to respondents and gatekeepers. Firstly, disclosing my former role would have been an act of self-disclosure. I avoided self-disclosure in order to establish more professional relationships with respondents and gatekeepers. Additionally I wanted to maintain an identity as a competent and independent researcher. Whilst at times I was undoubtedly seen as a young university student, my status as an academic researcher doing a PhD was a source of respect and implied skill and ability. Much research has considered the dilemmas of researchers entering fieldwork settings as ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ (for example see: Coloma, 2008; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kanuha, 2000). Being an ‘outsider’ to prison is claimed to help in gaining the trust of prisoners (Waldram, 2009). Indeed, prisoners were keen to establish that I was not a member of prison staff before agreeing to be interviewed. I also wanted respondents (both prisoners and staff) to see me as an ‘outsider’ to Samaritans in order to encourage more honest attitudes expressed, and to describe things to be in their own words based on assumptions that I did not have a detailed understanding of the Listener scheme. This enabled me to elicit less biased data through generating both positive and negative aspects of the scheme. By omitting this information it meant that I did not appear to be taking sides with Samaritans and Listeners. However, being sponsored by an organisation can affect how respondents perceive the researcher (Reinharz, 1997: 8). Therefore, with Listeners it was more beneficial to emphasise



the working relationship I had with Samaritans to foster trust, whereas with prisoners and staff it was more beneficial to place less emphasis on the sponsorship.

Having developed positive relationships with interviewees, some of the findings were not easy to digest. For example, during the course of the interviews I was genuinely touched and impressed by the dedication and care of many of the staff I met. However, the resources they had at their disposal and the lack of time they had to engage with prisoners, influenced how they interacted with prisoners. Chapter 9 therefore details how staff subjected Listeners who had adopted a more ‘trusted’ position, and prisoners who had made help-seeking choices to speak to a Listener, to scrutiny, and treated them with suspicion.

Being in prison – a place of punishment and suffering – can have deleterious effects on the researcher (Bosworth, 1999: 74; Crewe, 2009: 485; Liebling, 1999b). Whilst experiencing emotions in the field might be deemed ‘irrational’ or not ‘scientific’ (Kleinman, 2003: 377), there is now a much wider understanding that emotions facilitate the process of making sense of the research context and sensitise us to meanings (Holland, 2007; Kirschner, 1997 cited in Bosworth et al, 2005: 259; Kleinman, 2003:381-4). It is impossible to avoid the effects of the ‘gruelling’ nature of the conducting prison research (Sim, 2003: 241). This is where the field diary became a useful mechanism of ‘getting things off my chest’ at the end of each day and helped me to understand my experiences. Thus, it is important to recognise our own identity, views and emotion in relation to the field, rather than avoid their impact in a pursuit to appear ‘scientific’ (Kleinman & Copp, 1993: 13). Furthermore, the knowledge of Samaritans gained during my experience as a volunteer aided a more nuanced understanding of their work than an ‘outsider’ is likely to have achieved in the context of a normal research project, and undoubtedly enhanced my understanding of the experiences respondents described (Dwyer &



Buckle, 2009: 56; Wolf, 1996: 18). These issues were therefore borne in mind during the data analysis phase of the research.

#### **5.4.2 Quantitative data analysis**

The quantitative survey data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS – version 17). A number of different scales were created.<sup>22</sup> The suitability of variables for scales was analysed in a number of ways. First and foremost, the theoretical fit of items that appeared to be linked by a common factor, for example – the trust prisoners had in officers, whether prisoners felt staff had been unhelpful or fair to them, if they felt officers made an effort to talk to them, and how well prisoners felt they got on with staff on their wing can all be claimed to represent prisoners’ personal relationships with prison officers. The correlations of items identified for a scale were examined and items were subsequently analysed using a factor analysis, the purpose of which was to identify a group of manifest variables that could explained by a single underlying latent variable (Field, 2005: 619). When items that could be grouped together were identified, their reliability as a scale was determined by Cronbach’s alpha. It is widely recognised that a high value of Cronbach’s alpha (.7 or above) is desirable (de Vaus, 2002a: 20; de Vaus, 2002b: 230; Field, 2005: 668).

General patterns in the data were explored using ‘cross tabulation’ comparisons to explore relationships between categorical variables. A series of correlations, t-tests, and multivariate analyses were also conducted. Patterns according to demographic variables were also considered – in each instance data were explored with respect to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, country of birth, prior imprisonment and sentencing status. The multivariate analyses aimed to identify ‘predictors’ of help-seeking intentions to different sources of support, and

---

<sup>22</sup> For full description of the construction and descriptive statistics of these scales see chapters 6 and 7.



actual help-seeking from Listeners. The multivariate models analysed in part 2 of this thesis were initially limited by the number of missing cases. This led to the selection of some individual items which had fewer missing cases instead of scales in order to maximise the number of cases included in the analysis. The variables that were selected for each analysis are explained in the data chapters themselves in part 2 of this thesis. In terms of the statistical tests that were conducted, the conventional cut off point for statistical significance of  $p < .05$  was used (de Vaus, 2002b: 230; Miller et al, 2002: 118), however the actual probability value obtained is reported so that where the results are highly significant, they can be identified.

The quantitative data are presented in chapters 6 and 7 in part 2 of this thesis and the analyses focus on help-seeking intentions by prisoners in general and with respect to the Listener scheme in particular. To help illuminate some of the quantitative findings, relevant quotations have been selected from the interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff to assist in the interpretation of the aggregate findings.

### **5.4.3 Qualitative data analysis**

A total of 42 interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff were analysed. I transcribed all of the interviews myself in order to gain familiarity with the data and to begin to identify some of the pertinent themes. The analysis began with existing themes and topics determined by the key concerns and objectives of the research, however as the analysis proceeded, new themes emerges and existing themes were modified. In this sense a dynamic approach that was both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ was adopted (Noaks & Wincup, 2004: 131). Using the NVivo qualitative data analysis package, I conducted a thematic analysis and coded the transcripts. The method of coding enables the data to be organised and linked conceptually (Noaks & Wincup, 2004: 130). Furthermore, as Richards (2005: 86) asserts:



Coding is not merely to label all the parts of the documents about a topic, but rather to bring them together so they can be reviewed, and your thinking about a topic developed.

This was an on-going process and was continually reviewed and re-coded as the interpretation of the data proceeded using the software as a ‘tool’ of analysis (Weitzman, 2003: 314) and keeping records, or ‘memos’ as new themes emerged and developed (Saldaña, 2009: 32). The analysis and interpretation of these data has been facilitated by complementary sources of information such as field notes, induction booklets or other leaflets produced by the prisoners, and in the knowledge I acquired through chatting more informally during my time ‘in the field’.

Whilst all three groups interviewed (prisoners, Listeners and prison staff) were technically part of the prison ‘community’, they were all unique groups in their own right, and I wished to understand their different perspectives or standpoints (Bosworth et al, 2005: 261; Crasnow, 2008: 1092). According to ‘standpoint feminist’ approaches, knowledge is socially situated and researchers and individuals might have more than one position, it is therefore important to understand knowledge which appreciates these different positions, which may in turn facilitate the interpretation of data and field experiences (Cormack, 1999; Olesen, 2003: 345; Wolf, 1996: 14). The different accounts that emerged were therefore analysed. However, particular interest was also paid to instances where accounts corroborated with one another (or indeed were contradictory), not only to enhance the validity of the findings, but also to enhance the interpretation and analysis. Whilst the qualitative interview data presented generally represents the dominant themes in the interviews, where notable differences were observed in a smaller number of interviews, these were also examined and discussed.



The qualitative interview data is presented mainly in chapters 8 and 9 in part 3 of this thesis, and also in section 7.5 of chapter 7. Where quotations are used, they have been grammatically corrected and utterances such as ‘like’, ‘um’ and ‘you know what I mean’ were omitted, to provide greater flow and highlight more clearly the points interviewees were making. For some quotations, sections of the conversation have been omitted (denoted by [...]) to reinforce key points; however the meaning of interviewees’ statements remains intact and is not altered by this.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Research does not occur in a metaphorical germ-free zone. Instead criminological research is infected – or rather enriched – by the political and ethical dilemmas and challenges (Hughes, 1996: 85).

This chapter has aimed to provide not simply a description of the research design and methods, but has aimed to contextualise this by highlighting the importance of the political and prison context in determining how the research was subsequently negotiated, conducted and the data analysed. Moreover, the chapter has aimed to provide an account that reflected the context of the project, the ‘messy reality’ of prison fieldwork, and reflexive position of the researcher, as part of the research process that adds to the interpretation and understanding of the data in illuminating ways, as Hughes notes (above).



## **PART 2**

### **HELP-SEEKING IN PRISON**

This part of this thesis presents the first data chapters and examines the under-researched topic of help-seeking by prisoners. Both chapters in this part focus on the quantitative survey data obtained from a total of 331 prisoners, although where relevant, quotations from the interviews are used to assist with the analysis and interpretation. Chapter 6 first provides a more nuanced understanding of help-seeking by prisoners with respect to both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources of support and builds up an overall picture of patterns of help-seeking intentions by prisoners, and the variables that predict their help-seeking intentions. Chapter 7 moves on to specifically consider help-seeking intentions with respect to Listeners, and prisoners’ use and non-use of Listeners. Chapter 7 also explores, using both quantitative and qualitative data, prisoners’ experiences of Listener support.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Seeking help in prison**

This chapter seeks to explore patterns of help-seeking by prisoners with respect to both the different problems they experience, and the potential sources of support they have available to them. It asks: for which problems do prisoners seek support, and to whom do they go to for help? What drives or hinders help-seeking to ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources of support? The quantitative survey data generated from prisoners from each of the four establishments is analysed here and is also supported by qualitative interview data. The discussion begins by outlining the types of contact prisoners have with different groups of people on the ‘outside’. The analysis of prisoners’ help-seeking preferences with respect to the types of problems and sources of support follows. Finally, potential predictors of intentions to seek help from people on the outside, prison staff and prisoners are explored. Seeking help from Listeners is examined in chapter 7. But first, an explanation of the terms ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ used throughout the chapter, and a brief re-cap on the help-seeking literature, is provided.

Early prison sociologists talked about the special and unique features of the prison environment and prison life, emphasising the distinction between the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ marked by the prison walls, and other security features such as closed windows, locked gates and doors, and barbed wire (Goffman, 1957/1999: 313-4; Goffman, 1961: 15-16; Cohen & Taylor, 1972: 62). Prisoners therefore are cut off from the ‘outside’, marked by walls, steel bars, barbed wire and fencing (Armstrong & Griffin, 2003: 577) and face a ‘dense’ environment – physically, socially, emotionally – that they have to learn to cope with and



adapt to. Prisoners are subjected to a different and distinctive way of life forged ‘inside’ the prison walls (Scott & Codd, 2008: 11). As Clemmer (1940/58: 83) notes:

[I]t is a unique community since it is held together by walls and guns, laws and rules, yet in it, regardless of the reasons for its existence, there are social relations, communication which makes the relations possible, and other social processes. Not only are there relations between persons in prison, but the individuals within the prison communicate and have relations with persons beyond the walls.

Whilst these physical barriers are highly visible, other forms of barrier, such as those that demarcate normal life on the outside, are absent in the prison environment; for example a variety of different activities are conducted in the same environment, prisoners live and work in close proximity to a large number of other prisoners, and a routine is imposed by the institution (Goffman, 1957/1999: 314-5). However, within the prison walls, there are also demarcations of what constitutes ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ highlighted by the symbolic practice of ‘locking’ and ‘unlocking’ gates (Fitzgerald & Sim, 1982: 53) and temporary or fragmentary ‘releases’ and ‘confinements’; this provides the backdrop to social relations in prison (Sykes, 1958: 6). Furthermore, contact with people on the outside serves to undermine the traditional distinctions made by classical prison sociologists, on the clear line and separation between the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ worlds. Contemporary prison research has identified the ‘permeable’ quality of the prison walls (Bryan, 2007: 65; Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 51); there is a blurring of the boundaries, and prisoners exist in a state of ‘betweenness’ as connections with the outside world flow in and out of prison, both literally and symbolically (Baer & Ravneberg, 2008). Furthermore, research has shown how life from the outside is both imported and recreated within the prison walls, serving to undermine the distinction between the ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ (Comfort, 2002). In other words, “most prisoners do not live in a vacuum” (Codd,



2008: 1). However, potential sources of support will originate from either ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ of the prison walls and this chapter explores how, for what problems, and under what circumstances, prisoners look beyond or within the prison walls for help taking into account what hinders or facilitates help-seeking to these sources. It is recognised that some sources of support available on the ‘inside’ originate from the ‘outside’ thus bestriding the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ worlds. Examples include the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, mental health services and substance misuse services. Upon entry to prison, prisoners are encouraged to seek help and the support is presented as easily accessible.<sup>1</sup> In other words, these types of sources of support are offered as part of an ‘inside’ support system for prisoners accessed within the prison walls. For this reason they are considered ‘inside’ sources of support. Hence, ‘outside’ sources of support, for the purposes of the analyses in this chapter, refer to prisoners’ partners, friends and family.

As noted earlier in this thesis, whilst there is an extensive literature of prisoner coping and adaptation, much less attention has been paid to help-seeking by prisoners, and furthermore prisoners’ routes of access to sources of support during their time inside. The small amount of research concerned with help-seeking, tends to rest on a number of assumptions. Firstly, that seeking support is beneficial and ‘buffers’ the individual from the effects of their problems. Secondly, that help-seeking is largely a one-way process involving an individual in need accessing support or services, that are generally both available and unproblematic; from this perspective, a lack of willingness to seek help is in some way ‘maladaptive’ and should be addressed by encouraging take-up, thus placing responsibility on the individual (Greer & Anderson, 1979: 267). Furthermore, a number of scholars (Bosworth, 2007; Crewe, 2009; Hannah-Moffatt, 2001) have suggested that the late modern penal context has created an environment where prisoners are obliged to assume responsibility for their actions and behaviour by, for example, participating in offending behaviour or substance misuse

---

<sup>1</sup> Although, as this chapter highlights, there are a number of important barriers to seeking help from different sources of support in prison. Whilst therefore theoretically the support is easier to access ‘inside’ than ‘outside’, this may not always be the case.



programmes (see also chapter 4). In other words, prisoners are expected to be active agents in their own change and in managing their own progression during their sentences by seeking the appropriate help and support available to them. Research has paid less attention to the spectrum of help-seeking activity displayed by prisoners and the factors that influence their subsequent help-seeking preferences and activity, such as relationships with others, and seeking help in the context of the prison environment where secrecy and privacy are inherently limited and problematic. The overarching aim of this chapter is to build up a picture of patterns of help-seeking by prisoners.

## **6.1 Contact with the ‘outside’**

The significance of contact with partners, friends and family on the ‘outside’, and the potential role of support from them on the outside are reinforced in the literature (e.g. see Mills & Codd, 2007; chapter 4). In order to understand the potential range of support prisoners have available to them on the ‘outside’, this section first considers prisoners’ contact with the outside and addresses the question – with which groups on the outside are prisoners in contact, and what forms of contact do they use?

Survey respondents were asked “What contact do you have with people on the outside?” Table 6.1 shows the types of contact (visits, phone, letter) that prisoners indicated they had with partners, parents, siblings, children, friends and others<sup>2</sup> on the ‘outside’.

---

<sup>2</sup> It is recognised that many prisoners have ‘dysfunctional’ as opposed to ‘conventional’ family situations, and might be in contact with step families, foster families, and other acquaintances, in addition to teachers or solicitors for example. The ‘other’ category was included to represent groups who did not fit easily within the other categories provided from the respondents’ perspective.



*Table 6.1 – Types of contact with people on the outside*

	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Siblings</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Friends</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Visits</b>	30.0% (106)	43.2% (143)	35.0% (116)	21.5% (71)	36.3% (120)	9.7% (32)
<b>Phone</b>	41.4% (137)	66.2% (219)	58.9% (195)	26.6% (88)	57.4% (190)	16.6% (55)
<b>Letter</b>	42.0% (139)	55.6% (184)	45.6% (151)	17.2% (57)	26.2% (186)	18.7% (62)
<b>No contact</b>	4.2% (14)	10.3% (34)	14.5% (48)	14.2% (47)	16.0% (53)	0.6% (53)
<b>Does not apply</b>	42.9% (142)	9.7% (32)	10.9% (36)	48.3% (160)	4.5% (15)	-
<b>n</b>	321	312	311	315	314	312

N. B. This was a 'multiple response' question.  
 'Others' included other groups such as ex-partners, teachers, step-family and solicitors for example.  
 See text for explanation of shading.



For each type of contact (visits, phone and letter), prisoners were most likely to report being in contact with their parents (see light grey shading on table 6.1) followed by their siblings. The importance of immediate family can be explained by the age of the sample. Three quarters of the sample were under the age of 33, and the mean age of the sample was 25; younger prisoners are less likely to have partners and more likely to have contact with their family. Family ties are challenged by imprisonment but “families continue to care for prisoners because despite the locks, bars and bolts, an imprisoned family member is still a family member” (Codd, 2008: 23).

Table 6.1 further indicates that prisoners are most likely to be in contact with current partners by phone calls and letter, and with parents, siblings, children and friends by phone calls (see dark grey shading on table 6.1). The phone represents the most prominent type of contact that prisoners have with people on the ‘outside’. The ability to be able to contact people on the outside by telephone is a lifeline for prisoners given its immediacy and the fact that prisoners are able to initiate it themselves. Letters do also appear to be a prominent form of contact for prisoners, which like phone calls is a type of contact that they are able to initiate spontaneously during their free time. Goulding (2007: 55) contends that the ‘spontaneity’ of relationships with people on the outside is restricted by prison. The results presented above demonstrate how prisoners make greater use of types of contact that offer greater spontaneity.

However, despite this, it is important to note that the phone was dependent on two factors: first of all, the extent to which prison staff facilitate and encourage contact (Condry, 2012: 75; Liebling, 2004: 325-8); and secondly prisoners needed resources, for example phone credit, to be able to call people on the outside (Codd, 2008: 26). At times contact could also be limited by being on ‘basic regime’, the lowest level of the Prison Service’s ‘Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme’, which allocates resources and benefits according to the behaviour of



prisoners.<sup>3</sup> Staff are therefore gatekeepers of prisoners' relationships with people on the outside. One prisoner interviewed became increasingly distressed as he described his current lack of contact with his family because he lacked money to buy telephone credits:

*Since I've been here, I've had one phone call to my sister - nothing else since I have been here in two weeks. I couldn't even phone my mum and dad, couldn't even phone my brother, [and] couldn't get in touch with my missus, nothing at all. The only phone call I have made since I have been here is to my sister. I've got no credit on my phone so I can't phone my family members.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

Having the resources and freedom to contact people on the outside was therefore extremely significant because the access they had to these groups before is removed, restricted or controlled. Prisoners get *beyond* the prison walls by phone and letter, but they have to go *through* prison staff to do so. A number of interviewees mentioned acts of kindness by staff during times of particular need:

*The more senior staff, the ones who are more important, they actually let you make an important phone call, or a priest will sometimes help you get in touch with your missus, or the priest will actually make a phone call for you.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

Staff, therefore, have the ability to use their discretion to facilitate contact as well as to restrict it.

Supporting the abovementioned findings, prisoners interviewed noted the more dedicated and unconditional support they received from their family compared with their friends. Whilst

---

<sup>3</sup> See: [http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO\\_4000\\_incentives\\_and\\_earned\\_privileges.pdf](http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO_4000_incentives_and_earned_privileges.pdf).



contact with friends was also considered important, these relationships were inherently fragile, as one prisoner suggested:

*It [contact] drops after a bit since you've been in jail. Because your mates don't like to come and see you or nothing hardly anymore, it's just your family. You find out who your mates are.*  
(Adult male prisoner, Prison1)

The interviews with prisoners also revealed that ensuring people on the outside knew they were being thought of was one way prisoners could influence or maintain relationships:

*If I have a problem and I'm finding it hard, I'll just phone my friends, or family, and just stay on the phone. You still feel like you're connected to home, speaking on the phone for the whole of association.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)

*My contact varies because people on the out are busy; they have their own lives. So I don't expect everybody [to] just drop everything for me, because I understand they have their own lives on the out[side]. But they do make the time to come and see me. My mum comes up [to] see me, my ex-partner brings my lad and my daughter ..... I'm always on the phone to them, I keep that bond. I don't want that bond [to] break you see, so it's important. I send cards to the kids, and my mum and everybody letting them know I'm thinking of them, and they do the same for me.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

This supports the survey findings that prisoners highlight the significance of forms of contact they could use to connect with people on the 'outside' and the degree to which they were able to initiate contact themselves as a means of maintaining relationships with people on the outside.



When prisoners' contact with partners, friends and family on the outside was analysed according to individual/career variables (gender, age, ethnicity, country of birth, first language, prior imprisonment, sentencing status, and for those who have been sentenced – the length of their sentence), a small number of notable differences were identified. The percentages of prisoners who were in contact by one or more form (visits, phone, letter), or not at all, with each group on the outside, were analysed first in each instance.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, levels of 'contact intensity' with the outside were also analysed according to the above demographic variables; the contact intensity with the outside scale is an aggregate measure, created by summing the number of types of contact prisoners had with each group on the outside. Scores on the scale range from 0 to 18. Lower scores on the scale reflect low 'contact intensity', and higher scores on the scale reflect greater 'contact intensity' with the outside (see Appendix A6, figure A6.1 and table A6.1 for details of the scale distribution and descriptive statistics). Mills and Codd (2007: 675-6) warn against using the number of visits alone as a proxy measure for the 'strength' of contact with the outside, given the variability of the nature and significance of the relationship prisoners have with them. For example, the absence of visits may not denote a lack of family support or contact given that some individuals may find it logistically or financially problematic to arrange a visit. This research therefore considered both the groups they might be in contact with and the variety of forms of contact they might use in attempt to gain an insight into the 'intensity' of contact prisoners had with people on the outside, as this is hypothesised to impact on the extent to which prisoners make use of 'outside' sources of support, as explored later in this chapter.

When age differences were explored, it was found that prisoners aged 18-30 were significantly more likely to be in contact with partners, parents and siblings, than those prisoners aged over 30 (see Appendix 6A, table A6.2). It was found that, 91.6% of 18-30 year olds were in contact

---

<sup>4</sup> A dichotomous variable was created to group prisoners according to if they had no contact at all with that group (coded as 0), and if they were in contact via one of more forms (coded as 1).



with their parents compared with 77.9% of those over 30 years old.<sup>5</sup> These results mirror the life situations of younger adults who are more likely to have involvement with their immediate family. It is important to note however that whilst age influences with whom prisoners are likely to be in contact, it does not overall influence the level of contact intensity they have with the outside world, as no significant differences in contact intensity were found.<sup>6</sup> As prisoners get older, contact with immediate family is in part substituted by other groups although this is reflected in the ‘intensity’ of contact overall, and does not centre on one group in particular.

The analysis of demographic differences demonstrated that there are no significant differences between men and women prisoners in whether they were in contact with each group or not (see Appendix 6A, table 6A.3). Moreover, no significant difference was found in levels of ‘contact intensity’ with the ‘outside’ between men and women prisoners. At first, this finding appears surprising given the prominence in the literature of family contact and concerns related to children and family for female prisoners (for example see Carlen & Worrall, 2004; Walker & Worrall, 2000). However, the fact that women do not experience more intense contact, may explain why the ‘gendered pains of imprisonment’ are so acute with respect to family contact, in that they desire or need more intense contact with their families but do not get that.

Prisoners for whom English was their first language were significantly more likely to be in contact with their partners, parents and friends (see Appendix 6A, table A6.4). Moreover, prisoners who were born in Britain were significantly more likely to be in contact with their parents than those who were not born in Britain (see Appendix A6, table A6.6). When these groups of prisoners’ levels of contact intensity with the outside were compared, prisoners for whom English was their first language had significantly higher levels of contact intensity with

---

<sup>5</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=279) = 9.274, p = .002$ .

<sup>6</sup>  $t (161.936) = 1.537, p = .126$ .



the outside,<sup>7</sup> however no difference was found with respect to prisoners' country of birth.<sup>8</sup> These results suggest that there are possibly cultural inhibitors, indicated by language, of maintaining contact with families who might have stigmatised the individual as a result of their imprisonment.<sup>9</sup> It may also be the case that for these prisoners that their families live in another country, which impacts on the extent to which they are able to maintain contact.

Whilst prisoners' prior imprisonment did not influence whether prisoners had contact with each group (see Appendix A6, table A6.7), first time prisoners were found to have significantly higher levels of contact intensity with the outside than prisoners who had been in prison before (see figure 6.1).<sup>10</sup> These results could be explained by first time prisoners being more proactive in initiating contact with the outside as they adapt to institutional life, whereas prisoners who have been imprisoned before, are more likely to be aware of the nature of their surroundings and not pursue contact to the same extent. It is also possible that prisoners who have served a prior sentence may have lost some relationships as a result of their imprisonment, hence lower levels of contact intensity and potentially have less unconditional support available to them.

---

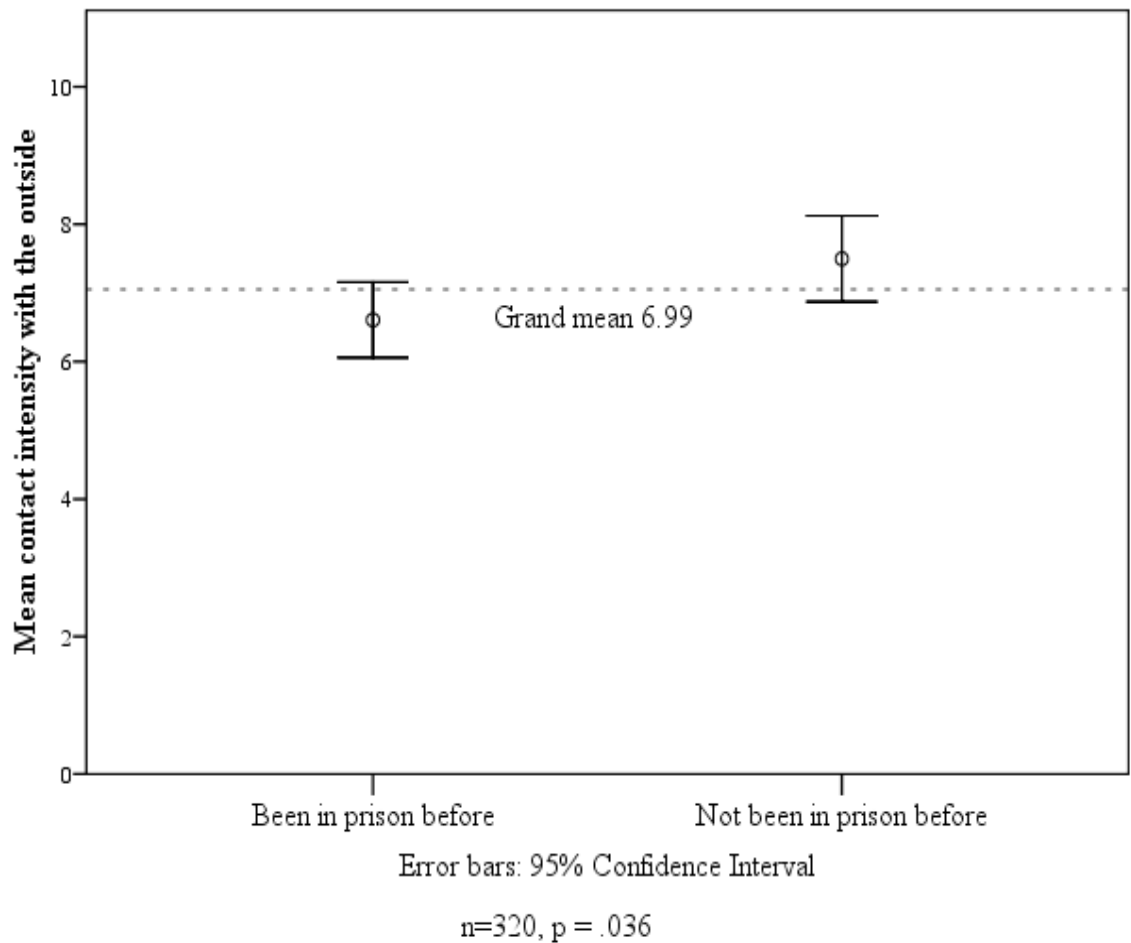
<sup>7</sup>  $t(318) = 2.534, p = .12.$

<sup>8</sup>  $t(319) = 1.084, p = .279.$

<sup>9</sup> For example see Song and Ingram (2002: 69-70) for a discussion on the cultural barriers that inhibit the availability of support for individuals who have HIV due to the stigma associated with the disease.

<sup>10</sup>  $t(320) = -2.108, p = .036.$



*Figure 6.1 – Prior imprisonment and contact intensity with the outside*

When the data were analysed according to sentencing status (Appendix A6, table A6.8), the results show that sentenced prisoners were significantly more likely to be in contact with parents and friends than un-sentenced prisoners: 90.5% of sentenced prisoners were in contact with their parents compared with 81.8% of un-sentenced prisoners;<sup>11</sup> and 86.2% of sentenced prisoners were in contact with friends compared with 71.3% of un-sentenced prisoners.<sup>12</sup> It is likely that sentenced prisoners have had more time to re-establish relationships after the initial break caused by their offence and their imprisonment. Un-sentenced prisoners, during a period of uncertainty may rely on others, such as family and not friends, until they have more certainty about the time they have left to serve. However, the analysis of levels of contact

<sup>11</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=278) = 4.055, p = .044$ .

<sup>12</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=297) = 9.213, p = .002$ .



intensity found no significant difference between these two groups.<sup>13</sup> Whilst friends and parents are more prominent sources of contact for sentenced prisoners, overall sentenced and un-sentenced prisoners do not significantly differ in the intensity of their contact with people on the outside.

One final analysis conducted assessed the relationship between sentence length and contact intensity with the outside. No significant correlation was found; the length of a prisoner's sentence is not related to reduced or increased contact intensity.<sup>14</sup> Prisoners who have been given longer sentences, and subsequently are more likely to have committed more serious crimes, do not experience lower levels of contact intensity with the 'outside'. This highlights the wide-ranging impact of imprisonment on relationships with people on the outside regardless of the length of time given, and as the earlier analysis highlighted, also gender, age and sentencing status. It also highlights the overarching finding of this section: whilst clearly family relationships are disrupted by imprisonment, the physical separation from people on the outside, and the limited opportunities and means prisoners have to contact them, prisoners (in particular first time prisoners) sought out opportunities to maintain contact with the outside, especially with their immediate family.

## 6.2 Types of problems and sources of support

To establish for which problems prisoners seek support, and whom they go to, survey respondents were asked about their preferred sources of support for six different problems. I started from the assumption that the type of problem encountered would, in part, influence the source of support chosen in line with a small number of studies that support this notion but did not explore it in depth (e.g. Cahill, Jessell & Horne, 1979; Hobbs & Dear, 2000; Rosen, 1983:

---

<sup>13</sup>  $t(317) = -.546, p = .586$ .

<sup>14</sup> Pearson's  $r = .020, n = 226, p = .765$ .



93; Wilson et al, 2005: 17). Whilst the following analysis can only begin to infer why prisoners chose specific sources of support, and the specific type of support they sought from that source, later sections in this chapter build on these findings further using multivariate models and qualitative interview data.

Survey respondents were asked: “Imagine that you have the kind of problems listed below. Who would you go to for help?” They were presented with the following different types of problems: ‘Problems with my life outside prison’ (outside problems); ‘Problems with prison staff or other prisoners’ (inside problems); ‘Drug or alcohol problems’ (substance misuse problems); ‘What I have done to other people’ (offence problems); ‘What I can do to change my life’ (changing life problems); and ‘Feeling low, upset or depressed’ (emotional or mental health problems).<sup>15</sup> Prisoners could select ‘Listeners’, ‘other prisoners’, ‘prison officers or prison staff’, and ‘partner, friends or family’ for each of the six problems. Therefore the question was designed to elicit prisoners’ help-seeking intentions with particular reference to ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources of support (see table 6.2).<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> This was a multiple response question so respondents could tick more than one source of support for each type of problem.

<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of the analysis that follows, ‘prisoners’ and ‘prison officers or staff’ were categorised as ‘inside’ sources of support. Listeners may also be classed as ‘prisoners; and it would therefore be misleading to add them to the ‘inside’ sources of support category. They are therefore considered a separate group and chapter 7 considers seeking help from Listeners in greater depth.



Table 6.2 –Help-seeking intentions: Types of problems and sources of support

	Outside problems	Inside problems	Substance misuse problems	Offence problems	Changing life problems	Emotional or mental health problems
<b>People on the outside</b>	51.6% (165)	16.7% (53)	33.4% (100)	32.9% (102)	57.6% (181)	42.6% (131)
<b>Prison officers or staff</b>	13.8% (44)	38.7% (123)	36.8% (110)	14.5% (45)	28.3% (89)	22.8% (71)
<b>Prisoners</b>	15.3% (49)	24.2% (77)	11.7% (35)	14.2% (44)	13.1% (41)	21.2% (66)
<b>Listeners</b>	12.8% (41)	11.3% (36)	9.7% (29)	12.3% (38)	11.1% (35)	20.2% (63)
<b>Would not seek help</b>	29.4% (94)	29.9% (95)	29.4% (88)	42.9% (133)	21.0% (66)	28.8% (90)
n	320	317	299	310	314	312

N. B. This was a multiple response question.

Dark grey shading highlights the results with respect to ‘outside’ sources of support (i.e. partners, friends or family), and light grey shading highlights results with respect to ‘inside’ sources of support (i.e. prisoners, prison officers or prison staff).



Table 6.2 demonstrates that prisoners clearly distinguish between different sources of support according to the type of problem; their help-seeking preferences are problem-driven. Generally speaking, prisoners select ‘inside’ sources of support for problems relating to the ‘inside’ (see light grey shading on table 6.2), and ‘outside’ sources of support for problems relating to the outside (see dark grey shading on table 6.2). Table 6.2 reveals that 51.6% of prisoners would turn to ‘outside’ sources of support for ‘outside problems’, compared with 29.1% of prisoners, who indicated that they would turn to ‘inside’ sources of support (i.e. prison officers or staff, and prisoners). ‘Outside’ sources of support were also clearly favoured for ‘changing life problems’ with 57.6% indicating that they would select ‘outside’ sources of support, and 41.4% who would favour ‘inside’ sources. This makes sense because life is more realistically changed outside and not inside the prison walls. Prisoners indicate a clear preference for ‘inside’ sources of support for ‘inside problems; 62.9% of prisoners indicated that they would seek help from prison staff or other prisoners (in particular prison staff) compared with 16.7% who would seek help from ‘outside’ sources. Furthermore, for ‘substance misuse problems’, ‘inside’ sources of support hold slightly greater prominence with 47.5% indicating that they would select ‘inside’ sources and 33.4% that they would seek support from ‘outside’ sources of support. Whilst support from the ‘outside’ plays a significant role for problems related to substance misuse, it is support from ‘inside’ that is sought out more frequently. This can be explained, for example, by the impact of the prison environment which restricts access to drugs, thus creating additional problems, such as withdrawal, for which prisoners require more urgent assistance. Not only that, but it is likely that prisoners have greater access to specialist drug treatment programmes and support in prison than in the community, and imprisonment for some creates an opportunity to tackle drug addiction (Howard League, 2011: 25). This supports Howerton et al’s (2007: 306) suggestion that prisoners target those sources of support most likely to be able to assist them with their problem and adds to our understanding of the sources of support selected by prisoners for different problems.



The distinction in prisoners' preferences for 'inside' or 'outside' sources of support becomes less clear for 'offence problems' where 32.9% would seek help from 'outside' sources, and 28.0% from 'inside' sources – here both groups therefore appear to play an equally important role. For example, prisoners might participate in offender behaviour programmes inside that aim to facilitate the process of coming to terms with, and understanding the meaning of, their offending behaviour. However this represents only part of the problem because their offending affects their lives outside too and outside sources of support might act as a source to assist in helping them to deal with the consequences of their offence and desist from crime.

With respect to prisoners' help-seeking preferences for problems of a more emotional nature, we see an equal split between preferences for 'inside' sources of support (44.0%) and 'outside' sources (42.6%). Whilst, emotionally supportive relationships are more likely to be established with people on the 'outside', these results show that 'inside' sources of support are equally sought out for 'emotional or mental health problems.' It is also for this type of problem where the role of prisoners, including Listeners, is enhanced compared with the other types of problems. It can be seen from table 6.2 that for each group on the 'inside' (staff, prisoners, and Listeners) approximately 20% of prisoners would seek help from each source for 'emotional or mental health problems'. Whilst prisoners tend to strategically select the source of support most able to resolve their problems (i.e. staff who can influence prison matters, and people on the 'outside' who can influence 'outside' matters), their patterns of help-seeking preferences also indicate that peers do have a small role, particularly for problems of a more emotional nature. As chapter 4 highlighted, the literature on help-seeking argues that 'professional' or 'staff' sources of help are favoured to 'peer' sources, particularly for problems that influence release date, or that require a practical solution; where peer understanding and empathy is more important, peers are favoured.



Taken together, the foregoing results highlight the strategic and problem-driven nature of help-seeking by prisoners to different sources of support. Whilst some have claimed that imprisonment ‘weakens’ relationships with people on the ‘outside’ to the extent that they are no longer sources of support (e.g. see Lindquist, 2000: 449), this research shows that prisoners do still make a lot of use of ‘outside’ sources of support. Furthermore, these results do not support claims that prisoners are unlikely to talk to staff (Blair, 2006: 9). Rather, prisoners strategically distinguish between different sources of support according to the nature of the problem.

A further inspection of table 6.2 reveals that patterns can also be identified by considering the types of problems most frequently sought help for from each source of support. Firstly, prisoners are most likely to turn to people on the outside for ‘changing life problems’, closely followed by ‘outside problems’. Secondly, prisoners are most likely to turn to ‘inside’ sources of support for ‘inside problems’, this was consistent whether prisoners and staff were considered as separate groups, or as one group of ‘inside’ support. The second most common type of issue taken to prison staff however was ‘substance misuse problems’, whereas the second most common type of issue taken to prisoners was ‘emotional or mental health problems.’ This indicates that staff are more likely to be perceived as a source of practical help, and prisoners were more likely to be approached for emotional support. Supporting this, whilst Listeners were the least favoured source of support for all types of problem, prisoners were most likely to turn to Listeners for ‘emotional or mental health problems’ compared with the other problems, with 20.2% indicating that they would talk to a Listener. This shows that prisoners identify Listeners with the image of Samaritans on the outside – a source of emotional support.



Approximately a third of prisoners indicated that they would not seek help at all; this was consistent across the majority of the problems, although slightly higher number of prisoners indicated that they would not seek help for offence related problems. One prisoner interviewed suggested that he didn't like talking about his offences for fear of the potential repercussions:

*You kind of put your guard up and as a prisoner you are always suspicious that there will be some sort of repercussion, like on my release or something.* (Male young offender, Prison 4)

Discussing crimes or illicit activities that he had not been charged with was of concern to this prisoner as it could lead to a further conviction or jeopardise his parole. Furthermore a small number of prisoners interviewed also indicated that they did not want to be judged by their crimes and so tended to avoid talking about them. This reminds us of the awareness prisoners have of the less negative experience they will have if they are able to maintain a reformed image for example, created under current penal conditions (Crewe, 2009). Overall however, the fact that a significant percentage of prisoners would not seek help at all for each of the six problems highlights that there is a need to explore the spectrum of prisoners' help-seeking activity and the factors that influence whether a prisoner seeks help from different sources in greater depth; this will be explored later in this chapter where predictors of help-seeking intentions are analysed.

The next stage of the analysis considered prisoners' help-seeking preferences with respect to individual/career factors. As chapter 4 highlighted, research in non-prison settings suggests that help-seeking is influenced by demographics, for example being male is thought to reduce the likelihood of seeking help (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Two series of variables were created for the purposes of these analyses. The first variable measures prisoners' overall levels of help-seeking intentions and is an aggregate score summing the number of problems they would



take to each source of support. Scores on the scale range from 0 to 24: lower scores on the scale reflect lower levels of help-seeking intentions, and higher scores reflect higher levels of help-seeking intentions (see Appendix 6A, figure A6.2 and table A6.9 for details of the scale distribution and descriptive statistics). The distribution of the scale and a mean of 5.66 highlight that overall prisoners' help-seeking intentions were low. Secondly, a group of variables were created which categorised prisoners for each of the six problems, according to one for four groups: 'Would not seek help at all', 'Would seek help from inside sources only', 'Would seek help from outside sources only' or 'Would seek help from both inside and outside sources.' The creation of these variables enabled group comparisons to be made of levels of help-seeking, and 'inside' and 'outside' help-seeking preferences.

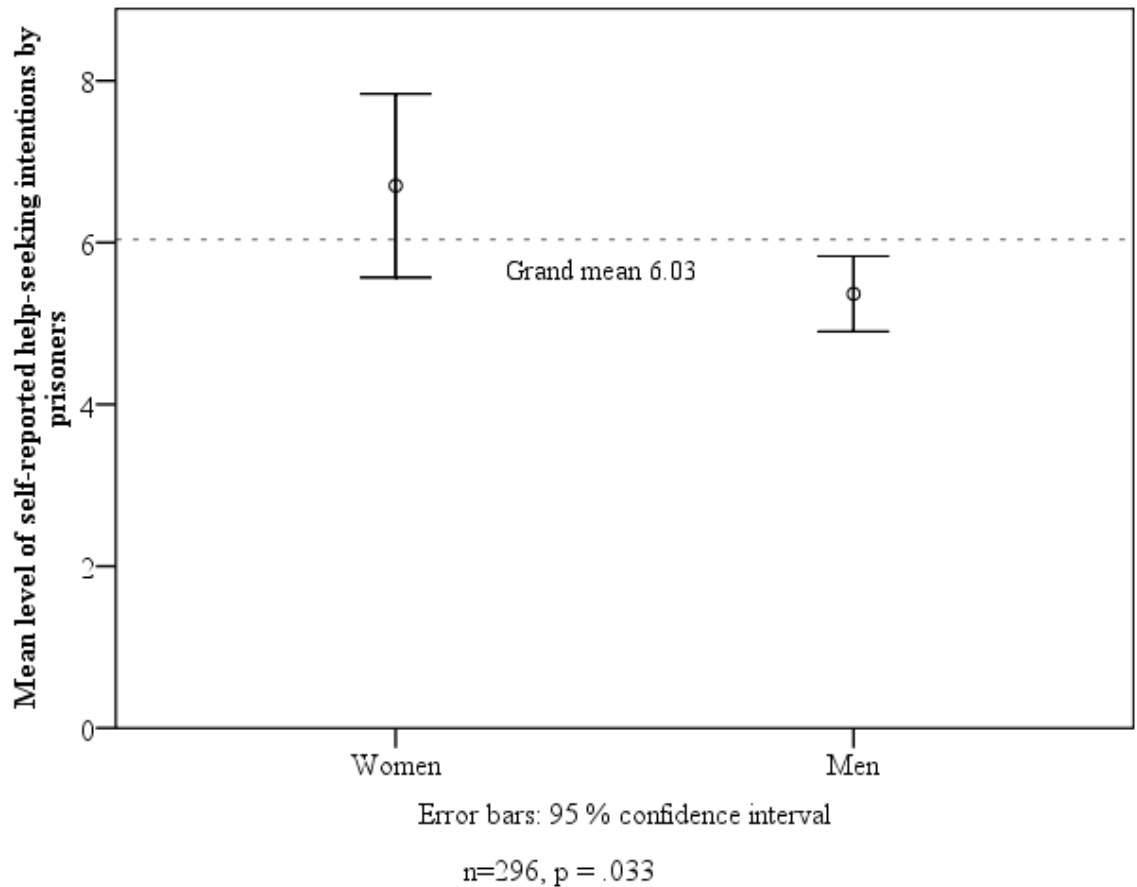
No significant age group differences in preferences for 'inside' and 'outside' sources of support were found (see Appendix A6, table A6.10). Notwithstanding the fact that 18-30 year olds were more likely to be in contact with partners, parents and siblings than those prisoners over the age of 30, this difference does not appear to affect the regularity they favour 'outside' sources of support over 'inside' sources. Moreover, no significant age differences were found with respect to their overall levels of help-seeking.<sup>17</sup> When the data were analysed according to gender however, a different pattern emerges. Women were found to indicate significantly higher levels of help-seeking intentions than men (see figure 6.2).<sup>18</sup> This is consistent with research of help-seeking intentions of men and women in the general population (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Garvey et al, 2008: 86; Nadler, 1991: 291; Rosen, 1983: 88) and prisoner populations (see chapter 4).

---

<sup>17</sup>  $t(291) = .564, p = .573$ .

<sup>18</sup>  $t(86.110) = 2.173, p = .033$ .



*Figure 6.2 Level of help-seeking intentions and gender*

This appears to fit with normative assumptions about women being more able to talk about ‘feelings’ or ‘problems’. However an analysis of men’s and women’s help-seeking preferences with respect to the different types of problems helps to unpack this finding further. Men and women did not differ significantly in their help-seeking preferences for ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources of support for the following four problems: ‘outside problems’, ‘inside problems’, ‘substance misuse problems’ and ‘emotional or mental health problems’ (see Appendix A6, table A6.11). These findings contradict research (Addis & Mahalik, 2003: 5; Nadler, 1991: 292) which has suggested that men are overall less likely to seek help for problems of an emotional nature and substance misuse problems, and demonstrate that there are overall no differences in the percentages of men and women prisoners who would seek help at all, and from ‘inside’ sources for these particular problems. Arguably, this is more evidence for why



the pains of imprisonment are gendered (Walker & Worrall, 2000) and particularly acute for women prisoners. According to normative assumptions, women are considered more likely to talk about their emotional well-being than men, yet here it is evident that women do not seek out support more often than men for emotional problems. Bosworth (1999) suggests that women prisoners often feel that they cannot express themselves in conventional means by talking and seeking help and this helps explain these findings. Furthermore, women are also considered to have greater levels of ‘outside problems’ compared with men, particularly with respect to childcare arrangements; their lack of higher levels of help-seeking here is therefore notable in terms of ensuring the needs of women are met.<sup>19</sup>

However, significantly more men prisoners (46.3%) would not seek help at all than women prisoners (30.9%) for ‘offence problems’; furthermore, significantly more women prisoners (35.3%) than men prisoners (21.1%) would seek help from ‘inside’ sources of support for ‘offence problems’.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, women (30.4%) were significantly more likely to seek help than men (18.8%) from ‘inside’ sources of support for ‘changing life problems’. On the other hand, men (40.4%) were significantly more likely than women (21.7%) to seek help from ‘outside’ sources for ‘changing life problems’.<sup>21</sup> These findings support conclusions made by Worrall and Gelsthorpe (2009) on a review of research published on women offenders that women are more likely to exhibit ‘shame’ over their crime, are likely to express a desire to ‘change’ their lives (Eaton, 1993; King & Gibbs, 2003; McIvor, 2004 – cited in Worrall & Gelsthorpe, 2009) and are more acutely affected by the stigma of their ‘offender’ status which also threatens notions of femininity (see Carlen and Worrall, 2004; 2006) and ‘contaminates’ their identity (Rowe, 2011: 578). Whilst men are overall less likely to seek help or favour

---

<sup>19</sup> As noted earlier, it is also arguable, that given that support systems in prison might theoretically be more readily available than on the ‘outside’, that men may be more likely to seek out this kind of support in prison than in non-prison settings. Nevertheless, much research still considers help-seeking from male prisoners to be suppressed compared with women, as detailed in this chapter.

<sup>20</sup>  $\chi^2$  (3, n=310) = 8.521,  $p$  = .036.

<sup>21</sup>  $\chi^2$  (3, n=314) = 9.291,  $p$  = .026.



‘outside’ sources, women appear to be more expressive, and active in their pursuits of change and reform, particularly to ‘inside’ sources of support. Women may wish to dissociate themselves from being an ‘offender’ and seek out help to facilitate this.

Whilst the analyses of help-seeking preferences according to language and country of birth were largely non-significant (see Appendix 6A, tables 6A.12 and 6A.13), a small number of notable differences were found. For ‘substance misuse problems’ and ‘changing life problems’, prisoners who did not speak English as their first language were significantly more likely to indicate that they would not seek help at all than those for whom English was their first language. For example, 26.5% of prisoners for whom English was their native language would not seek help for ‘substance misuse problems’ compared with 56.0% of those who had another native language.<sup>22</sup> Prisoners who were not born in Britain were significantly more likely not to seek help at all for ‘outside problems’.<sup>23</sup> This supports the aforementioned argument, that there are potentially cultural inhibitors that affect links with parents, and which may also influence prisoners’ willingness to seek help. If links with the outside are reduced as a consequence of the stigmatisation of the prisoner, this decreases the likelihood that prisoners will seek help for ‘outside problems’. Furthermore, for ‘substance-misuse problems’ a language barrier may prevent prisoners from being able to speak to staff whom they need to approach in order to access any drug treatment services.

Prisoners’ help-seeking preferences were analysed according to their prior imprisonment (see Appendix A6, table A6.14). Significantly more ‘first time’ prisoners (64.2%) indicated that they would seek help from ‘inside’ sources of support for ‘inside problems’ than prisoners who had been in prison before (45.3%). Similarly, 21.9% of first time prisoners, compared with

---

<sup>22</sup>  $\chi^2 (3, n=297) = 11.970, p = .007$ .

<sup>23</sup>  $\chi^2 (3, n=319) = 8.353, p = .039$ .



35.9% of prisoners who had been in prison before would not seek help at all for ‘inside problems’.<sup>24</sup> Individuals who have been in prison before may be more aware of the limits of the support that staff and prisoners offer, or might be more acutely aware of the inherent risks of seeking help in the prison environment; for example, the risk that another prisoner might perceive them as ‘weak’ because of their help-seeking (Crewe, 2005: 185; Deane, Skogstad & Williams, 199: 166). Furthermore, prisoners who have been in prison before may feel better able to manage ‘inside problems’ as a result of their experience. ‘First timers’ and prisoners who had served a prior term of imprisonment were compared with respect to their overall levels of help-seeking intentions; whilst first timers are more likely to seek help for ‘inside problems’, regardless of imprisonment history there are no significant differences in their overall levels of help-seeking intentions.<sup>25</sup> It is apparent that prior imprisonment does not alter the willingness of prisoners to seek help, but in fact may have the effect of making prisoners more strategic in who they choose to talk to and more reluctant to select sources available ‘inside’ the prison walls.

The analysis of prisoners’ help-seeking with respect to their sentencing status (see Appendix A6, table A6.14) revealed no significant differences between sentenced and un-sentenced prisoners for the following five problems: ‘inside problems’, ‘substance misuse problems’ ‘offence problems’, ‘changing life problems’ and ‘emotional or mental health problems’. The analysis did reveal that significantly more sentenced prisoners (40.7%) would seek help from ‘outside’ sources of support, compared with 28.8% of un-sentenced prisoners, for ‘outside problems’. Prisoners who had not been sentenced were significantly less likely to seek help at all for ‘outside problems’ with 40.7% indicating that they would not seek help, compared with 24.8% of sentenced prisoners.<sup>26</sup> Taken with the current study’s earlier finding that un-

---

<sup>24</sup>  $\chi^2 (3, n=318) = 11.515, p = .009$ .

<sup>25</sup>  $t (294) = -.215, p = .830$ .

<sup>26</sup>  $\chi^2 (3, n=317) = 9.088, p = .028$ .



sentenced prisoners are less likely to be in contact with parents and friends, it is evident that disrupted relationships caused by the shock and uncertainty of the individual's imprisonment, reduce the likelihood that they will seek help from partners, friends or family on the 'outside'. However, no significant difference was found in sentenced and un-sentenced prisoners' overall levels of help-seeking intentions.<sup>27</sup> This suggests that prisoners make use of the sources of support they perceive available and may seek out other sources when preferred sources are not. One final analysis found no correlation between prisoners' overall levels of help-seeking intentions and the length of the sentence they had been given.<sup>28</sup> Serving a shorter or longer sentence does not appear to inhibit, nor does it prompt, prisoners to seek help for their problems.

The results discussed in this section provide a more nuanced understanding of seeking help by prisoners, they shed light on its strategic and selective nature, how it is influenced by the type of problem, and how different prisoner groups exhibit subtly, yet significantly, different patterns of help-seeking. The final section in this chapter moves beyond this analysis to explore potential predictors of intentions to seek help from 'inside' and 'outside' sources of support.

### **6.3 Intentions to seek help from 'inside' and 'outside' sources of support**

As chapter 4 demonstrated, we know very little about help-seeking by prisoners, and research that has been conducted tends to compare 'professional' versus 'peer' sources of support (Devilly et al, 2005; Hobbs & Dear, 2000). Specifically, research has not explored the influence of the prison environment or prisoners' characteristics and relationships in facilitating or hindering help-seeking activity. This is despite the fact that it is widely

---

<sup>27</sup>  $t(291) = -.174, p = .862$ .

<sup>28</sup> Pearson's  $r = -.046, n = 205, p = .516$ .



recognised that prisoners carefully manage the image they portray to others in an environment where there is very little privacy and where relationships are inherently risky (e.g. Jewkes, 2002). It follows therefore that perceptions of their environment and relationships with others could influence prisoners' willingness to seek help, as well as individual characteristics. The sections that follow therefore explore a number of variables that potentially influence intentions to seek help by prisoners with respect to 'outside' and 'inside' sources of support. The variables used in the analyses are described first. This is followed by a discussion of the results of the multivariate models tested to identify factors that influence help-seeking by prisoners to people on the outside, prison officers or staff, and prisoners.

### **6.3.1 Potential predictors of help-seeking intentions**

Before going on to explore each of the potential predictor variables, we first consider the dependent variables. For each group – people on the outside, prison staff and prisoners – a variable was created summing the number, out of the six problems, that prisoners would seek help from them for. In each instance therefore the scale could range from 0 (would not seek help from that source at all) to 6 (would seek help for all of the problems). This distribution of each of the three scales (see Appendix A6, figures A6.3, A6.4 and A6.5, and tables A6.16, A6.17 and A6.18 for scale distributions and descriptive statistics) indicate that for all three groups, prisoners tend to select that source for a small number of problems. Notwithstanding the findings that prisoners strategically select sources of support according to the nature of the problem, it appears that overall 'outside' sources are slightly more likely to be favoured with a mean of 2.33 problems, compared with means of 1.44 and .98 problems taken to prison officers or staff and prisoners respectively.



The questionnaire was designed to tap into a number of variables that potentially influence whether prisoners will select particular sources of support when they experience problems for example relationships with potential sources of support and conditions of the environment that might make help-seeking ‘risky’ (Goldsmith & Parks, 1990). Some of the variables originally intended for the multivariate analyses could not be used due to the number of missing values they had which was approximately 25 cases in each instance. When the multivariate analyses were originally analysed, the number of cases included in the analysis went down to 234 out of a total sample of 331, with a loss of nearly 100 cases. Failure to include more cases in the analysis could hide patterns in the data. Therefore, firstly, correlations of all the individual items and scales were produced, and variables that were highly correlated with the help-seeking variables were selected for the analysis. Additionally, in order to include more cases in the analysis, predictors with higher numbers of missing values were excluded. To this effect, individual items which both strongly correlated with the outcome variables and had few missing values were sometimes selected instead of scales.

The independent variables can be categorised according to four groups: individual/career variables, personal characteristics, prison experience/relationships and perceptions of the prison environment. The individual/career variables explored were: gender, age, first language, country of birth, prior imprisonment, and sentencing status. The other three groups of predictor variables that were used are described below.

***Personal characteristics:***

*Proactivity scale* – It was hypothesised that prisoners who are more proactive in seeking out opportunities in prison may subsequently be more proactive in seeking help. Prisoners’ more active or proactive actions are worthy of attention, particularly given that prisoners are



expected to be active agents in order to progress with their sentences under the current penal climate. Proactivity implies that individuals define problems, seek out sources of support, and initiate contact (Garvey et al, 2008: 43). A measure of prisoner proactivity was included in the multivariate analyses and was created using a questionnaire item where respondents were asked to indicate which of the following they had done or would do during their time in prison: ‘Give advice to new prisoners about prison life’, ‘Ask prison staff for what I want’, ‘Sign up for education or training’, ‘Try to find work in prison’ and ‘Organise a group, team or meeting for prisoners’.<sup>29</sup> An aggregate score of the number of these that they would do was created. Scores on the scale range from 0 indicating lower levels of proactivity, to 5 indicating higher levels of proactive behaviour by prisoners.<sup>30</sup> A sample mean of 3.76 indicates that prisoners indicated quite proactive inclinations (see Appendix A6, figure A6.8 and table A6.20 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics).

*Contact intensity with the outside* – Prisoners’ contact intensity with partners, friends and family on the outside is considered to be an important predictor of seeking help from ‘outside’ sources of support. This is reinforced by the literature that emphasises the bearing links with family in particular has for prisoners on their well-being and coping (Condry, 2012; Harvey, 2005; Mills & Codd, 2007). However, as this chapter has explored, prisoners enjoyed forms of contact that they could initiate spontaneously, and therefore this variable might also be a good indicator of general sociability. This measure was described in section 6.1 of this chapter, and is an aggregate score measuring both the number of groups prisoners were in contact with, and the number of forms of contact they had with them.

---

<sup>29</sup> Respondents could answer ‘Yes’ (coded as 1) or ‘No’ (coded as 0) for each item.

<sup>30</sup> Whilst this is strictly not an interval level scale, it is used as such for the purposes of these analyses as it signifies proactive behaviour using a count of listed behaviours. See Miles & Shevlin (2001: 61-2) for a discussion on the use of ordinal scales in multivariate regression analyses.



Originally, two items from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being scale (Tennant et al, 2007) related to prisoners' self-reported confidence and ability to deal with problems well were considered for the analysis to assess the role of prisoners' confidence and mastery in their subsequent help-seeking activity: 'I've been feeling confident' and 'I've been dealing with problems well'.<sup>31</sup> Respondents could indicate along a five point scale how often they had felt that way: 'None of the time', 'Rarely', 'Some of the time', 'Often' or 'All of the time'. (see Appendix A6, figures A6.6 and A6.7 for item distributions and descriptive statistics). Correlations were conducted with each of the help-seeking variables to assess the relationships (see Appendix A6, table A6.19). Due to the number of missing values, these variables were excluded from the models.

### ***Prisoner relationships:***

*Trust in prison officers* – Positive personal relationships with officers are assumed to encourage prisoners to seek help from them when they experience a problem. Not only are staff potential sources of support, they are also gatekeepers to other sources of support. More punitive or unfair relationships are likely to inhibit prisoners' willingness to seek help from staff, whereas more positive, trusting and friendly relationships are likely to encourage it. Prisoners responding to the questionnaire reported very positive relationships with prison officers. For example 76.2% (241) of prisoners indicated that officers have been helpful to them 'Sometimes' or 'Often', 88.6% (280) of prisoners got on well with officers on their wings 'Sometimes' or 'Often', and 65.5% (207) of the sample indicated that they trusted officers 'Sometimes' or 'often'. Given the sensitive and complex nature of prisoners' problems, trust is an important aspect of disclosure so that they remain confident that there will not be any

---

<sup>31</sup> It was assumed for example, that prisoners who are more confident may be more inclined to seek help for their problems; on the other hand, prisoners who feel that they deal with their problems well may be less inclined to seek help out of a lesser need for assistance or support (Rosen, 1983). This may equally apply to seeking help from 'inside' and 'outside' sources since contact with the outside is under the control of prison staff 'inside'.



negative consequences of disclosure such as fear of being labelled as mentally ill (Howerton et al., 2007), being viewed as weak, ‘feminine’ (Hobfall, & Schröder, 2001: 202), or put on watch for suicide. A measure of trust in officers was therefore used in the analyses.<sup>32</sup> Respondents were presented with the statement ‘I trust officers in here’ and could respond with ‘Often’, ‘Sometimes’, ‘Rarely’ or ‘Never’. Scores could range from 1 (low trust) to 4 (high trust) (see Appendix A6, figure A6.9).

*Trust in other prisoners* – Given the amount of time prisoners spend in close proximity to one another, it is reasonable to suggest that relationships may form that are conducive to help-seeking, in part as a result of the awareness of the difficulties their peers may be experiencing (Crewe, 2009: 334). Moreover, it is possible that less positive relationships may lead to reduced help-seeking from staff for fear of what other prisoners might think. Survey respondents were asked about their relationships with prisoners. The large majority of prisoners in the survey sample reported that they mixed with other prisoners ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Often’ (86.6% (278)), got on well with other prisoners ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Often’ (92.2% (296)), and made friends with other prisoners ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Often’ (84.8% (278)). However, despite these positive relationships reported by prisoners, trust was clearly established less often with 51.3% (191) indicating that they trusted their fellow prisoners ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Often’; this has been observed by others (e.g. see Liebling, 2004: 360). The literature has also suggested that prisoners are cautious of forming close relationships with other prisoners given the level of trust that would be necessary (Greer, 2000). The formation of trusting relationships in prison do not come easily and require much effort. As Zamble and Porporino (1988: 78) argue,

---

<sup>32</sup> Originally, a ‘personal relationships with officers’ scale was going to be used in the analysis but was excluded due to the number of missing values. The personal relationships with officers scale consisted of an aggregate score for the following items: ‘I trust prison officers in here’, ‘Prison officers have been helpful to me’, ‘Prison officers have been unfair to me’, ‘Prison officers make an effort to talk to me’ and ‘I get on well with officers on my wing’ (see Appendix A6, figure A6.10, table A6.21 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics). Whilst the item on trust was selected for the analysis, correlations were conducted with each of the items related to relationships with officers to assess their relationship to help-seeking intentions (see Appendix A6, table A6.22).



identifying potential friends or acquaintances takes time and caution given the limited context within which this takes place. ‘Risk’ goes hand in hand with ‘trust’, and assessments are made about ‘predictability’ and ‘reliability’ (Howerton et al, 2007: 305). A measure of trust in prisoners was therefore used in the analysis.<sup>33</sup> Respondents were presented with the statement ‘I trust other prisoners in here’ and could reply ‘Often’, ‘Sometimes’, ‘Rarely’ or ‘Never’. Scores could range from 1 (low trust) to 4 (high trust) (see Appendix A6. Figure A6.11).

***Perceptions of the prison environment:***

The classic subcultural literature placed an emphasis on the social distance between officers and prisoners and a sense of ‘solidarity’ among prisoners (e.g. Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958). More contemporary prison research has highlighted that whilst solidarity is no longer the dominant explanation for the nature of social relations between prisoners, that there are both solidary and divisive mechanisms that influence both relationships between prisoners, and relationships between prisoners and staff (see chapter 4). Prisoners’ perceptions of the conditions of the prison environment and relationships in general may be more or less conducive to help-seeking. Prison research has also placed emphasis on the heightened sensitivity and meaning of behaviour, interaction and communication in the prison environment, particularly with respect to prisoner social interactions; undoubtedly this is a consequence of the high visibility of all aspects of prison life. In the prison environment, there is also the potential for prisoner conflict, for example violent and aggressive behaviour, which is the result of confining prisoners in small areas, placed in a powerless position, with limited means through which to release and express emotions. This is particularly the case in men’s

---

<sup>33</sup> Originally a ‘personal relationships with prisoners’ scale was going to be included in the analysis but was excluded due to the number of missing values. The ‘positive relationships with other prisoners scale’ was created as an aggregate score from the following items: ‘I mix with other prisoners’, ‘I trust other prisoners’, ‘I get on well with other prisoners’ and ‘I make friends with other prisoners’ (see Appendix A6, figure A6.12, and table A6.23 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics). Whilst the item on trust was selected for the analysis, a series of correlations were conducted to assess the relationship between help-seeking intentions and prisoners’ personal relationships with other prisoners (see Appendix A6, table A6.24).



prisons where masculine qualities such as competition, pride, aggression and the suppression of emotions are claimed to be prevalent (Butler, 2008: 864; Sim, 1994). Despite this, Crewe (2012: 35) claims that in fact prisoners do share their thoughts and feelings with one another, and moreover that whilst the potential for violence is never far away, acts of violence are not necessarily a core feature of prison life. The nature of relying on the support from other prisoners could be precarious and is treated with caution; it has been conceded that cohesive relationships between prisoners are undermined by a number of factors, such as the incentives for prisoners who inform staff about the illicit activities of others (Crewe, 2005; 2009). In the prison environment, not only must the prisoners disclose their weakness or vulnerability to those they are seeking help from, but also other members of the prison community (prisoners or prison staff) are likely to become aware of the support they receive given the high level of visibility of all movements in prisons, particularly when these movements do not correspond with the routine activities of other prisoners. Three variables were therefore included that were designed to measure prisoners' perceptions of the prison environment to assess their impact on help-seeking intentions. Each is described in turn:

*Perceptions of prisoner-officer social relations scale* – A scale of the perceived social relations between officers and prisoners was included in the multivariate analyses. This was an aggregate score of responses to the following items: 'Prison officers listen to prisoners', 'Prison officers can be trusted', 'Prison officers make an effort to help prisoners', 'Prison officers are fair', 'Prison officers push prisoners around', and 'Prison officers and prisoners get on well with each other'.<sup>34</sup> Scores on the scale could range from 6 (more negative relationships perceived between officers and prisoners) to 25 (more positive relationships perceived between

---

<sup>34</sup> Respondents could answer on a four point scale – 'Often' (coded as 1), 'Sometimes' (coded as 2), 'Rarely' (coded as 3) and 'Never' (coded as 4). One of the items were recoded so that a high score reflected more positive relationships perceived between officers and prisoners.



officers and prisoners).<sup>35</sup> The sample indicated they perceived generally very positive social relations between staff and prisoners as indicated by a mean of 16.90 (see Appendix A6, figure A6.13 and table A6.25 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics).

*Perceptions of prisoner conflict and solidarity scales* – Two measures on perceived social relations between prisoners were used arising out of the following questionnaire items:<sup>36</sup> ‘Prisoners fight with each other’, ‘Prisoners grass on each other’, ‘Prisoners hang around in groups’,<sup>37</sup> ‘Prisoners get on well with each other’ and ‘Prisoners help each other’.<sup>38</sup> The first three items were summated to create a scale of ‘perceptions of prisoner conflict’.<sup>39</sup> Scores on the scale could range from 3 (low levels of prisoner conflict) to 12 (high levels of prisoner conflict). A mean of 6.42 indicated generally low levels of conflict between prisoners perceived by the sample (see Appendix A6, figure A6.14 and table A6.26 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics). The last two items were summated to create a scale of ‘perceptions of prisoner solidarity’.<sup>40</sup> Scores on the scale could range from 2 (low levels of prisoner solidarity) to 8 (high levels of prisoner solidarity). Finally, a mean of 6.37 indicates that prisoners perceive higher levels of solidary relations between prisoners (see Appendix A6, figure A6.15, table A6.27 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics).

---

<sup>35</sup> A factor analysis suggested one underlying component for all five items and therefore suitability for combining into a single scale. A reliability analysis also confirmed suitability for creating a scale (Cronbach’s alpha = .834).

<sup>36</sup> A factor analysis suggested two underlying components for these items and therefore suitability for creating two scales.

<sup>37</sup> Respondents could answer on a four point scale – ‘Often (coded as 1), ‘Sometimes’ (coded as 2), ‘Rarely’ (coded as 3) and ‘Never’ (coded as 4). All three items were recoded so that a high score reflected higher levels of prisoner conflict. Whilst the item ‘prisoner hang around in groups’ could be seen as a positive aspect of prisoner interaction, a factor analysis demonstrated that it was perceived negatively by prisoners.

<sup>38</sup> Respondents could answer on a four point scale – ‘Often (coded as 1), ‘Sometimes’ (coded as 2), ‘Rarely’ (coded as 3) and ‘Never’ (coded as 4). Both items were recoded so that a high score reflected higher levels of prisoner solidarity.

<sup>39</sup> A reliability analysis did not indicate strong reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .528). Nonetheless the scale was used as an inspection of the individual items confirmed that they all represented conflict between prisoners and the factor analysis suggested that these items are in fact connected by a common latent variable.

<sup>40</sup> A reliability analysis produced a score very close to the desired level of reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .686) and so the scale was considered usable for the analysis.



The sections that follow explore the potential role that the above variables have on prisoners' intentions to seek help from 'inside' and 'outside' sources of support. A series of multivariate regression models were tested to identify potential 'predictors'. In each analysis four models were tested. The first model considered individual/career variables alone, the second model added personal characteristics to the analysis, the third added prison relationships,<sup>41</sup> and finally the fourth model added perceptions of the prison environment.

### **6.3.2 Intentions to seek help from people on the outside**

We first consider what drives prisoners to look beyond the prison walls for help and support. Briefly, to recap on earlier findings, prisoners were more likely to be in contact with their immediate family than any other group on the outside. Furthermore, phone calls and letters were the most prominent forms of contact prisoners had with people on the 'outside', which were methods that they were able to initiate themselves. Prisoners were more likely to seek help from 'outside' sources of support for 'outside problems' and 'changing life problems'; these are problems that are more likely to be resolved with people on the outside hence emphasising the strategic nature of prisoner help-seeking which has been a prevalent theme throughout this chapter. This was particularly the case for males and sentenced prisoners, a greater percentage of whom would look to 'outside' sources of support for 'changing life problems'. Despite the potential obstacles and barriers, it was evident that people on the 'outside' play a significant role in supporting prisoners. These data were explored further to consider the predictors of seeking help from outside sources. Table 6.3 shows the results of three multivariate models analysed.

---

<sup>41</sup> However for the models tested related to intentions to seek help from outside sources, prison relationships were not hypothesised to impact on help-seeking. Therefore for this analysis, only three models were tested.



*Table 6.3 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from outside sources of support*

	<i>Model 1</i> $\beta$ ( <i>p</i> )	<i>Model 2</i> $\beta$ ( <i>p</i> )	<i>Model 3</i> $\beta$ ( <i>p</i> )
<b>Individual/career variables</b>			
Gender	-.038 (.543)	-.018 (.755)	-.017 (.767)
Age	-.020 (.746)	-.003 (.953)	-.006 (.912)
Language	.103 (.211)	.048 (.535)	.056 (.464)
Country of birth	.004 (.961)	.005 (.950)	.009 (.910)
Prior imprisonment	.021 (.742)	-.030 (.618)	-.014 (.820)
Sentencing status	.061 (.330)	.042 (.465)	.052 (.370)
<b>Personal characteristics</b>			
Proactivity scale		.110 (.054)	.113 (.058)
Contact intensity with the outside		<b>.359 (.000)</b>	<b>.369 (.000)</b>
<b>Perceptions of prison environment</b>			
Prisoner-officer social relations scale			-.058 (.365)
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale			-.113 (.061)
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale			.069 (.254)
<b><i>R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	.016  ( <i>p</i> = .623)	<b>.156</b>  ( <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> )	.174  ( <i>p</i> = .118)

n=273

N. B. Table displays standardised beta values ( $\beta$ ) and *p* values. *p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

Grey shading highlights the model accepted.

Dummy codes: Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female); Language (0 = First language is not English, 1 = First language is English); Country of birth (0 = Not born in Britain, 1 = Born in Britain); Prior imprisonment (0 = Been in prison before, 1 = First time in prison); Sentencing status (0 = Not sentenced, 1 = Sentenced).



The results of the models displayed in table 6.3 indicate that the only variable that has an impact on intentions to seek help from outside sources of support is prisoners' contact intensity with the outside. Model 1 shows that individual/career variables do not have a significant impact alone. In model 2 we see that contact intensity is a significant predictor ( $\beta = .359, p = .000$ ) in a model that overall accounts for 15.6% of the total variance ( $p = .000$ ). When variables related to perceptions of the prison environment are added to the analysis in model 3, whilst contact intensity with the outside is still a significant predictor ( $\beta = .369, p = .000$ ), the model overall does not reach significance ( $p = .118$ ), therefore the prison environment does not impact on seeking help from outside sources of support. These results firstly suggest that greater levels of contact intensity with the outside create more opportunities for prisoners to seek help from 'outside' sources of support. Secondly, that the measure of contact intensity is likely to reflect, in part, both the *quantity* and *quality* of prisoners' relationships with people on the 'outside' since they are more likely to be used as sources of support, as evident by prisoners' increased willingness to seek help from them. Overall, we see that contact with people on the outside is vital for prisoners.

Whilst earlier findings suggested that first time prisoners, who have greater levels of 'contact intensity with the outside', might be more reliant on support from the outside, prior imprisonment did not emerge as a significant predictor of seeking help in these models. This suggests that first time prisoners might be more reliant on support from people on the 'outside', however they may not seek help more frequently than prisoners who had been in prison before. It is important to remember the two-way nature of relationships. Families live "in the shadow of prison" (Codd, 2008) and may themselves need support, information and reassurance from their imprisoned family member; therefore greater levels of contact intensity among first time prisoners does not necessarily imply higher levels of help-seeking. Whilst, the purpose of this analysis is to consider prisoners' help-seeking intentions, it must not be



forgotten that people on the ‘outside’ are not simply a source of support, and that they may seek help or need support from prisoners themselves.

### **6.3.3 Intentions to seek help from prison staff**

The concern with prison staff as sources of support is central, given that prisoners’ relationships with officers are strongly associated with their quality of life in prison (Crewe, 2005: 198; Vuolo & Kruttschnitt, 2008: 331). Prisoners experience variation in how they are treated by officers (Jacobson, Edgar & Loucks, 2007: 40) and this is claimed to shape prisoners’ feelings of well-being and safety (Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 490). As others such as Howerton et al (2007: 306) have noted, prisoners attach importance to the degree to which they feel they are respected, listened to, and treated compassionately. Additionally, as we have seen, staff are gatekeepers of access to the outside world, access to facilities and people on the inside. Research conducted by Hobbs and Dear (2000) found that prisoners were less likely to seek help from staff for emotional problems, mental health issues and their difficulties in coping. The foregoing findings from table 6.2 suggested that prisoners were most likely to take ‘inside problems’, ‘substance misuse problems’, and to a slightly lesser extent ‘changing life problems’ to prison officers or staff, compared with other problems. The nature of these problems suggest that prisoners strategically seek help from staff for more practical forms of help that staff are able to resolve by assisting or facilitating for prisoners. Whilst relationships between prisoners and officers were clearly favourable, not all prisoners would seek help from staff for some problems, or any problems at all.

Table 6.4 shows the results of four multivariate models tested to identify potential predictors of seeking help from prison staff. It was assumed that in particular seeking help from staff was driven by relationships with staff.



*Table 6.4 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from prison officers or staff*

	<i>Model 1</i> $\beta$ (p)	<i>Model 2</i> $\beta$ (p)	<i>Model 3</i> $\beta$ (p)	<i>Model 4</i> $\beta$ (p)
<b>Individual/career variables</b>				
Gender	.122 (.054)	<b>.128 (.042)</b>	.090 (.125)	.082 (.158)
Age	.112 (.077)	.106 (.095)	.085 (.147)	.078 (.180)
Language	.145 (.075)	.132 (.106)	.090 (.237)	.084 (.261)
Country of birth	-.057 (.496)	-.055 (.506)	-.069 (.371)	-.067 (.375)
Prior imprisonment	-.057 (.379)	-.064 (.327)	-.050 (.403)	-.036 (.550)
Sentencing status	.040 (.530)	.039 (.530)	.028 (.626)	.033 (.566)
<b>Personal characteristics</b>				
Proactivity scale		<b>.145 (.018)</b>	.057 (.331)	.035 (.558)
Contact intensity with the outside		.048 (.440)	.040 (.494)	.062 (.293)
<b>Prison relationships</b>				
Trust in prison staff			<b>.379 (.000)</b>	<b>.334 (.000)</b>
<b>Perceptions of prison environment</b>				
Prisoner-officer social relations scale				.088 (.367)
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale				<b>-.162 (.007)</b>
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale				.048 (.428)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.050</b> <b>(p = .042)</b>	<b>.074</b> <b>(p = .040)</b>	<b>.203</b> <b>(p = .000)</b>	<b>.229</b> <b>(p = .043)</b>

n=261

N. B. Table displays standardised beta values ( $\beta$ ) and  $p$  values.  $p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

Grey shading highlights the model accepted.

Dummy codes: Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female); Language (0 = First language is not English, 1 = First language is English); Country of birth (0 = Not born in Britain, 1 = Born in Britain); Prior imprisonment (0 = Been in prison before, 1 = First time in prison); Sentencing status (0 = Not sentenced, 1 = Sentenced).



The models in table 6.4 highlight a number of predictors of intentions to seek help from prison staff. Model 1 shows that individual/career variables alone do not predict help-seeking intentions. In model 2 where personal characteristics are also considered, gender emerges as significant ( $\beta = .128, p = .042$ ), but also we see that the more proactive a prisoner is, the more likely he or she is to intend to seek help from staff for their problems ( $\beta = .145, p = .018$ ). However, only a small percentage (7.4%) of the total variance is explained by this second model ( $p = .040$ ). In model 3 it is clear that trusting relationships formed with staff have a significant impact on help-seeking intentions. Trusting relationships formed with officers foster intentions to seek help from staff ( $\beta = .79, p = .000$ ). Also in model 3, gender and proactivity no longer feature as significant predictors; instead it is trust in officers that is important. Model 3 accounts for 20.3% of the total variance in prisoners' intentions to seek help from staff ( $p = .000$ ).

Finally, in model 4 (the model accepted), which explains 22.9% of the total variance ( $p = .043$ ) higher levels of trust in officers is once more associated with greater levels of intentions to seek help from staff ( $\beta = .334, p = .000$ ). We also see that conflict between prisoners has a negative impact on help-seeking intentions ( $\beta = -.612, p = .007$ ). Conflict in particular has a stronger influence on help-seeking intentions than trust in staff, which highlights the importance of the prison environment. Where prisoners perceive relationships between prisoners to be characterised by conflict, violence or grassing for example, the potential repercussions of seeking help from, or even talking to, staff are deemed more risky (Sabo, Kupers & London, 2001: 10-11), and this inhibits their intentions to seek help from them. This highlights the caution prisoners take in their relationships with both prison staff and prisoners. It is also important to note that these results suggest that it is 'conflict' and not 'solidarity' that influences help-seeking intentions. For example, it could be argued that greater levels of solidarity among prisoners would inhibit seeking help from staff because membership in the



prisoner subculture is claimed to reinforce the divide between prisoners and staff (e.g. see Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958). However, the ‘inmate code’, guiding prisoner actions and fostering a sense of solidarity among prisoners, is claimed to be much more ‘diluted’ in the late modern prison (Crewe, 2009). Secondly, prisoners recognise that interaction with, and help-seeking from, prison staff is essential to get things done regardless of solidary relations between prisoners. Nevertheless they are acutely aware of the risk of help-seeking when conflict between prisoners is higher.

To consider these findings further, the qualitative interview data was also consulted. Prisoners emphasised the importance of trusting relationships with staff, and the influence this had on their help-seeking. Prisoners indicated that trust was not easily established between prisoners and prison staff. When asked if there were officers she could trust, once prisoner remarked:

*I trust my personal officer. But other than that, no. I have known officers and have told them something in confidence, and then I've heard them telling someone else, and that's breaking trust really isn't it? (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)*

This quotation emphasises the position of power staff are in to use the knowledge obtained in their conversations with prisoners. Staff credibility is crucial (Toch, 1992: 125); prisoners wish to know the probable outcomes of seeking help from prison staff. Whilst then staff could use knowledge to help, prisoners were also acutely aware that their problem could become a point of discussion or gossip between staff. Therefore, trusting staff to deal with information appropriately was important when considering talking to them as a source of help and support. The interview data also revealed that prisoners felt they had to be ‘strategic’ in selecting particular officers who they get on well with, or who they felt were more likely to be receptive to their concerns. Prisoners therefore did not see all prison staff as the same (Liebling, 2004:



239), but judged them individually (Crewe, 2005: 197) as their demeanour and personality varied (Jacobson et al, 2007: 40). As we have seen earlier in this chapter, prisoners appeared to strategically select particular sources of support according to the problem experienced. Prisoners also described a ‘strategic’ approach when considering which member of staff to talk to:

*Some of the officers are moody, and some of the officers are approachable, some aren't. It's a case of weighing the personalities up of the officers and then thinking, well choosing, the officer you think best serves the purpose. [...] I pick moments on when to ask them things, and I'll only ask certain officers. (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)*

Therefore prisoners are cautious and their decisions about whom to approach and when to approach them are influenced by their observations and experiences with staff (Tait, 2012: 20), for example if they have been consistent, helpful, dismissive, unsympathetic or caring. In order to establish which officers he could foster good relationships with, one prisoner explained that he ‘tested’ them:

*You can always test somebody who is an officer. I just smile at them and say, “hiya” and I am nice to them. If you get “hmm yeah” you can suss them out straight away. If you get a smile and a “hiya” back then they are approachable aren't they? (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)*

Prison officers’ engagement with prisoners therefore holds central importance in whether they are seen as valid sources of support. Prisoners also referred to the trust they felt it was necessary to make them feel confident that staff would deal with their problems appropriately and sensitively. Taken together, these results point to the importance of how staff handle personal knowledge about prisoners. Whilst then the demeanour of staff indicated to a prisoner



their feasibility as a source of support, the relationships built with officers enabled the transfer of personal knowledge about prisoners and meant that staff were in a better position to be able to understand and help prisoners. Not only that but prisoners could assess trustworthiness via their relationships with staff and this influenced whether staff were seen and used as sources of support.

The interviews also supported the finding from table 6.4 that the risks posed by what other prisoners might think of their help-seeking activity inhibited seeking help from staff. When prisoners perceive poorer relationships between prisoners, evident for example by prisoners informing on one another or fighting, this leads them to be more cautious in their interactions with staff and consider how this is seen by other prisoners. This finding highlights the importance of the image prisoners feel they have to portray to others as the following prisoner explained:

*I didn't want to go and talk to officers because others think you are grassing people up, you know what I mean? They see you talking to an officer and they are like "oh who is he grassing up?"* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)

So whilst prisoners acknowledged that social relationships with staff can be beneficial, they were nonetheless very conscious of the visibility of their contact with officers in front of other prisoners. Sitting with officers for lengthy or intense periods could incite hostility from other inmates. The interviews with prison staff further revealed that they were aware that prisoners may be reluctant to disclose problems to them for fear of being seen as weak or simply because they struggled to discuss their feelings. Many staff therefore felt it necessary to 'reach out' to prisoners and offer support rather than just waiting for prisoners to seek help from them, as one female officer explained:



*We had a lad on here and [during his] first couple of weeks and he was really, really struggling, and he wouldn't talk to anybody. So I kind of went in, sat down and went "right I ain't moving until you talk to me." I was kneeling down, and I've got dodgy knees, so I said "the more I sit here the longer I am gonna get stuck, so get talking!" And he did start talking.*  
(Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 4)

The quotation above highlights how some officers recognise that showing prisoners care and concern facilitates the process of 'opening up'. The strategy adopted by this member of staff might appear pushy yet highlights the time restrictions they have for supportive interactions with prisoners. Essentially, whilst many of the staff interviewed clearly did care for the well-being of prisoners, they had to focus on identifying problems and resolving them, rather than exploring feelings and 'listening' (see chapter 9). Despite this, staff did express concern. This was valued and duly noted by prisoners (see also Tait, 2012) because it showed that staff wanted to help them and were not indifferent to their predicament. For example, one prisoner noted that certain staff had been particularly proactive in offering support to him:

*Some of them, they're really good and can tell when something is up without you even mentioning nothing, like especially some of the staff on here.... They won't pull you into an interview room like this, they will just speak to you normal like. When my girlfriend left me and I had trouble at home, I didn't tell no-one, but then one member of staff noticed and she spoke to me.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)

Staff attention to the well-being of prisoners made prisoners feel like they were being treated as people, not just prisoners. The above quotation also illustrates that prisoners value particular styles of communication with officers and the legitimacy of what they perceive as 'normal' forms of talk rather than those heavily imbued with power imbalances. This example illustrates



further that prisoners who do not seek help are not necessarily devoid of support, because support can be offered just as it can be sought out.

#### **6.3.4 Intentions to seek help from prisoners**

Current knowledge leads us to hold a number of predictions with respect to the potential indicators of seeking help from other prisoners. Firstly, that risks associated with help-seeking, such as exposing vulnerability or a lack of discretion, are likely to inhibit prisoners from seeking help, and the foregoing analysis highlighted that this had an effect on seeking help from prison staff. Secondly, that the supportive relationships more evident between female prisoners than males, are more likely to result in help-seeking. Finally, the foregoing findings in table 6.2 highlighted that prisoners were less willing to seek help from their peers compared with prison staff and people on the outside. Prisoners, who are less influential and powerful in the outcome of problems, or access to facilities, than staff for example, are less likely to be able to offer practical or instrumental help, or seen as being able to influence matters in order to resolve them. However, the problems prisoners were most likely to help seek help from other prisoners for were ‘inside problems’ and ‘emotional or mental health problems’; this points to the greater role prisoners have in supporting one another emotionally rather than instrumentally, although it is recognised that ‘inside problems’ also include more practical issues. However, prisoners might equally seek advice or support from other prisoners in relation to ‘inside problems’ because prisoners may be perceived as being in a better position to be able to empathise and understand their concerns.

In order to explore what influences prisoners’ intentions to seek help from other prisoners further, four multivariate models were analysed (see table 6.5). It was hypothesised that trust in other prisoners in particular would emerge as a significant predictor.



*Table 6.5 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from prisoners*

	<i>Model 1</i> <i>β (p)</i>	<i>Model 2</i> <i>β (p)</i>	<i>Model 3</i> <i>β (p)</i>	<i>Model 4</i> <i>β (p)</i>
<b>Individual/career variables</b>				
Gender	<b>.165 (.010)</b>	<b>.172 (.006)</b>	<b>.168 (.007)</b>	<b>.172 (.006)</b>
Age	-.096 (.134)	-.094 (.139)	-.090 (.147)	-.092 (.140)
Language	.080 (.325)	.055 (.495)	.029 (.717)	.039 (.627)
Country of birth	-.109 (.191)	-.108 (.191)	-.125 (.125)	-.124 (.127)
Prior imprisonment	-.031 (.632)	-.050 (.435)	-.046 (.466)	-.044 (.489)
Sentencing status	.001 (.993)	-.007 (.915)	.001 (.991)	.009 (.885)
<b>Personal characteristics</b>				
Proactivity scale		.112 (.068)	.079 (.196)	.078 (.222)
Contact intensity with the outside		<b>.139 (.027)</b>	<b>.139 (.024)</b>	<b>.132 (.038)</b>
<b>Prison experience/relationships</b>				
Trust in prisoners			<b>.191 (.002)</b>	<b>.172 (.012)</b>
<b>Perceptions of prison environment</b>				
Prisoner-officer social relations scale				-.057 (.399)
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale				.032 (.619)
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale				.097 (.157)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.037 ( <i>p</i> = .141)	<b>.070</b> ( <i>p</i> = <b>.012</b> )	<b>.103</b> ( <i>p</i> = <b>.002</b> )	.113 ( <i>p</i> = .435)

n=263

N. B. Table displays standardised beta values ( $\beta$ ) and  $p$  values.  $p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

Grey shading highlights the model accepted.

Dummy codes: Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female); Language (0 = First language is not English, 1 = First language is English); Country of birth (0 = Not born in Britain, 1 = Born in Britain); Prior imprisonment (0 = Been in prison before, 1 = First time in prison); Sentencing status (0 = Not sentenced, 1 = Sentenced).



Model 1 in table 6.5 shows that gender stands out as an important predictor of intentions to seek help from prisoners; women prisoners seek help from their peers to a greater extent than men prisoners do ( $\beta = .165, p = .010$ ). In model 2, again being female predicts help-seeking intentions from other prisoners ( $\beta = .172, p = .006$ ), and also contact intensity with the outside is highlighted as a significant predictor ( $\beta = .139, p = .027$ ). As noted in section 6.3.1, contact intensity with the outside is also likely to be an indicator of prisoners' general sociability and this finding indicates that those prisoners who are generally more sociable are also more likely to make use of peer mechanisms of support. Adding prisoners' relationships to the analysis in model 3 (the model accepted) highlights, as predicted, that more trusting relationships with other prisoners results in a greater willingness to seek help from them ( $\beta = .191, p = .002$ ). This third model accounts for 10.3% of the total variance ( $p = .002$ ). Whilst gender, contact intensity with the outside and trust are significant in model 4, adding perceptions of the prison environment to the analysis removes the overall significance ( $p = .435$ ).

These findings support the extensive literature on the supportive relationships between female prisoners (Bosworth & Carrabine, 2001; Greer, 2000; Tait, 2012: 23; Larson & Nelson, 1984; Levit, 2001: 97; Ward & Kassebaum, 1965). Whilst it is likely that women prisoners may still have concerns about talking to their peers, the presence of a masculine culture in men's prisons, characterised by qualities associated with respect and aggression (Brown & Ireland, 2006; Butler, 2008; Graham & Wells, 2003) may weaken or alter the nature of supportive relationships between men prisoners. Women are also more likely than men to talk about their feelings and emotions, in other words, expose their vulnerability (Cusack et al, 2006). Women prisoners report "warmth and mutual support" among one another, and the higher prevalence of romantic relationships compared with men has also been noted (Rowe, 2012: 110-1). Whilst earlier findings did not indicate that men were less likely to seek help for 'emotional or mental



health problems' than women, it would appear that women are more likely to make use of prisoner support in general than men prisoners do.

The interviews with prisoners supported the findings from table 6.5 further as they described how relationships were guarded because of the 'deviant' and 'untrustworthy' characteristics that are associated with individuals who have received custodial sentences. This is further reinforced by the symbolism of imprisonment which represents societal distrust of offenders and sets a tone of distrust within the prison environment (Bond & Lee, 2005: 1429-1436). A small number of prisoners in both the interview and the survey samples talked of negative relationships between prisoners that they had witnessed. One prisoner reported: *"There's a lot of shit stirring"* (Adult female survey respondent, Prison 3), suggesting that relationships were fragile and subject to disruption through rumours. This was particularly observable in the female establishment, but not entirely absent in the male prisons as the quotation below highlights:

*The drug culture, the bullying culture – it's just general prison life. They're in prison for crimes and they believe they've got kudos to live up to. Perhaps they are affiliated with a gang outside or something like that, you see there's like these little cliques and they all stick together.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

This quotation highlights the complexity of prisoners' relationships and the links that form and dissolve between them, in particular with reference to establishing trusting relationships. Relationships with other prisoners posed risks and it consequently made sense for prisoners to build relationships with particular individuals, characterised by a degree of trust, which facilitated help-seeking. When talking about trusting people in prison, one female prisoner said:



*It's very hard to trust a person isn't it. [...] If you haven't got trust, what have you got? You've got nothing.* (Adult female prisoner 4, Prison 3)

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that trust was a central aspect to prisoners' relationships where help-seeking was concerned.

Examining the interview data also supported the finding that prisoners' general sociability led to more help-seeking or mutually supportive actions between prisoners. The majority of the prisoners interviewed mentioned that they had, on a number of occasions helped other prisoners in some way, for example by offering them with guidance on how to 'do time' by keeping their head down and staying out of trouble. Essentially, whilst prisoners were expected to cope alone, they were simultaneously reaching out to one another. Crewe (2009: 339) suggested that there is a "low level emotional identification" between prisoners, who recognise the inherent pains of prison life experienced by others living in the same environment. Many of the prisoners in this study recalled both observing and experiencing helping relationships and mutual support between prisoners, as the following quotation illustrates:

*If I am seen not talking to anyone and sitting in a cell on my own, or I don't look happy, certain people sometimes will come up to me and are like "alright mate, do you want to talk?" Or they even just come up to you and get you out for a game of cards. Just so you are not sitting there on your own.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

Whilst then these encounters did not necessarily result in a prisoner actively seeking help from another prisoner or explicit forms of emotional support, the interactions were nevertheless supportive and expressed a degree of understanding and appreciation for the plight of their peers. Prisoners were 'looking out for' each other. The gender difference in seeking help from



prisoners found in table 6.5 was supported in interviews where mutual support and a concern for the well-being of other prisoners was particularly evident in the female establishment, as the quotations below highlight:

*You get used to living to the girl next door so you get used to her routine, and she gets used to yours. Then if you don't come out one day, they will think what's wrong because that's not normal.* (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)

*There was this one old lady who came in, she was absolutely petrified because she was like 64 and she'd never been in prison.... When she came onto the wing I think she thought, sometimes prisoners get a bad reputation don't they, tarred or branded. So I think she thought it was going to be sort fighting, and people bullying.... And this was on a detox wing as well, which sometimes has quite a bad reputation. But everyone on the wing went out of their way to help her and they called her 'Nanna'. They all went out of the way to make sure she had tobacco, and got hot water for her because she was upstairs.* (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)

These female prisoners therefore describe an awareness of other prisoners' routines, behaviour and well-being. When there is cause for concern, such as a change in behaviour, or evidence of an inability to cope with the prison environment, they reached out, supported, and assisted one another. These quotations further illustrate the more visible nature of mutual support between female prisoners than male prisoners. Males appeared more likely to make informal gestures and help each other pass the time by, whereas female prisoners were more explicit in their efforts to help and support one another. The interview data discussed above also helps us to understand why seeking help from prisoners appears to be less compared with the other groups. Prisoners 'normalised' support between themselves as part of everyday life in prison; support did not necessarily need to be explicitly sought out, but was evident through the



supportive interactions and gestures, which reduces the visibility of help-seeking (Wills, 1991: 279). Clegg, Bradley and Smith (2006: 102) claim that making use of more informal mechanisms of support preserves self-esteem by avoiding explicit help-seeking that exposes vulnerability or weakness. The foregoing analysis highlights a need to consider help-seeking as situated in the context of the prison and understanding the risks and strategic decisions that are associated with seeking help. Once again, this demonstrates that a lack of help-seeking does not necessarily reflect a deficit of support.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a more nuanced understanding of help-seeking by prisoners that takes into account contextual factors such as the prison environment and prisoners' relationships. The nature of the prison environment, characterised by restricted movements, low trust, and high visibility, elicits a 'strategic' approach adopted by prisoners in their help-seeking activity. Overall, only a small number of notable demographic differences in help-seeking from 'inside' (i.e. prisoners, prison officers or prison staff) and 'outside' (i.e. partners, friends or family) sources were found, which were in line with the existing prison literature. In particular, women prisoners were more likely to express intentions to seek help from other prisoners. Whilst women are considered to have more 'outside' problems than men, their levels of contact with the 'outside' and intentions to seek help for 'outside problems' are not higher than those of men. This helps to explain why the 'gendered' pains of imprisonment are so acute for women. In general, a lack of help-seeking by prisoners is considered undesirable and it is deemed the responsibility of the prisoner to seek help when they need it. However, this view fails to consider the issues highlighted in this chapter – that the source of support is strategically



selected according to the nature of the problem, and that trusting relationships are poignant for prisoners' intentions to seek help. Moreover, the conditions of the prison environment, particularly if perceived to be more risky as a result of conflict between prisoners, inhibits help-seeking intentions with respect to staff, who are not only potential sources of support to prisoners, but are also gatekeepers to methods of contact with the outside, other sources of support, and facilities or services that could alleviate prisoners' problems. Therefore, Goldsmith and Park's (1990) assertion, that help-seeking involves a conflict between a desire to talk and risks of seeking help, is relevant to an analysis of help-seeking in the prison environment. When talking about seeking help, we must also not overlook more informal supportive interactions that take place, and mechanisms of support that may in fact make help-seeking unnecessary in some instances. For example prison staff recognised that help-seeking by prisoners could be risky, and so reached out to prisoners they considered in need of support. Likewise, prisoners reported mutually supportive interactions between them and 'looking out' for each other.

Taken together, the findings in this chapter reinforce that help-seeking by prisoners is 'strategic' and is shaped by the nature of the prison environment, relationships with sources of support and the specific nature of the problem. In particular, help-seeking by prisoners, to 'inside' and 'outside' sources of support, needs to be understood as *situated* in the prison context.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Seeking help from Listeners and experiences of Listener support**

Having explored patterns of help-seeking by prisoners in the preceding chapter, this chapter focuses specifically on seeking help from Listeners by prisoners. It asks: What do prisoners know and think about Listeners? What drives prisoners to seek help from Listeners? What are prisoners' experiences of talking to Listeners? These questions are addressed by exploring both the prisoner survey data and qualitative interview data with the 14 prisoners who have talked to Listeners.

This thesis has described how peer support and mentoring has been championed by government as a mechanism of 'reducing re-offending'. Peer support has also formed a part of the Prison Service's suicide prevention strategy. Whilst then peer support is grounded upon ideas that peers provide more informed and emphatic support (Davison et al, 2006: 443; Devilly et al, 2005: 223; NOMS South West, 2008: 12), and on the grounds that volunteering fosters 'active citizenship' among offenders (Edgar, Jacobson & Biggar, 2001; Farrant & Levenson, 2002), its use across the criminal justice system has been primarily to achieve government defined outcomes such as reducing 're-offending'. However there is very little clear and robust evidence to support these claims, particularly with respect to the perspective of 'service-users' about whose experiences and preferences very little is known. Moreover, there is a need to explore other potential impacts than could be reflected in a single quantifiable outcome such as 'reduced re-offending', or in the context of the Listener scheme,



reduced levels of suicide and self-harm among prisoners. The data presented in this chapter aims to address these gaps and seeks to understand factors that encourage or inhibit prisoners to seek help from Listeners.

This chapter is split into five sections. The first section considers prisoners' knowledge about Listeners and their positive and negative perceptions of them drawing from the quantitative survey data from prisoners. The second section explores the survey data further by attempting to identify what variables predict prisoners' willingness to seek help from Listeners by analysing multivariate models. Next, prisoners who have sought help from Listeners, and those who have not, are compared to identify any further factors that predict actual help-seeking from Listeners. Furthermore, how survey respondents who had talked to Listeners rated their experience of Listener support is explored and their patterns of usage of the scheme is investigated in an attempt to further understand how prisoners use peer support and what they think about it. Following this, survey respondents' willingness to become Listeners themselves is considered. The final section of this chapter explores the qualitative data generated through interviews with prisoners who have talked to Listeners about a problem. These data further contextualise the quantitative data on seeking help, the circumstances leading to prisoners accepting and using Listener support, the conditions that facilitate the process of 'opening-up' to Listeners, and prisoners' experiences of talking to Listeners.

## **7.1 What prisoners know and think about Listeners**

Firstly, we consider the context in which prisoners use, or do not use peer support by understanding what prisoners know and think about Listeners. Survey respondents were asked about how they found out about Listeners, their ideas about the support Listeners provide, and their positive and negative perceptions of Listeners. This section explores these data, and



provides the context and background to seeking help from Listeners that will be built upon throughout this chapter.

### **7.1.1 What prisoners know about Listeners and how they find out about them**

There is an opportunity for prisoners to find out about Listeners as soon as they enter prison via ‘reception’ and ‘induction’. Prisoners cross the threshold from the ‘outside’ to the ‘inside’ world of the prison via reception where their arrival is administratively processed. Once this processing has taken place, prisoners would normally be moved onto an induction wing or a ‘first night centre’ to begin the induction process. The official stated purpose of induction is to ease newly arrived prisoners, into prison life. However, a number of scholars would argue that reception and induction begin the process of ‘prisonization’ or ‘assimilation’ of prisoners into the prison culture that enforces the standardisation of behaviour (Clemmer, 1940; Fitzgerald & Sim, 1979: 52; Goffman, 1961; Harvey, 2005). During the reception and induction processes prisoners are provided with information on aspects of the prison regime such as how and when various activities are accessed and conducted, and the help and support that is available.<sup>1</sup> Prisoners are also ‘screened’ for potential issues such as mental health, physical health, risk of suicide or self-harm, and literacy and numeracy ability during induction. Induction wings were created after the identification of a need to facilitate adaptation to prison (Liebling, 2007: 430) by providing more comprehensive information to prisoners on arrival (HMPS, 2008: 36; Home Office, 1991: 23). The new wings were further designed to be smaller, quieter and more relaxed than the main prison wings, in order to create a less daunting and more comfortable atmosphere for prisoners, particularly ‘first timers’, as they adjust to their circumstances (Liebling, 2007: 436; Owers, 2010, HMCIP Annual Report). Despite these efforts however, some prisons, particularly larger establishments with high turnovers, still find it difficult to

---

<sup>1</sup> Under certain circumstances prisoners would be moved directly to another wing instead of going through ‘induction’. The reasons for this include: having recently served a term of imprisonment at the establishment, requiring immediate healthcare, or a lack of room on the induction wing for example.



provide the information at a more personal and individual level to every newly arrived prisoner (Jacobson, Edgar & Loucks, 2007: 7). Entering prison and the procedures that take place have been described as disorienting, lonely, and stressful due to: the large volume of information new arrivals are presented with (Jacobson, Edgar & Loucks, 2007: 48; Rowe, 2012: 110), the long periods of waiting, many will also be suffering from substance withdrawal, feeling preoccupied with outside matters such as the care of their children (Liebling, 2006: 23-4; Rowe, 2012: 109), and not knowing what to expect from the prison environment. It is within this context that prisoners initially find out about Listeners.

As explored in chapter 3, the Prison Service's SCG has framed Listener support as a key aspect of provision for suicidal and self-harming prisoners. Policy recommends the visible presence of peer supporters, in particular Listeners, during the reception and induction processes (Prison Service Order 2700; Safer Custody Group, no date) to offer support prisoners at what is recognised as both a distressing and 'high risk' period due to 'transitional stress' as prisoners adapt to life 'inside' (Goulding, 2007: 41), particularly if they are experiencing it for the first time. A further role is to explain the support they can offer to prisoners during their imprisonment, and how prisoners can access Listener support. In each of the establishments visited for this research, Listeners were claimed to have a presence on reception and during the induction process to support and inform new arrivals. This was verified by both staff and Listeners who often reinforced the importance of offering Listener support to newly arrived prisoners and the procedures in place to ensure this. For example one Listener stated *"Everyone who comes into this prison is aware of the Listeners, what they do and how they can access us."* (Adult male Listener, Prison 1). It was the view of prison staff that Listeners informing prisoners about the availability of Listener support on arrival to prison was very much *"part of procedure"* (Senior officer, Induction wing, Prison 1). Another member of staff noted:



*The Listener scheme is explained through the induction process where they [prisoners] see a Listener the next morning. And there's always one available in reception when they first arrive that night. So there's the option of seeing a Listener straight away when you come in. (Senior officer, Residential wing, Prison 2)*

The overwhelming majority of the survey sample indicated that they knew about Listeners; only 1.8% (6) prisoners from the total sample of 331 prisoners claimed to have not heard of Listeners.<sup>2</sup> This supports claims that most prisoners have some awareness of the Listener scheme. The survey data were explored further to examine the source of prisoners' knowledge about Listeners, and their ideas about the support Listeners provide.

Survey respondents were asked 'How did you come to know about Listeners?' and could select from the following options: 'A member of staff told me about Listeners' (Staff), 'Another prisoner told me about Listeners' (Another prisoner), 'A Listener explained it to me' (Listener), 'I saw a poster about Listeners' (Advertisement), 'I know about them from another prison' (Another prison), or 'I found out about them another way' (Other).<sup>3</sup> Table 7.1 shows prisoners' sources of knowledge about Listeners.

---

<sup>2</sup> The small numbers prevent any further analysis of individual/career differences, between prisoners who had heard of Listeners and those who claimed to have not heard of them.

<sup>3</sup> This was a multiple response question therefore prisoners could select more than one item.



*Table 7.1 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners*

Source of knowledge	% (n)
Advertisement	53.1% (170)
Staff	46.9% (150)
Another prison	34.4% (110)
Another prisoner	29.4% (94)
Listener	21.3% (68)
Other	9.7% (31)

n=320

N.B. This was a multiple response question.

Table 7.1 highlights that prisoners most frequently found out about Listeners via advertising material (53.1%). Posters advertising Listeners were clearly on display on wings and in different areas of the establishment such as corridors, interview rooms, offices and the Chapel. A number of prisoners in the interviews mentioned that in some prisons they had been shown a DVD about Listeners, or had seen them advertised on ‘prisoner TV’ being played in certain areas of some prisons. Another significant source of knowledge about Listeners, for almost half (46.9%) of the sample, was prison staff. One prisoner interviewed suggested that a member of staff had explained the availability of Listener support during the induction process. Not only that, but prisoners who had talked to Listeners often mentioned in the interviews that they found out about Listeners when they were feeling down or upset, and that a member of staff explained about Listener support and offered to get a Listener for them to talk to. Over a fifth (21.3%) of prisoners indicated that Listeners were their source of knowledge. Whilst Listeners have a strong presence in the induction and reception process, prisoners mostly find out about Listeners via staff and advertising material, most likely before they speak to a Listener. Furthermore, prisoners may not be fully aware of who Listeners are when they first meet them during the reception and induction processes.



When these data on the sources of prisoners' knowledge about Listeners were analysed according to demographic and prison demographic variables very few significant differences are found (see Appendix A7, table A7.1 to A7.6).<sup>4</sup> With respect to age, prisoners over the age of 30 were significantly less likely to find out about Listeners via another prisoner, or a Listener<sup>5</sup> but were significantly more likely to find out about Listeners via advertising material (see Appendix A7, table A7.1).<sup>6</sup> Women prisoners were significantly more likely to find out about Listeners from another prisoner (40.8%) than men prisoners (26.0%) (see Appendix A7, table A7.2).<sup>7</sup> This is in line with current knowledge about the nature of women's imprisonment and the more supportive and interactive nature of their social relations, where it is likely that they will signpost one another to potential sources of support. Finally, prisoners who did not speak English as their first language, were significantly less likely to find out about Listeners via a member of staff, than prisoners for whom English was their first language (see Appendix A7, table A7.5),<sup>8</sup> 25% of prisoners for whom English was not their first language found out about Listeners via prison staff, compared with 48.8% of prisoners who spoke English as their first language. This suggests that language is important in finding out about Listener support.

To build up a picture of the support that prisoners perceived was available from Listeners, survey respondents were asked about what they thought was the role of Listeners. They were asked 'What is your idea of what Listeners do?' and could select from the following list: 'Listeners give information to prisoners about prison life' (information), 'Listeners help prison staff' (help staff), 'Listeners help prisoners to solve personal problems' (problem-solving) and

---

<sup>4</sup> Prisoners' source of knowledge was not analysed according to whether it was their first time in prison or not as the question did not specify when prisoners found out about Listeners and therefore they could have been referring to when they found out about Listeners during a previous sentence.

<sup>5</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=317) = 3.985, p = .046$  and  $\chi^2 (1, n=317) = 6.441, p = .011$  respectively.

<sup>6</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=317) = 6.692, p = .010$ .

<sup>7</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=320) = 5.786, p = .016$ .

<sup>8</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=319) = 5.052, p = .025$ .



‘Listeners give advice to prisoners’ (advice).<sup>9</sup> The prisoners surveyed most frequently associated Listeners with an advisory role (60.9% (195)), and a problem solving role (50.6% (162)), and to a slightly lesser extent as a source of information (42.8% (137)). Remarks made by prisoners who annotated the questionnaires help clarify the perceived role of Listeners among prisoners: one prisoner suggested that Listeners had an “*advice and problem solving*” role (Adult male questionnaire respondent, Prison 2). Another felt that Listeners were on hand to “*explain what prison life was like when I first came in*” (Adult male questionnaire respondent, Prison 1). Prisoners’ ideas about Listener support was analysed according to demographic and prison demographic variables (see Appendix A7, tables A7.7 to A7.13). However, as before, this produced largely insignificant results. Men were significantly more likely to place emphasis on the problem-solving and informational role of Listeners than women prisoners;<sup>10</sup> 46.4% of men compared with 30.6% of women prisoners indicated that they thought Listeners were a source of information (see Appendix A7, table A7.8).

### 7.1.2 Positive and negative perceptions of Listeners

Having explored prisoners’ ideas about what Listeners do, and how they found out about them, we now consider what prisoners think about Listeners – both their positive and negative perceptions. The literature on peer mentoring places emphasis on the ‘angelic’ and ‘pro-social’ qualities of peer supporters. For example Davies (1994: 128) suggests that prisoners who are mature, well respected by prisoners and staff, who have ‘prison knowledge’ and altruistic qualities tend to be earmarked to become Listeners. It does not automatically follow, however, that prisoners will view Listeners positively. Peer support is grounded upon principles of mutual respect (Clegg, Bradley, & Smith, 2006: 106), but “prisons, almost by definition, are

---

<sup>9</sup> This was a multiple response question so prisoners could select more than one idea about the nature of Listener work.

<sup>10</sup>  $\chi^2(1, n=320) = 5.119, p = .024$  and  $\chi^2(1, n=320) = 5.701, p = .017$  respectively.



places of incarceration for unrespected persons” (Mathiesen, 1965: 141). Thus, prisoners will be conscious that their fellow prisoners have been imprisoned for a wrong-doing (Crewe, 2009: 301) whether they have become Listeners or not. In fact the ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners has been noted as a source of resignation about the altruistic intentions of Listeners (HMPS, 2008: 39) or eliciting distrust of Listeners among prisoners (Howard League, 2001: 8; Jacobson, Edgar & Loucks, 2007: 19). Survey respondents were asked about both their positive and negative perceptions of Listeners. Respondents were asked ‘If someone told you the following about Listeners, would you agree or not?’ They were provided with the following statements: ‘Listeners are easy to talk to’ (easy to talk to), ‘Listeners cannot be trusted’ (untrustworthy), ‘Listeners have a good reputation in here’ (good reputation), ‘Listeners push themselves on you’ (pushy), ‘Listeners are friendly towards prisoners’ (friendly) and ‘Listeners grass on prisoners’ (informers). Respondents could select from the following options for each statement: ‘Strongly agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’, ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Don’t know’. Table 7.2 shows prisoners’ responses with respect to their perceptions about Listeners.



*Table 7.2 – Positive and negative perceptions of Listeners*

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Easy to talk to</b>	19.4% (63)	47.1% (153)	6.2% (20)	1.5% (5)	25.8% (84)
<b>Good reputation</b>	13.2% (43)	44.0% (143)	8.6% (28)	1.5% (5)	32.6% (106)
<b>Friendly</b>	17.5% (57)	50.8% (165)	4.0% (13)	1.2% (4)	26.5% (86)
<b>Untrustworthy</b>	6.8% (22)	8.9% (29)	34.5% (112)	12.9% (42)	36.9% (120)
<b>Pushy</b>	1.8% (6)	1.5% (5)	46.5% (151)	20.3% (66)	29.8% (97)
<b>Informers</b>	4.6% (15)	6.2% (20)	26.5% (86)	14.8% (48)	48.0% (156)

n=325

N.B. Dark grey shading highlights positive perceptions of Listeners, and dark grey shading highlights negative perceptions of Listeners.



Table 7.2 shows that prisoners generally held positive views towards Listeners. For example, 66.5% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that Listeners were easy to talk to, whereas only 5.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed that Listeners were friendly (see dark grey shading in table 7.2). Furthermore, the majority of prisoners did not indicate negative views towards Listeners. This is illustrated by the fact that 10.8% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Listeners were informers, whereas 47.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion that Listeners are untrustworthy (see light grey shading in table 7.2). Overall therefore, it can be concluded that positive perceptions are much more common than negative perceptions of Listeners. Approximately a third of prisoners failed to indicate negative or positive views about Listeners because they did not know a Listener.<sup>11</sup>

Listeners have been described by Richman (2004, no page) as a ‘distinctive’ and ‘highly visible’ group as a result of their general demeanour and behaviour, in addition to the brightly coloured T-Shirts which they wear in many establishments. However, this description relies on the assumption that prisoners actually come into contact with a Listener to be able to see them. Listeners who reside on different wings may only become visible in chance meetings at the gym, education, or places of work in other areas of the establishment. An examination of the interview data generated by prisoners revealed that social contact had a key role in the development of views towards Listeners. Social contact and proximity to Listeners enabled prisoners to assess Listeners’ character, demeanour and behaviour. Whilst the opportunity and contexts in which observations could be made are limited (Crewe, 2009: 307-8), prisoners

---

<sup>11</sup> The original format of the question did not provide an option to select ‘don’t know’ in response to each of the statements. A number of respondents however failed to respond to the question and annotated the questionnaire with remarks such as: “*I don’t know as we don’t have them on this wing*” and another prisoner noted “*I’ve never talked to a Listener so can’t comment*”. The question instructions were subsequently altered for questionnaires distributed in prisons 2, 3 and 4 to reinforce to respondents that they did not have to know a Listener personally and a ‘don’t know’ category was added. de Vaus (2002a: 72) suggests that up to half of ‘non-substantive’ respondents indicate ‘ambivalent’ attitudes. Given that such a large percentage felt unable to respond to this question, particularly compared with the high completion rate of other questions, to not have responded to this could result in respondents expressing a false view (de Vaus, 2002b: 106). The percentages of survey respondents who selected ‘don’t know’ was similar percentages of prisoners in prisons 2, 3 and 4 compared with prison 1 (see Appendix A7, table A7.14), and non-responses in the first prison were coded as ‘don’t know’ for the purposes of these analyses.



nevertheless use their knowledge, experiences and observations to form their views, as one prisoner explained:

*People say, “I wish I had seen a Listener last night because I nearly topped myself.” I tell them they need a Listener really, but people don’t like someone coming from another wing when they don’t know them. (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)*

Therefore, prisoners were cautious and preferred to know Listeners in order to form a view about them. They were unable to assess the trustworthiness or character of a Listener on another wing who they had not met or observed. In order to assess the trustworthiness of Listeners, prisoners described how they observed Listeners. In particular Listeners’ ‘silence’ about their supportive encounters with prisoners was an indication of trustworthiness.<sup>12</sup>

*One [Listener] went out and spoke to a prisoner, and I said, “what did he say to you?” And he said, “I can’t tell you it’s confidential.” So that gives me enough to know he’s not going to walk around and go telling people if he’s got this problem or that problem. (Young offender, Prison 4)*

This thesis has earlier highlighted the ‘strategic’ and ‘instrumental’ nature of help-seeking by prisoners. We also see that prisoners are strategic and use their observations and experiences to determine trustworthiness of Listeners as sources of support.

Further analyses of the survey data were conducted using scales on prisoners’ positive and negative perceptions of Listeners.<sup>13</sup> The positive perceptions of Listeners scale was created by

---

<sup>12</sup> This corresponds with Listeners’ accounts about confidentiality and becoming ‘confidence keepers’ see chapter 8 (section 8.2.1).

<sup>13</sup> The two scales were created after a factor analysis confirmed two underlying factors, one for ‘negative perceptions’ and the other for ‘positive perceptions’ of Listeners.



summing scores for the following items: ‘Listeners are easy to talk to’, ‘Listeners have a good reputation in here’ and ‘Listeners are friendly towards prisoners’.<sup>14</sup> Scores on the scale could range from 3 (less positive perceptions) to 15 (more positive perceptions). A mean of 11.15 indicated generally positive perceptions of Listeners (see Appendix A7, figure A7.1 and table A7.15 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics). The negative perceptions of Listeners scale was created by summing survey respondents’ scores for the following items: ‘Listeners cannot be trusted’, ‘Listeners push themselves on you’ and ‘Listeners grass on prisoners’.<sup>15</sup> Scores on the scale could range from 3 (less negative perceptions) to 15 (more negative perceptions). A mean of 7.40 indicated more balanced perceptions of Listeners (see Appendix A7, figure A7.2, table A7.16 for scale distribution and descriptive statistics).

A series of t tests confirmed that there are no significant differences with respect to positive or negative perceptions of Listeners between men and women prisoners, between those who have been in prison before or not, and between prisoners who are sentenced and un-sentenced.<sup>16</sup> However, prisoners who spoke English as their first language were significantly more likely to have positive perceptions and significantly less likely to have negative perceptions than those who did not speak English as their first language.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, prisoners born in Britain were significantly more likely to have positive perceptions of Listeners and significantly less likely

---

<sup>14</sup> Respondents could answer on a five point scale – Strongly agree (coded as 1), ‘Agree’ (coded as 2), ‘Don’t know’ (coded as 3), Disagree (coded as 4) and ‘Strongly disagree’ (coded as 5). ‘Don’t know’ responses were treated as a ‘middle position’ (de Vaus, 2002a: 72). The three items were recoded so that a higher score reflected more positive perceptions of Listeners. A reliability analysis confirmed suitability for combining into a single scale (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .804$ ).

<sup>15</sup> Respondents could answer on a five point scale – Strongly agree (coded as 1), ‘Agree’ (coded as 2), ‘Don’t know’ (coded as 3), Disagree (coded as 4) and ‘Strongly disagree’ (coded as 5). ‘Don’t know’ responses were treated as a ‘middle position’ (de Vaus, 2002a: 72). The three items were recoded so that a higher score reflected more negative perceptions of Listeners. A reliability analysis produced a score very close to the desired level of reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .689$ ) and so the scale was considered usable for the analysis.

<sup>16</sup> Gender: Positive perceptions of Listeners –  $t(323) = -.1857, p = .064$ ; Negative perceptions of Listeners –  $t(96.445) = 1.221, p = .225$ . Prior imprisonment: Positive perceptions of Listeners –  $t(33.745) = -.054, p = .957$ ; Negative perceptions of Listeners –  $t(323) = -.071, p = .943$ . Sentencing status: Positive perceptions of Listeners –  $t(319) = .386, p = .700$ ; Negative perceptions of Listeners –  $t(319) = 1.306, p = .192$ .

<sup>17</sup>  $t(321) = 2.591, p = .010$  and  $t(33.745) = -4.522, p = .000$  respectively.



to have negative perceptions than prisoners who had not been born in Britain.<sup>18</sup> The findings suggest that language barriers, and potentially also cultural issues, may inhibit more positive attitudes towards Listeners. A series of correlations conducted found no relationship between positive or negative perceptions of Listeners with age, and with the number of months they had spent in their current prison.<sup>19</sup>

## **7.2 Intentions to seek help from Listeners**

Peer support has been framed in the literature as an ‘alternative’ to professional or staff support. Research often makes the assumption that peer support is targeted at those groups who do not use or access other sources of support (Parkin & McKeganey, 2000: 301) and tends to be grounded on the notion that ‘peer’ sources are seen as favourable compared with ‘professional’ sources of support because of shared experiences, shared ‘social status’ (Parkin & McKeganey, 2000: 295; Soloman, 2004: 396), greater levels of trust and better communication with peers (Cahill, Jessell & Horne, 1979: 400; Hall & Gabor, 2004: 20) and a tendency to hold anti-authority views or distrust staff (e.g. see Cahill, Jessell & Horne, 1979; Soloman, 2004). These issues are particularly significant in the prison environment (Blair, 2006: 7). For some prisoners peer support might be seen as the only legitimate source of support they have available to them (Hall & Gabor, 2004: 23). However, there is very little robust evidence available that is directly concerned with factors that influence prisoners’ intentions to use peer mechanisms of support. As with the models that were tested in chapter 6, the analysis that follows aims to identify predictors of prisoners’ intentions to seek help from Listeners.

---

<sup>18</sup>  $t(322) = 2.047, p = .041$  and  $t(322) = -2.160, p = .031$  respectively.

<sup>19</sup> Age: Positive perceptions of Listeners – Pearson’s  $r$  correlation coefficient =  $-.039, p = .489, n=322$ ; Negative perceptions of Listeners – Pearson’s  $r$  correlation coefficient =  $-.059, p = .294, n=322$ . Number of months spent in current prison: Positive perceptions of Listeners – Pearson’s  $r$  correlation coefficient =  $-.011, p = .840, n=315$ ; Negative perceptions of Listeners – Pearson’s  $r$  correlation coefficient =  $.011, p = .840, n=315$ .



First, it is useful to remind ourselves of what has been established about seeking help from Listeners in the data presented so far in this thesis. Chapter 6 (section 6.2) outlined and explored the sources of support that prisoners indicated they would select for different problems, and highlighted that Listeners were the least favoured source of support compared with prison staff, prisoners and people on the ‘outside’. This finding was consistent across all six problems: ‘outside problems’, ‘inside problems’, ‘substance misuse problems’, ‘offence problems’, ‘changing life problems’ and ‘emotional or mental health problems’ with approximately 10-13% of the survey sample indicating an intention to seek help from Listeners for each problem. The percentages of survey respondents who indicated intentions to seek help from other prisoners for these problems was similar, albeit slightly higher, to the percentages who would seek help from Listeners for ‘outside problems’, ‘substance misuse problems’, ‘offence problems’, ‘changing life problems’ and ‘emotional or mental health problems’.<sup>20</sup> Initially it appears that the problems prisoners would take to Listeners are comparable to the problems they would take to other prisoners. However this is not the case for ‘inside problems’, as prisoners are less willing to seek help from Listeners for these problems compared with other prisoners. For ‘inside problems’, 24.2% of survey respondents indicated intentions to seek help from prisoners, compared with 11.3% who indicated intentions to seek help from Listeners. Overall, prisoners were most likely to be willing to seek help from Listeners for ‘emotional or mental health problems’ compared to the other problems with 20.2% of survey respondents expressing an intention to seek help from Listeners for this. This suggests that prisoners identify Listener support with the type of support provided by Samaritans on the outside.

An analysis of prisoners’ intentions to seek help from Listeners for each problem, with respect to individual/career variables was conducted (see Appendix A7 tables A7.17 to A7.23) and

---

<sup>20</sup> Although it is recognised that ‘Listeners’ might also come under the umbrella of ‘prisoners’.



found largely no significant differences, although, 17.4% of first time prisoners would seek help from Listeners for ‘offence problems’ compared with 8.4% of prisoners who had been in prison before (see Appendix A7, table A7.22).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, for ‘offence problems’, ‘changing life problems’ and ‘emotional or mental health problems’ un-sentenced prisoners were nearly twice as likely to seek help from Listeners than sentenced prisoners (see Appendix A7, table A7.23).<sup>22</sup> It is apparent that prisoners who have not yet been sentenced are more willing to talk to Listeners. The discussion that follows explores these data further by testing five multivariate models in the search for predictors of intentions to seek help from Listeners.

As with the multivariate models presented in chapter 6 (see section 6.3.1), the dependent variable was created summing the number of problems prisoners would seek help from Listeners for. The scale could range from 0 (would not seek help from Listeners at all) to 6 (would seek help from Listeners for all six problems). The distribution of the scale (see Appendix A7, figure A7.3 and table A7.24) indicates that the majority of prisoners would not seek help from Listeners, or would do so for one problem only; this is also highlighted by a low mean of .76. Five models were tested. The first model analyses individual/career variables (gender, age, first language, country of birth, prior imprisonment and sentencing status). The second model adds personal characteristics (proactivity scale, contact intensity with the outside – described in chapter 6, section 6.3.1) to the analysis. The third model adds perceptions of Listeners to the analysis. The positive perceptions of Listeners scale was selected in favour of the negative perceptions scale as the reliability analyses of these scales suggested that the positive perceptions scale was more reliable (with Cronbach’s alpha scores of .804 compared with .698 respectively). Furthermore, the positive perceptions scale was more strongly

---

<sup>21</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=310) = 5.705, p = .017$ .

<sup>22</sup>  $\chi^2 (1, n=307) = 4.373, p = .037$ ;  $\chi^2 (1, n=311) = 4.277, p = .039$ ; and  $\chi^2 (1, n=309) = 6.165, p = .013$  respectively.



correlated with the seeking help from Listeners scale so was deemed a potentially stronger predictor. A description of this scale was provided in section 7.2.1 of the current chapter.

The fourth model adds prisoners' relationships to the analysis as measured by three variables. Firstly intentions to seek help from prisoners, and secondly intentions to seek help from prison staff scales (described in chapter 6, section 6.3.1) were included. Prisoners' intentions to seek help from prisoners in general, may be related to their willingness to seek help from Listeners who are also prisoners. Additionally, as help-seeking intentions to staff decrease, we might expect intentions to seek help from Listeners to increase if prisoners prefer 'peer' over staff sources of support. However, it is also important to remember that prisoners might have to request to speak to a Listener via a member of staff, and therefore might be more willing to seek help from staff in general. A third measure was therefore included in light of this to assess how well prisoners got on with officers on their wing, as these members of staff represented the primary gatekeepers of prisoners' access to Listeners.<sup>23</sup> The item required prisoners to respond to a statement 'I get on well with officers on my wing' with 'Often', 'Sometimes', 'Rarely' or 'Never' (see Appendix A7, figure A7.4 for scale distribution). In the fifth multivariate model, the role of prisoners' perceptions of the prison environment, in the creation of conditions more or less conducive to help-seeking from Listeners, was assessed by including three variables on relationships between prisoners and staff in general (perceptions of prisoner-officer social relations scale, perceptions of prisoner conflict scale, and perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale – see chapter 6, section 6.3.1 for a description of these variables). Chapter 6 found that perceptions of prisoner conflict inhibited intentions to seek help from staff, but did not influence intentions to seek help from prisoners. Accordingly, whether perceptions of the prison environment inhibit or encourage help-seeking intentions with respect

---

<sup>23</sup> As with the analyses in chapter 6, in this instance an individual item was used, rather than a scale of prisoners' personal relationships with officers due to the higher number of missing values in the scale. How well prisoners got on with officers on their wing was the item that most strongly correlated with the number of problems prisoners would take to Listeners and was hence considered a potentially strong predictor.



to Listeners could also shed light on how Listeners are seen by prisoners in relation to staff and prisoner groups.

Table 7.3 shows the results of the five multivariate models tested to determine the predictors of intentions to seek help from Listeners by prisoners.



*Table 7.3 – Multivariate models: intentions to seek help from Listeners*

	<i><b>Model 1</b></i> <i><b><math>\beta</math> (p)</b></i>	<i><b>Model 2</b></i> <i><b><math>\beta</math> (p)</b></i>	<i><b>Model 3</b></i> <i><b><math>\beta</math> (p)</b></i>
<b>Individual/career variables</b>			
Gender	.051 (.418)	.057 (.369)	.021 (.849)
Age	.026 (.682)	.032 (.618)	.030 (.627)
Language	.054 (.501)	.040 (.616)	.009 (.910)
Country of birth	-.002 (.984)	-.001 (.988)	-.030 (.696)
Prior imprisonment	<b>.143 (.027)</b>	.128 (.051)	<b>.128 (.039)</b>
Sentencing status	<b>-.163 (.011)</b>	<b>-.166 (.009)</b>	<b>-.164 (.007)</b>
<b>Personal characteristics</b>			
Proactivity scale		.049 (.432)	-.005 (.928)
Contact intensity with the outside		.099 (.117)	.054 (.378)
<b>Perceptions of Listeners</b>			
Positive perceptions of Listeners scale			<b>.314 (.000)</b>
<b>Prison relationships</b>			
Help-seeking from prisoners scale			
Help-seeking from staff scale			
Relationships with wing officers			
<b>Perceptions of prison environment</b>			
Prisoner-officer social relations scale			
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale			
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale			
<b><i>R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	.046 ( <i>p</i> = .064)	.058 ( <i>p</i> = .194)	<b>.146</b> ( <i>p</i> = .000)

N. B. Table is continued on the next page



*Table 7.3 – Multivariate models: intentioned to seek help from Listeners*  
*continued*

	<b>Model 4</b> <b><math>\beta</math> (p)</b>	<b>Model 5</b> <b><math>\beta</math> (p)</b>
<b>Individual/career variables</b>		
Gender	.000 (.987)	-.002 (.971)
Age	.008 (.897)	.005 (.937)
Language	-.013 (.866)	-.043 (.569)
Country of birth	-.024 (.750)	-.036 (.632)
Prior imprisonment	<b>.136 (.028)</b>	<b>.120 (.049)</b>
Sentencing status	<b>-.171 (.005)</b>	<b>-.189 (.001)</b>
<b>Personal characteristics</b>		
Proactivity scale	-.012 (.841)	-.035 (.566)
Contact intensity with the outside	.060 (.327)	.062 (.317)
<b>Perceptions of Listeners</b>		
Positive perceptions of Listeners scale	<b>.308 (.000)</b>	<b>.285 (.000)</b>
<b>Prison relationships</b>		
Help-seeking from prisoners scale	-.037 (.535)	-.032 (.598)
Help-seeking from staff scale	<b>.186 (.003)</b>	<b>.170 (.008)</b>
Relationships with wing officers	.057 (.386)	<b>.212 (.010)</b>
<b>Perceptions of prison environment</b>		
Prisoner-officer social relations scale		<b>.235 (.007)</b>
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale		.085 (.176)
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale		.006 (.920)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.175</b> <b>(p = .032)</b>	<b>.214</b> <b>(p = .008)</b>

n=260

N. B. Table displays standardised beta values ( $\beta$ ) and  $p$  values.  $p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened. Grey shading highlights the model accepted. Dummy codes: Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female); Language (0 = First language is not English, 1 = First language is English); Country of birth (0 = Not born in Britain, 1 = Born in Britain); Prior imprisonment (0 = Been in prison before, 1 = First time in prison); Sentencing status (0 = Not sentenced, 1 = Sentenced).



Whilst models 1 and 2 in table 7.3 fail to reach significance, it emerges that both prior imprisonment and prisoners' sentencing status help to predict help-seeking to Listeners. It is not surprising that when the positive perceptions of Listeners scale is added to the analysis in model 3 that it is found that more positive perceptions of Listeners increase prisoners' willingness to seek help from Listeners ( $\beta = .314, p = .000$ ). In model 4, in addition to prior imprisonment, sentencing status and positive perceptions of Listeners, intentions to seek help from staff is also significant ( $\beta = .186, p = .003$ ). Higher levels of help-seeking from staff predicts higher levels of help-seeking from Listeners. This fourth model explains 17.5 % of the total variance ( $p = .032$ ).

Finally, in the model 5 (the model that is accepted), which accounts for 21.4% of the total variance in prisoners' intentions to seek help from Listeners ( $p = .008$ ), it is demonstrated that when perceptions of the prison environment are added to the analysis, the role of prison staff in prisoners' intentions to seek help from Listeners is further reinforced. Prisoners who perceive more positive social relations between officers and prisoners in general have higher intentions to seek help from Listeners ( $\beta = .235, p = .007$ ). Furthermore, prisoners who get on well with officers on their wing ( $\beta = .212, p = .010$ ) and have higher intentions to seek help from staff ( $\beta = .170, p = .008$ ) are more likely to seek help from Listeners. It is apparent that relationships with prison staff influence prisoners' intentions to seek help from Listeners and that prison staff play an important role for prisoners seeking help from Listeners. Two key points arise from this finding. Firstly, that prisoners' help-seeking intentions with respect to Listeners more closely resembles the model of intentions to seek help from staff (chapter 6, table 6.4) than it does intentions to seek help from prisoners (chapter 6, table 6.5). This indicates the 'in-between' role of Listeners who are trained as 'quasi-' or 'para-professionals' (Richman, 2004: no page; White, 2000: 3). Secondly, it reinforces the 'gatekeeping' role that staff have in facilitating prisoners' access to Listeners. Prisoners are more likely to be willing to request to



speak to a Listener when they need one if their relationships with prison staff are more favourable. Additionally, prisoners who hold more positive perceptions of Listeners ( $\beta = .285$ ,  $p = .000$ ) are also more likely to intend to seek help from Listeners.

Model 5 also reinforces that help-seeking intentions from Listeners are enhanced among unsentenced prisoners ( $\beta = -.189$ ,  $p = .001$ ). These prisoners might be experiencing a period of great uncertainty and shock through being remanded in custody, and they might not yet have access to the same level of facilities and activities as other prisoners (such as gym, contact with the outside, work, phone credit). In chapter 6 it was found that sentenced prisoners were found to have more contact with parents and friends, and overall were more likely to indicate intentions to seek help from ‘outside’ sources of support. Sentenced prisoners have more certainty about the stretch of imprisonment ahead of them, and have a greater period of time to re-establish relationships disrupted by their imprisonment. ‘First time’ prisoners were more likely to indicate that they would be willing to seek help from Listeners ( $\beta = .120$ ,  $p = .049$ ). Support is not necessarily sought out to the same degree by prisoners who have prior experiences of imprisonment who may have become ‘blasé’ about the process (Howard League, 2001a: 10). First time prisoners on the other hand are more likely to feel ‘low’ (Jacobson, Edgar & Loucks, 2007: 23) and value supportive relationships as they adjust to their imprisonment (ibid.: 37). As we saw in chapter 6, ‘first timers’ are more likely to express intentions to seek help from ‘inside’ (i.e. staff and/or prisoners) sources of support. This can be explained by prisoners who have been in prison before being more ‘strategic’ in their help-seeking, whereas first time prisoners may be less aware of the risks of seeking help in prison, or less knowledgeable about who to turn to ‘inside’ when they experience particular problems. These results suggest that Listeners therefore play a role in assisting prisoners in coping with the shock of imprisonment and in coming to terms with prison life. This finding is supported



further by qualitative interview data from prisoners who talked to Listeners that is explored in section 7.5 of this chapter.

### **7.3 Actual help-seeking from Listeners**

The prisoner survey data not only enables the investigation of the variables that influence prisoners' help-seeking intentions, but also the variables that influence their actual help-seeking from Listeners. As outlined in chapter 5, prisoners who had talked to Listeners, and who had not, were asked a small number of different questions in relation to their specific contact with Listeners. The data explored in this section builds up a picture of predictors of actual help-seeking from Listeners using multivariate models. The key aim of this section is to enable a greater understanding of the factors that influence use and non-use of Listeners, in order to begin to understand how Listener support is used by prisoners.

#### **7.3.1 Seeking help from Listeners**

Before we consider predictors of actual help-seeking from Listeners, we first explore data gleaned from 268 prisoners of the survey sample who indicated that they had not talked to a Listener about a problem. This sub-sample of prisoners were asked to indicate the reasons why they had not talked to a Listener. Prisoners were asked 'Why have you not talked to a Listener about a problem while you have been in prison?' and were provided with the following options: 'I do not feel like talking to Listeners' (Do not feel like talking), 'I do not trust Listeners' (Lack of trust in Listeners), 'I worry what other prisoners will think' (Concerned about image), 'I had no problem I would have talked to Listeners about' (Not needed Listener support) and 'I never talk to anyone about my problems' (Does not talk about problems).<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> This was a multiple response item so prisoners could tick more than one reason for not talking to a Listener.



*Table 7.4 - Prisoners' reasons for not talking to a Listener*

<b>Reason for not talking to a Listener</b>	<b>% (n)</b>
Not needed Listener support	49.2% (128)
Prefer other sources	27.3% (71)
Does not talk about problems	14.6% (38)
Lack of trust in Listeners	12.3% (32)
Concerned about image	3.8% (10)

n=236

N.B. This was a multiple response question.

Table 7.4 shows that the most frequent reason for not contacting Listeners, as indicated by almost half (49.2%) of these prisoners appears to be that they have not experienced a problem about which they would have needed to talk to a Listener. Secondly, 27.3% of prisoners do not feel like talking about their problems to Listeners. These findings reinforce the 'strategic' nature of help-seeking that is driven by the nature of the problem experienced outlined in chapter 6. Only a small percentage (3.6%) of this sub-group expressed a concern about their image when seeking help from Listeners.

The help-seeking intentions of prisoners who had not talked to Listeners were analysed with respect to which problems they would be willing to seek help from Listeners for (see table 7.5).<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> This data was obtained by considering this sub-sample's responses to the question originally presented in chapter 6 (table 6.2).



*Table 7.5 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners of prisoners  
who have not talked to them*

<b>Problems</b>	<b>% (n)</b>
Outside problems	7.3% (19)
Inside problems	8.1% (21)
Substance misuse problems	7.9% (19)
Offence problems	8.0% (20)
Changing life problems	5.9% (15)
Emotional or mental health problems	12.3% (31)

n=262

N.B This was a multiple response question

Whilst it is evident from table 7.5 that prisoners who have not talked to Listeners associated Listener support with ‘emotional or mental health problems’, their intentions to seek help for the other five problems are relatively equally distributed. Intentions to seek help from Listeners among these prisoners who have not talked to Listeners are slightly lower compared with the overall figures that were presented in chapter 6 (table 6.2) suggesting that prisoners who have not already talked to Listeners, are less likely to intend to seek help from them. The help-seeking preferences of prisoners who had not talked to Listeners were explored further. These prisoners were asked ‘Is there anyone else you would talk to about your problems?’<sup>26</sup> Table 7.6 shows prisoners’ responses to this question.

<sup>26</sup> This was a multiple response item so prisoners could tick more than one source of support they would talk to.



*Table 7.6 – Help-seeking intentions of prisoners who have  
not talked to Listeners*

Source of support	% (n)
Outside sources	72.2% (164)
Prisoners	34.8% (79)
Prison officers	28.2% (64)
Prison Chaplains	25.1% (57)
Counsellors	17.2% (39)
Healthcare	11.9% (27)
Psychologists	10.1% (23)
Other sources	7.5% (17)

n=227

N.B. This was a multiple response question.

It is evident from table 7.6 that prisoners who have not talked to Listeners indicate a preference for outside sources of support (72.7%). It is noteworthy that the second most favoured source of support for this subgroup is other prisoners (34.8%). These results therefore in fact suggest prisoners who have not talked to Listeners are not necessarily less inclined to seek support from their peers more generally. This is consistent with the findings presented so far in this chapter that help-seeking intentions from Listeners is not related to their help-seeking intentions from other prisoners, as one Listener explained, “*There’s some who just don’t call Listeners out. They find someone else like pad mates.*” (Adult male Listener, Prison 1). This Listener highlights that prisoners select sources of support that they know and have established relationships with. These findings were reinforced when the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ help-seeking preferences of prisoners’ who had talked to Listeners and those who had not were compared. Table 7.7 shows that prisoners who have talked to Listeners are significantly more likely to



seek help from ‘inside’ sources only, with 33.9% of these prisoners indicating they would seek help from ‘inside’ sources only, compared with 13.1% of prisoners who had not talked to a Listener who would seek help from ‘inside’ sources only. Whereas, prisoners who have not talked to Listeners, are significantly more likely to favour ‘outside’ sources of support; 21.2% of prisoners who had not talked to a Listener, compared with 3.6% of prisoners who had talked to Listeners indicated that they would seek help from ‘outside’ sources of support only.

*Table 7.7 – Intentions to seek help from ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources and use of Listeners<sup>27</sup>*

	<b>Not talked to a Listener</b>	<b>Talked to a Listener</b>
Would not seek help	14.2% (37)	3.6% (2)
Would seek help from inside sources only	13.1% (34)	33.9% (19)
Would seek help from outside sources only	21.2% (55)	3.6% (2)
Would seek help from inside and outside sources	51.5% (134)	58.9% (33)

n=316

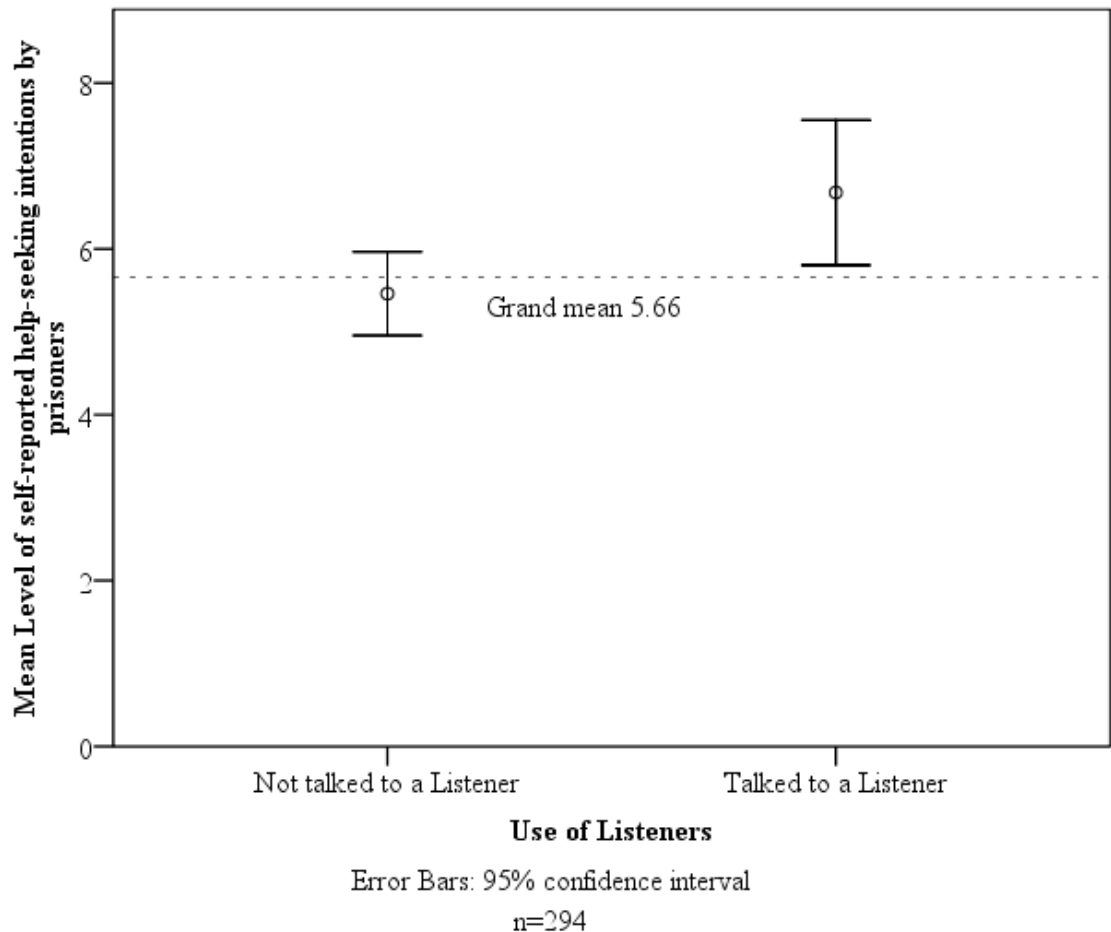
It has been suggested that prisoners who make use of support by Listeners are more likely to report experiencing problems more frequently than those who do not (Snow, 2000), and other evidence generated from a review conducted in five prisons, found that ‘users’ of Listener support were generally more willing to seek help from both Listeners, and a variety of other sources of support than ‘non-users’ (Snow & Biggar, 2006: 160). It is possible therefore that peer support may in fact offer an ‘additional’ rather than an ‘alternative’ source of support (DeVilly et al, 2005: 237). The survey data generated for the current study were further analysed by comparing the overall level of help-seeking intentions of prisoners who had used, and those who had not used the Listener scheme. Figure 7.1 illustrates that prisoners who had

<sup>27</sup>  $\chi^2 (3, n=316) = 24.559, p = .000$ .



talked to a Listener reported significantly higher levels of help-seeking intentions than those who had not.<sup>28</sup>

*Figure 7.1 – Level of intentions to seek help and actual help seeking from Listeners*



The finding illustrated in figure 7.1 contradicts much of the peer support literature which suggests that prisoners who use peer support are likely to be alienated from other sources, of support, in particular staff (Davidson et al, 2001: 446-7; Philip & Sprat, 2007: 49; Soloman, 2004: 395; White, 2004: 3).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup>  $t(292) = -2.093, p = .037$ .

<sup>29</sup> However, it is important to be wary of the causal ordering of this finding. It is possible that prisoners are subsequently more willing to seek help from other sources of support as a result of talking to a Listener.



Multivariate models were analysed to determine predictors of actual help-seeking from Listeners. The dependent variable was created by allocating prisoners to one of two groups: ‘Not talked to a Listener’ – 82.5% (268) and ‘Talked to a Listener’ – 17.5% (57).<sup>30</sup> The variables selected for the analysis aimed to match those used in section 7.2, where the predictors of intentions to seek help from Listeners were analysed, in order to establish if parallels could be drawn with prisoners’ actual help-seeking activity with respect to Listeners. A small number of variables had to be excluded from the analyses for reasons that are outlined in the description of the variables selected in the analysis that follows.

Four multivariate models were tested. The first model assessed individual/career variables alone (gender, age, first language and country of birth). Sentencing status was not included in the analysis as whilst prisoners might have been sentenced at the time of completing the questionnaire, they may have spoken to a Listener prior to sentencing.<sup>31</sup> Relatedly, prior imprisonment was excluded from these models. Prisoners might have served prior sentences, but might have talked to a Listener on their first sentence. In the second model, prisoners’ personal characteristics were added (proactivity and contact intensity with the outside). The third model added prisoners’ help-seeking intentions with respect to Listeners, prisoners and staff to the analysis. Models testing predictors of help-seeking to these sources of support were explored in chapter 6 (sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4) and the current chapter (section 7.2). These variables were included to examine whether prisoners have talked to Listeners or not differ in their help-seeking intentions to different sources of support. However, prisoners’ positive perceptions of Listeners were not included in the multivariate models, on the grounds that these views may be the consequence of having sought help from Listeners. The fourth and final model added prisoners’ perceptions of the prison environment to the analysis (prisoner-

---

<sup>30</sup> Prisoners who had not talked to a Listener were coded as 0, and prisoners who had talked to a Listener (in their current or in a previous prison) were coded as 1. Logistic regression analyses were therefore carried out.

<sup>31</sup> Section 7.3.2 explored patterns of usage of the Listener scheme with respect to the stage of their imprisonment when prisoners sought out Listener support.



officer social relations, perceptions of prisoner conflict, and perceptions of prisoner solidarity). Whilst these variables were not found to influence prisoners' intentions to seek help from prisoners, perceived conflict between prisoners was found to inhibit intentions seek help from staff. Further to this, perceptions of prisoner-officer social relations were found to influence prisoners' intentions to seek help from Listeners (see table 7.3). These variables were therefore included to assess the potential role of the prison environment in actual help-seeking from Listeners. Table 7.8 shows the results of the four multivariate models that were analysed.



*Table 7.8- Multivariate models: actual help-seeking from Listeners*

	<b>Model 1</b>			<b>Model 2</b>		
	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>
<b>Individual variables</b>						
Gender	.349	1.413	.362	.329	1.390	.390
Age	.008	1.008	.662	.009	1.009	.629
First Language	19.907	4.419E8	.998	26.019	4.945E8	.998
Country of birth	-.258	.772	.703	-.349	.705	.611
<b>Personal characteristics</b>						
Proactivity scale				-.226	.798	.105
Contact intensity with the outside				-.017	.983	.699
<b>Help-seeking intentions</b>						
Intentions to seek help from Listeners						
Intentions to seek help from prisoners						
Intentions to seeking help from staff						
<b>Perceptions of the prison environment</b>						
Prisoner-officer social relations scale						
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale						
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale						
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	.050			.067		
<i>p</i>	.090			.094		

N. B. table is continued on the following page



*Table 7.8- Multivariate models: actual help-seeking from Listeners continued*

	<b>Model 3</b>			<b>Model 4</b>		
	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>
<b>Individual variables</b>						
Gender	.214	1.239	.625	.134	1.144	.768
Age	-.006	.994	.771	-.007	.993	.749
First Language	19.363	2.565E8	.998	19.393	2.645E8	.998
Country of birth	.060	1.062	.938	.080	1.083	.921
<b>Personal characteristics</b>						
Proactivity scale	<b>-.315</b>	<b>.730</b>	<b>.043</b>	<b>-.352</b>	<b>.703</b>	<b>.035</b>
Contact intensity with the outside	-.057	.945	.275	-.033	.968	.546
<b>Help-seeking intentions</b>						
Intentions to seek help from Listeners	<b>.477</b>	<b>1.611</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.564</b>	<b>1.757</b>	<b>.000</b>
Intentions to seek help from prisoners	-.187	.830	.174	-.157	.855	.261
Intentions to seeking help from staff	<b>.204</b>	<b>.227</b>	<b>.036</b>	.160	1.174	.129
<b>Perceptions of the prison environment</b>						
Prisoner-officer social relations scale				.037	1.037	.479
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale				<b>-.347</b>	<b>.707</b>	<b>.004</b>
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale				-.032	.969	.854
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	<b>.252</b>			<b>.300</b>		
<i>p</i>	<b>.000</b>			<b>.000</b>		

n=263

N.B. This table displays Beta coefficients (B), odds ratios (Exp(B)) and *p* values. *p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

Grey shading highlights the model accepted.

Dummy Codes: Actual help-seeking from Listeners (0 = Not talked to a Listener, 1 = Talked to a Listener); Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female); Language (0 = First language is not English, 1 = First language is English); Country of birth (0 = Not born in Britain, 1 = Born in Britain).

Reference category: first.



In table 7.8 three factors emerge as important in model 4 (the model accepted) which accounts for 30.0% of the total variance ( $p = .000$ ). First of all, higher levels of proactivity reduce the likelihood that prisoners will seek help from Listeners by 29.7% ( $B = -.352$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = .703$ ,  $p = .035$ ). This makes sense because in order to seek help from Listeners, prisoners would normally have to ask a member of staff or seek out a Listener and approach them. Prisoners who are more proactive are less likely to need Listener support. Secondly, model 4 shows that an intention to seek help from Listeners predicts actual help-seeking. Prisoners with intentions to seek help from Listeners are nearly twice as likely to have sought help from them ( $B = .564$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.757$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

Finally, model 4 shows that higher levels of conflict between prisoners reduces the likelihood of actual help-seeking from Listeners by 29.3% ( $B = -.347$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = .707$ ,  $p = .004$ ). In chapter 6 (table 6.4) it was evident that perceived conflict between prisoners inhibited intentions to seek help from staff. When perceptions of the prison environment are added to the analysis, the impact of intentions to seek help from staff is removed. However, the fact that help-seeking from Listeners, and intentions to seek help from staff are both influenced by perceptions of prisoner conflict demonstrates that the two are related. A consistent story has emerged thus far that seeking help from Listeners is linked to seeking help from staff. Prisons are not environments where emotions are easily communicated between individuals living and working there (Liebling, 1994: 6) and prisoners may be inhibited from seeking help to avoid appearing 'weak' or 'vulnerable' (Crewe, 2005: 185; Deane, Skogstad & Williams, 1999: 166). Clegg, Bradley and Smith (2006: 104) suggest that seeking help risks damaging an individual's sense of pride in their ability to resolve and attend to their own problems. A small number of 'young offender' interviewees noted these concerns:



*Many wouldn't come and speak to a Listener because they would be too afraid of being labelled as, pardon my language, a pussy or whatever else. Because they would then be seen like "why can't you deal with your problems yourself?" So a lot of them won't go and speak to the Listeners. (Male young offender, Prison 4)*

*Most people laugh it off really when we do the inductions. We tell them that you might need to talk to a Listener at some point of their sentence and they start laughing and say "oh yeah I'm not soft". But it's not about that really. It's about having the courage, If you need someone to talk to, it's about having the courage to press your bell and ask. Because, if you don't ask, you don't get. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

These quotations therefore reinforce the risks of seeking help from Listeners when prisoners perceive conflict such as fighting or 'grassing' between prisoners.

As the foregoing analysis of the qualitative interview data revealed, prisoners' perceptions of Listeners were formed when they were able have social contact with Listeners or observe them on their wings, and it was apparent that this had an impact on their willingness to seek out Listener support *"I think that people would use Listeners on this wing, but at the minute we haven't got one on the wing."* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2). Another prisoner explained:

*This wing has not got a Listener, and some of the lads on here do need a Listener. They fetch them in from other wings and they look down on us. You don't know if they're breaking your confidence back on another wing. You know, we need our own Listener on here. (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)*



The quotations reinforced the assertion that proximity to Listeners increased the opportunities for more informal help-seeking activities. This was corroborated by prison staff and also accounts provided by Listeners who recognised that showing ‘more of a face’ on particular wings was beneficial in forming links with prisoners and encouraging take-up of their support (see chapter 8). However, as Listeners were generally considered the better behaved and more trusted prisoners, they tended to be located on ‘enhanced wings’<sup>32</sup> where they enjoy better conditions and more time out of their cells. It was therefore problematic to try and place Listeners on each wing as a prison Chaplain explained:

*The ideal would be to have a Listener in each wing, and at the moment we probably have enough to do it. The problem is that on some wings they haven’t got the same facilities or resources. For example, the [Listeners] go on the enhanced wing because of the extras they get. So to try and persuade somebody to go onto the detox wing, which can be rough and noisy and what have you, is difficult. (Prison Chaplain, Prison 1)*

If a Listener is not physically present on the wing, prisoners do not have the opportunity to assess the conduct and character of Listeners, nor are they able to see or control the result of their disclosure to Listeners. Thus the interview data adds to an understanding of seeking help from Listeners in that greater social contact also increases the likelihood that prisoners will seek help from them. Furthermore, where levels of conflict between prisoners are perceived to be higher, the risks of seeking help from Listeners from other wings, whom prisoners do not know, are perceived to be higher. Where a Listener is present on a wing, help might be able to be sought informally, thus reducing the potential risks that arise from requesting to speak to a Listener via a member of staff.

---

<sup>32</sup> These wings are specifically for prisoners who have achieved the highest level of the ‘Incentives and Earned Privileges’ scheme.



### **7.3.2 Patterns of usage of Listeners**

The discussion now turns to consider patterns of usage of Listeners by exploring the survey data with respect to another sub-group of prisoners who had talked to Listeners. These prisoners might have talked to a Listener in their current (n=45), or in a previous (n=12) prison. Existing knowledge on peer mentoring suggests that the length of the relationship between mentor and mentee holds significance, for example longer term relationships are claimed to impact more on the likelihood of re-offending (Hayashi & O'Donnell, 2004: 5-6). Listener support in prison however is designed to be offered for a short-term period or during a particular time of difficulty or distress. The 57 prisoners who had talked to a Listener were asked how many times they had accessed Listener support. Approximately three quarters (74.5% (41)) of these prisoners had talked to a Listener between one and three times. This is consistent with Samaritans' aims of usage of the service by callers on the outside. Evident in the research literature are emerging patterns of particular times or places where prisoner distress may be particularly acute (Howard League, 2001b; Liebling, 1995: 183). The initial period of custody tends to be particularly difficult for prisoners as they adapt and adjust to their new environment. And moreover, the first few days of custody is a particularly 'high risk' period for suicide (e.g. Liebling, 2006b; Topp, 1979). This sub-group of prisoners who had talked to Listeners were also asked 'When did you talk to a Listener?' Table 7.9 shows that prisoners were most likely to talk to Listeners during the initial period of custody (50.9%). Furthermore, approximately a quarter (25.5%) talked to a Listener after they had been sentenced (see dark grey shading on table 7.9). Hence, feelings associated with adapting to prison or coming to terms with a prison sentence prompt prisoners to talk to Listeners.



*Table 7.9 – When prisoners talked to Listeners*

<b>When prisoners talked to Listeners</b>	<b>% (n)</b>
First few days of imprisonment	50.9% (28)
During trial	14.5% (8)
After sentencing	25.5% (14)
Near to release <sup>33</sup>	5.5% (3)
Daytime	29.9% (16)
Evening	34.5% (19)
Night	30.9% (17)

n=55

N.B. This was a multiple response question  
 Dark grey shading highlights the stage of prisoners' imprisonment, and light grey shading highlights the time of day, when Listener support was accessed.

Almost two thirds (65.4%) of prisoners talked to a Listener during the evening or night time (see light grey shading on table 7.9). This supports the literature which suggests that another 'high risk' period is at night where prisoners are isolated for long periods of time, often alone, in their cells (Dooley, 1990). These findings will be built upon in the final section of this chapter where qualitative accounts of prisoners who have talked to Listeners are explored, and where it is asserted that at particular times (such as times spent locked in a cell) prisoners reach a 'tipping point' where there is more of an urgent need to talk to someone.

Research has shown that service users take a variety of different problems to peer supporters. Davison, Pennebaker and Dickerson (2000: 213) posit that people are more likely to turn to their peers for problems that are socially stigmatising or those that only a peer could understand and not judge. In a prison setting, Richman (2004) suggested that prisoners

<sup>33</sup> It is important to remember however, that the prisons visited were under-representative of prisoners reaching their release dates, as they were all closed prisons. Therefore it is likely that this figure would be larger if the research was conducted in open prisons where prisoners are closer to the ends of their sentences.



approach Listeners most frequently with family problems, problems with other prisoners and feelings of loneliness. A study of a peer support scheme in one Canadian prison found that emotional problems, issues related to imprisonment, and family or relationship problems were among the most common issues taken to peer supporters (Hall & Gabor, 2004: 22). However both of these studies are limited by the fact that the findings were not verified by service users themselves. Prisoners who had talked to Listeners were asked “What problems have you contacted a Listener about?”<sup>34</sup> Table 7.10 shows these prisoners’ responses (see dark grey shading) and illustrates that use of Listeners in prison is consistent with the types of problems taken to Samaritans on the outside – ‘emotional or mental health problems’ (78.2%) and ‘outside problems’ (58.7%). Table 7.10 also presents these data alongside the intentions to seek help by these prisoners who have talked to a Listener about a problem (see light grey shading).

*Table 7.10 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and problems taken to Listeners*

	<b>Prisoners who would take the problem to Listeners</b>	<b>Prisoners who took the problem to Listeners</b>
Outside problems	35.7% (20)	58.7% (29)
Inside problems	23.2% (13)	18.2% (10)
Substance misuse problems	18.2% (10)	12.7% (7)
Offence problems	28.6% (16)	5.5% (3)
Changing life problems	31.5% (17)	16.4% (9)
Emotional or mental health problems	56.4% (31)	78.2% (43)

n=55

N.B. Explanation of the shading can be found in the text.

<sup>34</sup> This was a multiple response question so prisoners could select more than one problem that they took to Listeners.



The data presented in table 7.10 further reveal that for four of the problems ('inside problems', 'substance misuse problems' 'offence problems' and 'changing life problems'), higher percentages of prisoners indicated that they would take these problems to Listeners, compared with the figures for problems actually taken to them. For example 5.5% of prisoners who had talked to Listeners had talked about 'offence problems', whereas 28.6% of this same sub-group of survey respondents indicated that they would seek help from Listeners for this problem. This suggests that the experience of talking to Listeners may increase their willingness to talk to Listeners about other problems. This is particularly evident when the findings from table 7.5 are considered where prisoners who had not talked to Listeners are less likely to indicate a willingness to seek help from Listeners for all of the six problems. For 'emotional or mental health problems', 78.2% of prisoners who had talked to Listeners took this problem to them, however a lesser figure of 56.4% of prisoners who talked to Listeners indicated that they would seek help from Listeners for this problem. The results presented below and in section 7.5 of this chapter therefore explore how these prisoners felt about their experience of talking to Listeners.

Prisoners who had talked to Listeners were also asked to rate their experience by indicating how they felt after talking to a Listener. These survey respondents were presented with the following statements – 'I felt hopeful about the future' (Hope), 'I felt anxious' (Anxiety), 'I felt that I could sort the problem out' (Mastery), 'I felt angry' (Anger) and 'I felt relieved' (Relief). Respondents were asked to indicate along a four point scale to show how they felt: with 1 meaning that they 'Did not feel that way at all', up to 4 meaning that they 'Felt that way very much so'. Table 7.11 presents prisoners' responses to these statements.



*Table 7.11 – Feelings after talking to Listeners*

	<b>Did not feel that way at all</b>		<b>Felt that way very much</b>	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Hope	7.3% (4)	38.2% (21)	41.8% (3)	12.7% (7)
Mastery	21.8% (12)	25.5% (14)	38.2% (21)	14.5% (8)
Relief	14.5% (8)	27.3% (15)	29.1% (16)	29.1% (16)
Anxiety	29.1% (16)	30.9% (17)	21.8% (12)	18.2% (10)
Anger	50.9% (28)	25.5% (14)	10.9% (6)	12.7% (7)

n=55

N.B. Dark grey shading highlights positive feelings after talking to a Listener, and light grey shading highlights negative feelings after talking to a Listener.

Table 7.11 shows that over 50% of prisoners who had talked to Listeners reported feelings of ‘hope’, ‘mastery’ and ‘relief’ and hence went away with positive feelings after talking to Listeners (see dark grey shading in table 7.11). However, negative feelings are not always relieved, as illustrated by the fact that 40.0% of prisoners felt ‘anxiety’ and 23.6% felt ‘anger’ after talking to a Listener. Whilst these results may imply that significant proportions of prisoners still experienced negative feelings after ‘offloading’ to Listeners, it must be remembered that feelings of ‘anxiety’ and ‘anger’ can also be explained as a consequence of inherent features of the prison environment (Zamble & Porporino, 1988: 199). It is therefore important to remember the context in which the results sit, and that the negative feelings did not necessarily arise out of talking to Listeners, only that talking to Listeners does not necessarily result in the relief of them. This is not to say however that all prisoners felt that talking to a Listener had a positive effect or served to reduce negative feelings as one interviewee explained:



*I didn't really feel anything to be honest, I was just telling him everything and he was nodding his head saying "yes", "no" and that. After he said I can't really tell you what to do he weren't really all that much help to be honest. (Male young offender, Prison 4)*

This young offender therefore highlights that whilst prisoners might be willing to talk to Listeners, they may not find it easy to talk to a Listener, and may not benefit from Listener support.

The findings described earlier in this chapter demonstrated that prisoners emphasised the individualised nature of their views about Listeners and the importance of social contact in developing views, and forming relationships with, Listeners. Over half (58.9% (33)) of prisoners who had talked to a Listener indicated a preference for talking to the same Listener, compared with 41.1% (23) for whom it did not matter which Listener they spoke to. When the interviews with prisoners were analysed, it was found that they indicated a strong preference for particular Listeners. Even where prisoners reported extremely positive relationships with particular Listeners, they nonetheless emphasised that the experience would not necessarily be replicated with another Listener:

*I have only got that experience from one Listener at the end of the day. Some might come off as different. I might have a different experience with another Listener; I might not get on with him or trust him. (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)*

*I've only ever been able to trust two Listeners, and there's quite a few [of them]. (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)*



The individualised nature of trust was further highlighted in the interviews when prisoners described how they distrusted particular Listeners, yet trust others. This is highlighted by the quotation below, which shows that despite confidentiality being broken with one Listener, the prisoner was able to build up trust in another one:

*The Listener who I was speaking to went and broke my confidentiality, and it was all around the wing within like 20 minutes of me talking to him. So I said I never want to speak to him and always spoke to another Listener and got closer with this other Listener..... We'd sit in his cell and have a cup of coffee and a few cigarettes like, and I used to speak to him..... He said, "whatever you say don't go no further than these four walls, whatever you say stays between us". (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)*

Prisoners prefer to talk to the same Listener because of the trusting relationship that is required, and out of a lack of social contact or trust in Listeners they did not know.

## 7.4 Willingness to become a Listener

All survey respondents were asked 'Would you like to become a Listener yourself?', and could respond in one of the following ways: 'Yes I would like to become a Listener', 'I am not sure right now' or 'No, I definitely do not want to become a Listener'. Multivariate models were tested in order to establish what variables might predict a willingness among prisoners to volunteer as Listeners themselves. Survey respondents were put into two groups – prisoners who do not want to become Listeners or who are not sure (60.2% (195)), and prisoners who do want to become Listeners (39.8% (129)).<sup>35</sup> Four models were tested (see table 7.12). Model 1 analysed individual/career variables alone (gender, age, first language, country of birth, prior

---

<sup>35</sup> Prisoners who did not want to become a Listener or who were not sure were coded as 0, and prisoners who did want to become a Listener were coded as 1. Logistic regression analyses were therefore carried out.



imprisonment and sentencing status). The second model added personal characteristics (proactivity and contact intensity with the outside) to the analysis. Model 3 also included prisoners' help-seeking intentions (with respect to prisoners and prison staff) and actual help-seeking from Listeners. The fourth and final model added variables measuring prisoners' perceptions of the prison environment (prisoner-officer social relations, perceptions of prisoner conflict and perceptions of prisoner solidarity).



*Table 7.12- Multivariate models: willingness to become a Listener*

	<b>Model 1</b>			<b>Model 2</b>		
	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>
<b>Individual variables</b>						
Gender	<b>-1.583</b>	<b>.205</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>-1.628</b>	<b>.196</b>	<b>.000</b>
Age	-.013	.987	.414	-.015	.985	.337
First Language	-.262	.770	.694	-.398	.672	.563
Country of birth	.014	.986	.979	.008	1.008	.988
Prior imprisonment	-.495	.609	.082	.535	.586	.070
Sentencing status	-.439	.644	.145	-.443	.642	.152
<b>Personal characteristics</b>						
Proactivity scale				<b>.424</b>	<b>1.528</b>	<b>.003</b>
Contact intensity with the outside				.042	1.043	.268
<b>Help-seeking</b>						
Actual help-seeking from Listeners						
Intentions to seek help from prisoners						
Intentions to seek help from staff						
<b>Perceptions of the prison environment</b>						
Prisoner-officer social relations scale						
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale						
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale						
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	<b>.139</b>			<b>.193</b>		
<i>p</i>	<b>.000</b>			<b>.000</b>		

n=260

N.B. This table displays Beta coefficients (B), odds ratios (Exp(B)) and *p* values. *p* > .05 is not significant and significant results and emboldened. Grey shading highlights the model accepted.

Table and notes are continued on the next page



*Table 7.12- Multivariate models: willingness to become a Listener continued*

	<b>Model 3</b>			<b>Model 4</b>		
	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>	B	Exp (B)	<i>p</i>
<b>Individual variables</b>						
Gender	<b>-1.872</b>	<b>.154</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>-1.811</b>	<b>.183</b>	<b>.000</b>
Age	-.019	.981	.240	-.018	.982	.270
First Language	-.789	.454	.268	-.715	.489	.319
Country of birth	.084	1.088	.885	.067	1.070	.908
Prior imprisonment	<b>-.613</b>	<b>.542</b>	<b>.046</b>	<b>-.677</b>	<b>.508</b>	<b>.031</b>
Sentencing status	-.482	.617	.128	-.464	.629	.152
<b>Personal characteristics</b>						
Proactivity scale	<b>.419</b>	<b>1.521</b>	<b>.004</b>	<b>.471</b>	<b>1.601</b>	<b>.002</b>
Contact intensity with the outside	.039	1.039	.324	.024	1.025	.551
<b>Help-seeking</b>						
Actual help-seeking from Listeners	<b>.922</b>	<b>2.514</b>	<b>.020</b>	<b>1.063</b>	<b>2.895</b>	<b>.009</b>
Intentions to seek help from prisoners	.028	1.028	.764	.017	1.017	.857
Intentions to seek help from staff	<b>.182</b>	<b>1.200</b>	<b>.031</b>	<b>.232</b>	<b>1.261</b>	<b>.010</b>
<b>Perceptions of the prison environment</b>						
Prisoner-officer social relations scale				-.069	.933	.093
Perceptions of prisoner conflict scale				.131	1.140	.162
Perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale				.095	1.100	.513
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	<b>.247</b>			<b>.265</b>		
<i>p</i>	<b>.000</b>			<b>.000</b>		

continued: Dummy Codes: Willingness to become a Listener (0 = No/not sure, 1 = Yes); Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female); Language (0 = First language is not English, 1 = First language is English); Country of birth (0 = Not born in Britain, 1 = Born in Britain); Prior imprisonment (0 = First time in prison, 1 = Been in prison before); Sentencing status (0 = Not sentenced, 1 = Sentenced); Actual help-seeking from Listeners (0 = Not talked to a Listener, 1 = Talked to a Listener). Reference category: first.



Table 7.12 draws attention to five variables that predict prisoners' willingness to become Listeners in model 4, which accounts for 26.5% of the total variance ( $p = .000$ ). Firstly, women are significantly and much less likely to be willing to become Listeners than men ( $B = -1.811$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = .183$ ,  $p = .000$ ). This finding does not support current assumptions in the volunteering literature that women are more likely to volunteer than men (e.g. Wilson, 2000). This thesis assumes that volunteering in prison is not the same compared with the outside. The enhanced willingness of men to volunteer in prison compared with the outside could be explained by the unique environment they are living in, and the pressures created by penal policy to adopt roles that demonstrate socially accepted behaviours (see chapter 8). The criminological literature suggests that women are likely to actively demonstrate that they are pursuing 'reform' (see the review conducted by Worrall & Gelsthorpe, 2009). This finding does not necessarily contradict this literature. Women can demonstrate that they are actively pursuing reform by taking part in offending behaviour or drug detox programmes for example; becoming a Listener is one option among others where women can demonstrate reform, but one which women are less likely to select than men. Secondly, table 7.12 shows that a prior term of imprisonment also reduces prisoners' willingness to become Listeners ( $B = -.677$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = .508$ ,  $p = .031$ ). Put another way, prisoners serving their first prison sentence are more likely to want to take part in activities such as volunteering, whereas prisoners who have experienced imprisonment before may feel less motivated to volunteer or engage in activities that are perceived as associated with change and reform.

Another predictor that emerges from model 4 is proactivity. Prisoners who are more proactive are also significantly more likely to be willing to become Listeners ( $B = .471$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.601$ ,  $p = .002$ ). This finding suggests that prisoners who are more proactive are also more likely to pursue opportunities available to them, such as volunteering. Current government policy encourages prisoners to be active agents in their own change, and make use of opportunities to



facilitate this (Bosworth, 2007; Crewe, 2009; see chapter 4). Prisoners need to be proactive otherwise such policy falls on deaf ears. Additionally actual help-seeking from Listeners nearly trebles the likelihood that prisoners will be willing to become a Listener ( $B = 1.063$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = 2.895$ ,  $p = .009$ ) and is important even when prisoners' levels of proactivity are taken into account. Presumably prisoners' experiences and positive perceptions of Listeners very much enhance their willingness to become a Listener themselves. Finally, prisoners' intentions to seek help from staff also slightly increase the likelihood that prisoners are willing to become Listeners ( $B = .232$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.261$ ,  $p = .010$ ). These results are consistent with assertions that Listener work is closely linked with prison staff, in that Listeners may be perceived as a 'quasi-professional' group by prisoners. Prisoners' perceptions of the prison environment did not influence their willingness to become Listeners.

## **7.5 Experiences of 'being listened to' by Listeners**

Although the government has continued to promote the use of peer support and mentoring across the criminal justice system, current evidence on the 'benefit' or 'impact' of peer support is patchy and lacks a sound empirical base (see chapter 2). In particular, the voice of the 'service-user' is neglected. Where the potential effects or benefits of peer support are considered it is often posited that peer mentoring offers a relationship characterised by a non-judgemental approach, the provision of informed advice (McClanahan, 2007: 1) and empathy for the predicament of the person in need (Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003: 275). Empathy is particularly significant in prison where prisoners have been found to value feeling 'listened to', 'heard', 'understood' and 'acknowledged' (Borrill et al, 2004: 64; Corston, 2007: 33; Howerton et al, 2007: 305; Medlicott, 2001: 209; Philip & Spratt, 2007: 49; Tait, 2012). This final part of the chapter draws from the interviews conducted with 14 prisoners who had talked to Listeners about a problem. These interviews explored: the circumstances under which



prisoners talked to Listeners, the problems they discussed, how they described the experience of talking to Listeners, and what they perceived to be the outcomes of seeking help from them.

### **7.5.1 ‘Tipping points’ and ‘catharsis’**

A small number of prison scholars have used the idea of ‘thresholds’ to describe the ability of prisoners to cope with the prison environment. These tend to be described in terms of outbreaks of violence or aggression stemming from the boredom and frustration inherent in prison life (Einat & Einat, 2000: 317). Toch (1992: 187) described stress ‘thresholds’ as the ability to cope when problems accumulate to negative effect. ‘Tipping points’ are reached whereby prisoners adopt a range of coping mechanisms shaped by the only means they have available to them (see Gostin & Staunton, 1985: 85). Time spent in cells, where prisoners are often alone, has been identified as particularly difficult for prisoners (Liebling, 2006b). In their cells they have copious amounts of time to reflect on their past, their crimes, their loved ones on the outside and their future (Crewe, 2009: 440) and difficulty in sleeping is common (Crewe, 2009: 440; Medlicott, 1999: 219). Being locked up in a cell, particularly for extended periods, has been found to elicit: psychosis, aggression, anxiety, depression, self-harm, withdrawal, and torturing the mind with memories and regrets of the past (Bonner, 2006; Ditchburn, 2003; Inch, Rowlands & Soliman, 1995: 167-8; Gostin & Staunton, 1985). At particular times when the pains of imprisonment may be particularly acute, time becomes an ‘enemy’ (Medlicott, 1999: 227).

The quantitative data generated from the prisoners who had talked to Listeners explored in section 7.3.2 of this chapter revealed that Listener support was most likely to be accessed during prisoners’ first few days in custody, and during the night when they were locked in their cells. Prisoners interviewed described the circumstances under which they sought out Listener



support and confirmed that not only where there certain stages of imprisonment where Listener support was more likely to be accessed, there were also certain times of day when prisoners were more likely to talk to a Listener, more often than not when they were locked up in their cells. It is therefore asserted that prisoners reach a ‘tipping point’ that leads them to seek out Listener support illustrated by the below quotations:

*I was having a bit of trouble adjusting to prison life and I was finding it hard, and I had to talk to someone, anyone. (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)*

*I was very down, very depressed. I had been in quite a strong relationship, and obviously I had been ripped away from that, so it was really hard to start with [...] And it was all the bad feelings I had when I first came in. [...] So I was really down. When you are on your own, in a cell on your own, you do tend to do a lot of thinking – especially if you’ve just come in. (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)*

*I kept it inside; I thought I could keep in in there. But then I had to talk. (Male young offender prisoner, Prison 4)*

These quotations point to a sense of urgency created by a need to be talk, or ‘off-load’ to a listening ear. One prisoner describes what he felt would have happened if he had not requested to speak to a Listener:

*It would have been on my mind all night and I wouldn’t have gone to sleep. So it actually got me to sleep. I woke up in the morning feeling better. It helps to talk about it because if you keep it on your mind, you’ll end up blowing up in your cell, and you won’t be able to get to*



*sleep, and it will be on your mind all night, and you end up crazy if you don't get it off your chest.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

Prisoners' frustrations therefore are heightened by the isolation imposed by imprisonment and the time spent confined to their cells alone. Not only are opportunities for 'deep talk' about personal or emotional matters extremely limited in prison (Medlicott, 2001: 207), at particular times the effects of its absence are worsened. It is at these times where Listener support is available and hence more likely to be accessed. Another prisoner described how the amount of time she spent in a cell alone made her feel 'stuck' and like she was unable to move forward at all:

*I was just finding it hard to cope with being in prison, and I just couldn't talk to anybody. And I think it was about a week here, and I thought I've just got to talk to someone because I wasn't really getting anywhere. I wasn't really coping, wasn't really eating, wasn't really doing anything. Just hoping that time went a lot quicker. But when, you know, you don't have a job and stuff, you are locked up most of the time – and that's part of the problem. I just felt, I just felt lost, like I wasn't able to move forward, and like properly dealing with being in prison.* (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)

Furthermore, 'tipping points' might also be created later on when prisoners had new challenges to adjust to:

*It was about a month [after I came in]. I'd finished the detox within three weeks. I was in a cell with someone who was sleeping pretty much throughout the day and throughout the night. [...]*  
*I couldn't get a wink of sleep because of the detox, and I was thinking about everything, just*



*going over it all, and the last year outside. So I needed to talk to someone.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

‘Tipping points’ are therefore periods where prisoners experience a build-up of feelings which creates the need to talk. Whilst these are most likely to occur during the initial phase of custody, they can also be experienced at other times, and are heightened by time spent in cells.

The potential ‘cathartic’ effects of talking about problems to others has been noted by a small number of scholars in the non-prison literature. For example Brannon and Larson (1991) suggest that ‘releasing feelings’ and ‘getting a problem off your chest’ have a positive emotional effect. This has also been described as ‘venting’:

The process of venting is a way to relieve internalized pressures but also to create through talk imagery that crystallizes somewhat unknown cognitions into known and shared entities. [...] The “sounding board” function enables receivers to articulate their uncertainties and problems in ways that help them to be more objective and perhaps even resolve the troubling issues that they face. (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987: 33)

It has been suggested that the active listening approach adopted by Samaritans facilitates ‘release’ for distressed individuals, and is further claimed to benefit service users by facilitating the exploration of feelings and options, in order for the ‘caller’ to move forward (Samaritans, 2007: 10). In the prison environment, characterised by a build-up of emotions, feelings, anger, combined with the imposed power restrictions and dependency, ‘catharsis’ may play an important role for prisoners dealing with their problems, feelings and emotions. A common theme in the prison survival and coping literature is that prisoners attach a high value to the feeling of being heard and understood and very much desire opportunities for ‘talk’



(Medlicott, 1999). There is a scarcity of ‘listening ears’ in the prison environment (Liebling, 1992), and a lack of professional ‘talking therapies’ (HMIP, 2007: 41). It is therefore not surprising that the prisoners interviewed for the current study frequently talked of the cathartic effect of talking to Listeners in terms of ‘getting things off their chests’, ‘feeling a weight lifted’ off their shoulders, experiencing a ‘lifted mood’, ‘releasing pressure’, feeling less ‘burdened’, and avoiding ‘bottling things up’ or ‘explosions’. This is highlighted in the quotations below:

*We need to talk, we need to offload at the end of the day. If we bottle it up then sooner or later it is just going to explode. Because I’ve got enough problems, and if I can share, sharing with people helps, it really does.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

*To be able to have someone to talk to about your problems, it takes stress off your shoulders.* (Male young offender, Prison 4)

These quotations suggest that this form of ‘listening therapy’ (Davies, 1994: 126) can be a source of relief and release for those who use it by ‘reducing the urgency’ (Mishara & Daigle, 1997: 879) of the problem. Interviewees acknowledged the importance of the role of someone who is really ‘there’ for them, and who really ‘listens’ (O’Shea, 2006: 278; Cowie et al, 2002: 455). Sharing problems with a Listener elicited feelings of being ‘heard’, ‘understood’ and hence feeling not so alone in the prison environment:

*It is good to have someone there that understands that you do feel isolated when you are locked behind a door, and that you don’t feel isolated when you are out working. It is good to know as well that there is someone there for you, someone you can turn to. You don’t have to sit and worry, and not eat, and not get anywhere really. Your mind is not really in here with*



*your problems so you are not really moving forward, you are just staying still.* (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)

The interviews also revealed that through being able to offload to a Listener that prisoners subsequently felt a greater sense of mastery and autonomy in coping with their problems. It has often been claimed in the literature that an effect of ‘peer support’ or ‘self-help’ is a sense of control, autonomy and self-esteem (Arntson & Droge, 1987: 171; Pollack, 2004: 702; Snow & Biggar, 2006: 154; White, 2004: 4) however these claims have not been verified by ‘service-users’ themselves. Catharsis could enable prisoners to see a way forward with their problem and talking about problems could facilitate a process of ‘self-discovery’ (Davison, Pennebaker & Dickerson, 2000; Medlicott, 2001: 45). In other words, by communicating to Listeners, prisoners were also communicating to themselves, and this in turn had the potential to trigger a new phase in their adjustment process. One prisoner explained:

*I left the room feeling a lot better than when I entered the room to be honest with you. And I’ve just accepted that I’ve just got to be positive and do my time and things will work out for me. I have got to remain positive. I got a job in the workshops a couple of days later, [it] took mind off stuff and I was earning a bit of money so I can get some phone credit and phone my family and stuff.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)

*I have realised through this experience, through the Listener helping me – she’s made me realise that you’ve got to look after yourself in life and not everybody else. Because the more you look after everybody else, you are not concentrating on you. And that’s all I’ve been doing all this time. Now I am concentrating on me.* (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)



The prisoners above then felt able to move forward in a more positive way and cope with current situations to a greater extent. Receiving support from other prisoners enables the discussion of pertinent problems from their perspective, and considering how to proceed when given the space and time to explore it. Overall, feeling understood and listened by a peer appeared to help the majority of prisoners, leaving them feeling better able to cope with their problems (Anon, 1999: 25; Davidson et al, 2006: 447-8), or in the words of one prisoner, begin to “*look at things a bit differently*” (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3).

### **7.5.2 Peer empathy and understanding**

Whereas for some prisoners the ‘peer’ nature of Listener support served to inhibit their use of the scheme, for those who had talked to Listeners, the significance of Listeners as peers had a symbolic value that was absent from other sources of support. The interviews with prisoners who had talked to Listeners explored the significance of the support Listeners provided to prisoners as peers. Feeling ‘understood’ by Listeners boosted prisoners’ mood and made them feel acknowledged as people, and as individuals (see Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003: 280; Park & Ward, 2009: 26-7). The prisoners quoted below highlight the significance of the presence of caring individuals and listening ears in the prison environment:

*We are all in the same position at the end of the day, we are all in prison. You know [Listeners] don't have to do it but they do. We are in here, we are all in prison. Some people see us as being 'hardened criminals' but we are not at the end of the day. We have all got a heart and emotions and feelings. Someone caring for you while you are in prison, when everyone else is banging on the door and swearing and insulting staff or whatever, so someone who has the frame of mind that they can care for someone else, it makes you feel a hell of a lot*



*better about yourself. It picks you up and puts you in a good space and frame of mind.* (Adult male prisoner, Prisoner 2)

*Listeners are there to help you and to listen to you when other people won't listen, and some people don't listen.* (Male young offender, Prison 4)

These quotations demonstrate that prisoners attach significance to feeling heard in an environment where they are surrounded by vocal and physical signs of the frustrations of prison life, and where they largely feel unheard, and that others are unwilling to hear them. Listeners' shared experiences with prisoners therefore provide authenticity to expressions of care, concern and empathy (White, 2000: 19). An important potential element of peer support is empathy, and how this is expressed through action:

The actions, which serve as an expression on the empathizer's concern, *communicate* something to the target. They communicate that the empathizer understands the target's situation (e.g., as a result of listening carefully). (Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003: 281. Emphasis in original.)

The sharing of common concerns and deprivations might foster cohesion between prisoners (Sykes, 1958; Toch, 1992: 256), reduce 'isolation' (Cooney & Braggins, 2010: 35; Håkansson, & Montgomery, 2003: 267; Pfeiffer et al, 2011) and foster a 'sense of belonging' (Soloman, 2004: 394) or 'reciprocity' (Arntson & Droge, 1987: 171). It has been argued that a degree of self-disclosure by the peer supporter is an important component of peer support (Davidson et al, 2006: 446) because it forms a bond of identification between the supporter and supported and elicits the supported to feel 'understood' (Pack & Ward, 2009: 26). It has also been observed to facilitate prisoners 'opening-up' to, and trusting peer supporters in prison (Hall &



Gabor, 2004). Whilst self-disclosure by volunteers is discouraged by Samaritans to enable a caller-centred approach, it was evident in the interviews with prisoners, that Listeners at times, used their common experiences to facilitate the process of ‘opening-up’ and supporting prisoners, as one interviewee explained:

*I did stiffen up at first and couldn't speak. The [the Listener] told me something that he'd been through which eventually opened me up, and I couldn't stop speaking. We were in there for about two and a half – three hours just talking. So it was quite good. It made me more confident to speak to him again if I needed to, which I have done.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)

The ‘peer’ nature of Listener support was also communicated by Listeners revealing something about themselves of their past experiences to reinforce that they understood the prisoners’ predicament. Whilst ‘listening’ is a core focus of Listener activity, the interviews with prisoners revealed that the importance of Listeners as peers was also communicated in the advice, guidance and assistance they provided them with. In other words, in the accounts given by prisoners, it appears that Listeners were ‘stretching the boundaries’ of the support they offered to prisoners in response to having experience of living in the same environment and being able to offer guidance on how to manage relationships or get things done in prison, as the prisoners quoted below illustrate:

*[The Listener] said don't lend stuff off anyone. I had people asking me if I wanted tobacco when I first came in. He said “they'll make you pay double back” and stuff. So that helped me out because there was people who didn't speak to a Listener who came in at the same time, and they were on the same wing as me, and they took tobacco and stuff and were getting into loads of debt and had to get moved off and stuff.* (Adult male prisoner, Prison 1)



*She explained ways of putting in for a job, putting in applications to the right people to get it done quicker, and she helped me fill in the applications. Then I got a job quite easy. (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)*

The ‘peer’ status of Listeners meant that they were a source of information, guidance, practical assistance and support on ‘doing time’. Additionally, a small number of prisoners also described that gestures of support by Listeners, based on peer understanding of their callers’ problems served to demonstrate to prisoners that they understood their predicament, as one prisoner explained:

*I got a big brown envelope with some paper and a couple of envelopes with a little note saying, “here’s some writing paper – you need to write to your family.” I think there were some stamps as well. And the Listener did that off his own back. So he did think about me. I was in trouble with money and stuff, and I know you do get letters off the prison to send out but they are second class letters and you can only send out two a week. I got to write more letters than I could have done. (Adult male prisoner, Prison 2)*

This act of kindness reinforced the support that was available from the Listener, reassured the prisoner that he understood his problem, and finally reaffirmed the benefits of talking to Listeners that extended beyond listening. Listeners demonstrated their understanding of prisoners and exhibited care through their subsequent actions. A small number of interviewees noted that they had not in fact called for a Listener themselves, and that a Listener had approached them, as the female prisoner quoted below explains:



*When I first came in [the Listener] explained who she was and everything and at that time I did give her a brief description of what had happened with my mum and everything. I didn't really go into detail. Then I went to Church because it would have been my mum's birthday, and I went to light a candle for her. The Listener was there, and I broke down in Church. That's when she came and asked 'would you like a hug?' and gave me a hug. Then I went into a bit more depth about what had happened and everything, and normally I am not one that would talk to a complete stranger about personal problems and things like that. (Adult female prisoner, Prison 3)*

Once again the informal supportive activities are valued by prisoners and might also mean that they access support having not sought help for it directly. Chapter 8 goes on to explore in further detail Listeners' accounts of 'reaching out' to prisoners who they felt were in need of support. These kinds of supportive gestures, and the practical help they gave to prisoners demonstrated a recognition to prisoners that Listeners understood the frustrations and emotional difficulties elicited by imprisonment. Whilst in strict terms these are examples of Listeners 'stepping out of their role' (Davies, 1994: 134), it is important to remember once again that Listeners live with those they support. It is therefore suggested that forms of practical assistance and the sharing of prison knowledge emerge as a direct response to the close circumstances of Listeners and their callers and the 'peer' nature of their relationships. Hence whilst 'listening' and 'talk' still held primary significance, prisoners nevertheless reported feeling that they had been given useful advice, guidance or feedback in response to the problems they had shared with Listeners. The value of Listener support therefore extended beyond simply having a 'listening ear'.



## **7.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the ‘service-user’ perspective with respect to help-seeking and the Listener scheme. The majority of prisoners surveyed know about the Listeners and generally expressed positive views about them. The analyses of predictors of intentions to seek help from Listeners, and their actual help-seeking from Listeners revealed that seeking help from Listeners was closely related to seeking help from staff. Prisoners’ relationships with staff and their intentions to seek help from staff appear to influence help-seeking from Listeners. In particular both intentions to seek help from staff, and actual help-seeking from Listeners are influenced by perceptions of prisoner conflict which reinforces the link between seeking help from these two groups by prisoners. It is therefore asserted that Listeners are seen as a ‘quasi-professional’ group, who are accessed via staff.

A prominent theme in the data presented in this chapter was prisoners’ proximity to, observations of, and social contact with, individual Listeners and the bearing this had for use of Listener support. Getting to know listeners was important both in terms of building trust and learning more about the support available from them. Positive experiences with Listeners fostered positive views; however these views were limited to those particular Listeners and often did not contribute towards a view of Listeners in general. Prisoners do not have uniform perceptions of the nature of Listener support and make a cautious judgement about individual Listeners when considering help-seeking. Prisoners are therefore no less ‘strategic’ in seeking help from Listeners than they were any other group as demonstrated in chapter 6.

Being ‘heard’ or ‘listened to’ was a valued commodity among prisoners who reached particular ‘tipping points’ that created a sense of urgency and need to ‘release’ and share their problems. This avoided ‘explosion’ and ‘lifted the weight’ off their shoulders. The accounts provided by prisoners and Listeners however also suggested that Listener support comes in a variety of



forms. Whilst ‘listening’ held particular significance in the prison environment, Listener support could also involve offering guidance on ‘doing time’, expressing care, sharing experiences, or offering practical assistance. This provides some evidence that Listeners ‘stretch the boundaries’ of their role and is explored in greater depth in chapter 8 which follows.



## **PART 3**

### **LISTENERS IN PRISON**

This third and final part of the thesis considers the roles of Listener peer supporters and prison staff in the day to day operation of the Listener scheme. Chapter 8 focuses on the accounts provided by Listeners and challenges and ambiguities they face as they conduct their Listener work supporting prisoners. It considers what Listeners identified as the qualities and behaviour associated with their voluntary role, as well as the implications this had for their ability to ‘slip in and out’ of the role, or step back and withdraw from their volunteering. Chapter 9 explores the crucial gatekeeping role of staff in facilitating Listener work and responding to help-seeking by prisoners. Further to this, how staff make use of Listeners as ‘tools’ of prison work, and how they exerted control over Listeners and Listener support is discussed. Overall, these final chapters extend our understanding of the reality of volunteering by prisoners in the prison context and problematise official conceptions of ‘empowerment’.



## **Chapter 8**

### **Being a Listener and doing Listener work**

A core assumption underpinning the analysis of this thesis is that volunteering in prison is not the same as volunteering outside the prison walls. This is not only because “voluntary work is elevated in significance among populations whose other roles have been diminished” (Musick & Wilson, 2003: 268), it is also because volunteering in prison operates under different power relations, in a place where people are sent as punishment. Government discourse has emphasised the ‘empowering’ potential of volunteering, as a means for prisoners to demonstrate ‘active citizenship’ and enhance self-worth (NOMS, 2006b; NOMS, 2007b; NOMS, 2011; NOMS South West, 2008). However, research to date has not considered the unique challenges posed by the prison setting in which this voluntary work takes place. A small number of studies have started to consider the effects of volunteering on Listeners (e.g. Dhaliwal & Harrower, 2009), and it is widely acknowledged that Listeners ‘change’ and ‘benefit’ from the Listener work and role (Samaritans, 2011b; see also chapter 3). However there is a lack of robust evidence to support claims of the ‘benefits’ of volunteering as Listeners. Moreover, there is a need to unpack how Listeners understand and define ‘benefits’ that are derived from volunteering whilst at the same time understanding how Listeners see and manage their work, their role and themselves as prisoners who have become volunteers.

This chapter seeks to explore Listeners’ reflections on their motivations for participating in the scheme, how Listeners feel their voluntary work has impacted on them, how Listeners conduct their work and what it consists of, and how Listeners manage their dual role as prisoners *and*



Listeners. The discussion that follows draws from data obtained from the 16 Listeners interviewed to understand their experiences in greater depth, to explore the complex nature of Listener work, and examines the tensions and ambiguities generated by doing Listener work as a prisoner.

## **8.1 Becoming and being a Listener**

This first section considers the altruistic and ‘generative’ motivations reported by Listeners as prompting them to become involved in Listener volunteer work. Following this, the intense training in the process of becoming a Listener is outlined. Finally, how Listeners described being a Listener as a particular way of ‘doing time’ is discussed. It is argued that being a Listener facilitates coping and adaptation to prison. This derives from the perceived benefits of becoming a ‘generative’ prisoner such as obtaining respect, enhancing status and improving self-worth.

### **8.1.1 Motivations to volunteer as a Listener**

In chapter 7, it was found that women prisoners, first time prisoners, more proactive prisoners, prisoners who had sought help from Listeners and prisoners with higher levels of intentions to seek help from staff, were more likely to indicate a willingness to volunteer as a Listener. This section builds on these data by considering qualitative accounts of prisoners who had become Listeners on their motivations to volunteer. Research on volunteering has identified that volunteers express a number of different motivations that led them to volunteer. For example, one study suggested that volunteers are frequently motivated by a desire to help others (e.g. see Wilson & Musick, 1999) and Bradley (1999-2000: 49) found that the primary motivation for volunteering among older adults was to provide a sense of purpose and productivity or



‘generativity’. Volunteering can also make people feel ‘needed’ or provide a sense of belonging (Bille-Brahe et al, 1999: 216). Social psychological research has further suggested that guilt is a reliable predictor of helping behaviour, and moreover, that helping others reduces guilt by contributing to the well-being of others which serves to reduce the volunteer’s own negative feelings (Salovey, Mayer and Rosenhan, 1991: 223-4). Similarly, research on offenders desisting from crime has explored how offenders expiate their guilt by making a contribution to society, which has been called “generativity as restitution” (Maruna, 2001: 121-3). Other research suggests that engaging in a positive or altruistic behaviour enables a socially acceptable, or ‘conventional’, identity to be portrayed (Denzin, 1987: 158; Farrall & Calverley, 2000: 106). Volunteering, or ‘generative’ activities, have been proposed to serve as a mechanism through which ex-offenders

seek to atone for their past crimes and explicitly ‘advertise’ a new, pro-social identity to secure others’ trust and to help prevent others from making the same mistakes as they did as youth. (Maruna, 1997: 72)

Within the prison environment, a desire to portray a new and improved pro-social identity may be prompted by other motivations. As identified earlier in this thesis, in the late modern context, prisoners are expected to be active agents, responsible for their change and reform (Crewe, 2009; Hannah-Moffat, 2001). However, chapter 4 highlighted that prisoner volunteering is also a governance mechanism designed to push prisoners towards compliance and self-management and is used because prison officials recognise that ‘idleness’ is counterproductive for both staff and prisoners (Batchelder & Pippert, 2002). It is therefore in the interests of prison officials to keep prisoners busy in activities that are promoted as an opportunity to progress and develop desirable skills. Prisoners work within a structure of limited choice determined by the prison (Hannah-Moffat, 2001: 173-4); this undoubtedly



reduces the meaningfulness of their choices and encourages choice on the basis of what will look most favourable when their release is considered by those assessing their engagement and success at reform. Therefore, prisoners may be motivated to select roles that are legitimate as deemed by the authorities or find other ways to showcase that they are embracing the opportunity to reform (Maruna, 2001: 123) and have adopted particular ‘idealized’ qualities (McAdams, 1993: 122). The Listener role is considered by many prisoners to be desirable because they feel it is a position trusted by prison staff (Liebling, 2004: 241). Furthermore, Listeners interviewed by Richman (2004) associated being a Listener with achieving an enhanced ‘status’ compared with other prisoners through the adoption of responsibility and enjoying greater freedom of movement around the establishment compared with other prisoners. It follows therefore that volunteering as a Listener presents an opportunity for prisoners to foster a more positive image with staff and demonstrate that they are helpful and caring individuals, with a desire to change, or as individuals who have changed.

Whilst it is clear that motivations might stem from the potential benefits to the volunteer, as opposed to primarily altruistic concerns for others, volunteers in non-prison settings find it difficult not to frame their motivation in altruistic terms because of a concern that it undermines the pro-social or altruistic impetus that is presumed to characterise volunteering (Wilson & Musick, 1999: 263). Despite this however, volunteers do tend to at least in part acknowledge that their motivations stem from the personal benefits they enjoy (Rumagy, 2007: 241). It is also important to note that individual motivations may change over time as volunteers become embedded in an organisation and more involved in, committed to, and experienced with the work (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008: 70; Rochester, Paine & Howlett, 2010: 129). There is some limited evidence that suggests that whilst prisoners may be initially motivated by the potential personal gains, that as they are trained and experience volunteering, they develop an attachment to the work and are motivated to continue by altruistic concerns for



the welfare of others (Edgar, Jacobson & Biggar, 2001: 27; Safer Custody News, 2008: 5; Taylor, 2008).

Listeners in the current study were asked to reflect on what motivated them to volunteer for the scheme. The large majority of Listeners framed their motivations in terms of an altruistic concern for other prisoners. This, they explained, tended to arise from having been ‘selfish’ or in receipt of help from others in the past. Approximately half of the Listeners suggested that their past experiences – such as a period of depression, knowing someone who had talked to a Listener, or even having talked to a Listener themselves – prompted them to seek out this kind of work. In other words, they wanted to stop just ‘doing their own time’ and wished to help others do their time too, as the Listeners quoted below demonstrate:

*[W]hen I became a prisoner, I would hold my pride, and sort of like defend myself. I didn't really care about no one else. But then when I really started getting in to [my sentence], and thinking about it, I was being a bit selfish, and I thought I might as well help people out in prison. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

*I had been sectioned, and coming back into prison – this was not the first time I had been in – wasn't a great feeling. There were people there for me who I got talking to. I didn't know they were Listeners at the time, but after talking to them for a while they explained what they did. I thought I might want to do something along the same sort of lines. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

Both of the Listeners above highlight how their orientation changed from focussing on themselves to helping others. Listeners tended to place emphasis on the importance of having other-centred, as opposed to self-centred, motivations for becoming a Listener. When asked



what they would say to other prisoners who were considering becoming Listeners, interviewees frequently suggested that they would warn prisoners that it was a lot of hard work, and involved a very serious subject matter. They warned that prisoners should “*think about it carefully*” and “*not rush into it*”. It was also evident that Listeners were aware of the possible self-interests prisoners might have to volunteer, such as the greater freedom of movement around the establishment or enhanced respect from staff. For example, one Listener warned against prisoners joining the scheme for the ‘wrong reasons’. When questioned further, he explained that the wrong reasons would be:

*to benefit themselves, because that’s not what [being a Listener] does, and they’ll learn that very quickly. A lot of people join the Listeners to benefit themselves and quit a week later when they realise it is a lot different It’s intense to do.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)

Thus, it was deemed important to have altruistic or pro-social concerns for others. There was some variation in this among interviewees; whereas some Listeners felt they were generally helpful and caring people anyway, others felt that a change in orientation to more altruistic concerns led them to seek out volunteering opportunities. One Listener explained how his volunteering had been described by a psychologist as arising out a desire to achieve a certain status or to feel important:

*I had a psychologist’s report once who said something like, because I like to help people or do things for people, it’s like I want to be noticed myself. She used the term grandiose, or something. It’s my way of being accepted by other people, through helping other people. But she’s a psychologist – what do they know?!* (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)



Listeners were aware of the potential for respect and acceptance through their volunteering, in an environment where prisoners were treated as a group rather than as individuals by staff. Listeners framed their motivations and their continued volunteering in altruistic and generative terms. This served to place emphasis on their new pro-social identity articulated through their altruism (Maruna, 2001: 102; 134).

A small number of Listeners interviewed indicated that they had admired the character and status of Listeners and that this had prompted them to volunteer. When one Listener was questioned about what he thought about Listeners prior to applying to join, he said:

*Upon seeing what the Listeners do, and seeing them around the jail, they were people that you look up to, and I thought that I would like to do that, I would like to walk down like that and be able to help people rather than just take. [...] I just kept seeing the Listeners everywhere I went, the stickers and the T-Shirts and the way they was getting treated was different. They were not like any other prisoners. All the other prisoners laugh and joke and go around the jail with no ambition, no drive. But every time you saw a Listener he was smiling and he was always going somewhere. It was kind of like he wasn't a prisoner, because he always had something to do. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

This quotation suggests that Listeners were seen as a group elevated in status compared with other prisoners and supports findings from chapter 7 that prisoners saw Listeners as 'quasi-professionals'. Listeners therefore represented a group moving forward and were seen as having achieved a status unlike that of normal prisoners. Moreover, whilst Listeners clearly saw some 'status' attached to the role, this was associated with conducting significant work by helping others, and being a different kind of prisoner who was on the path to reform.



### 8.1.2 Learning to listen: the selection and training of Listeners

*I never used to listen.* (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)

The Listener quoted above draws attention to one of the prominent outcomes Listeners derived from the process of becoming a Listener, an enhanced ability to ‘listen’ and communicate, that will be explored in the discussion that follows. First however, we consider the recruitment, selection and training process Listeners experience. Prisoners who wish to become Listeners fill out an application form, and require a supporting statement from a member of staff. All applicants are subject to a security check to assess whether the prisoner poses any potential security risk to the establishment, for example if they had been linked to drugs, given the risk they might pose if granted the greater freedom around the establishment they would have as Listeners. The applications are further considered by Samaritans, and by a member of the Safer Custody team at the establishment who co-ordinates facilitation of the Listener scheme. The prisoners are then interviewed and undergo a selection process, led by Samaritans, where they are observed during a number of group discussion activities. The applicants considered suitable for the scheme are subsequently invited to attend the ‘Listener Initial Training’ (LIT) course.

Since 2006, Samaritans have used a national mandatory training package. Prior to this, whilst national guidance on the selection and training of Listeners had been issued,<sup>1</sup> it was not mandatory that branches adopt it. The training package was developed after a review, conducted in 2001,<sup>2</sup> identified inconsistency in the style and quality of training provided by branches to Listeners. Remarks made by some Listeners who had spent time in more than one prison suggested that they felt like they had been trained by completely different organisations, and not just by different branches within the same organisation. It therefore became a priority

---

<sup>1</sup> See ‘Prison Befriending Resource Manual’ (The Samaritans, 1993) and ‘Guide to Befriending’ (The Samaritans, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> The review was the ‘Risk 1 Project’ and is described in chapter 3.



to develop a standardised training package to improve the quality and consistency of training. The training package is unique in that it was designed in such a way that prisoners do not need to be able to read or write to participate. Literacy problems are common among prisoners and Samaritans did not want to exclude prisoners on the basis of their literacy level. Prisoners do not need to read or write as a Listener; it follows therefore, that they should not have to do so in the training (Samaritans, 2011b: 24). Prisoners participate in eight, two-hour, sessions covering:

- What makes a good Listener?
- The limits of our role
- How we listen to people who need us
- Exploring suicidal thoughts and intentions
- Accepting other people's decisions about their own lives
- Supporting people at risk
- People who self-harm
- How we support each other

The period over which the training is delivered varies according to the arrangement between branches and the prisons, however Samaritans stipulate that the training should take place over a period between three and eight weeks. Existing Listeners are normally involved in the delivery of the sessions alongside Samaritans volunteers and prospective Listeners are observed as they engage in activities, discussions and role plays.

Listeners interviewed felt the training process was pivotal in the process of becoming a Listener and in becoming a competent and skilled listening ear. Listeners saw an ability to communicate more effectively as a core outcome of the training, not only with reference to those they supported, but also with people in general. The Listeners below describe how they learned the impact of their body language or tone of voice on their callers and the degree to



which a caller subsequently ‘opened up’. In other words, they had learned ways to communicate that they were really ‘listening’ and paying attention to their callers, and this facilitated improved channels of communication more generally:

*The training is vital, you realise afterwards how much the training actually means. It’s the little things, you know eye contact, body language, if you slouch down he’s going to think you’re not interested. You have to make good eye contact but not freak them out. So the training is very, very essential, because these people are on the edge. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

*I took so much back from that training. You know when they read out a situation to you, I’ve learnt how you ask the right questions, the appropriate questions [and] how you get information out of the contact that you are going to see. (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)*

Listeners therefore gained a new kind of power in which they were able to positively influence their interactions with other prisoners. This played a key role in how others perceived them, for example another Listener suggested that through his newly acquired skills, he was able to overcome the initial impression he often made that he was ‘tough’ or ‘rough’. The improved ability to communicate therefore portrayed an image to others that they were respectful and caring individuals.

Research on volunteering has shown that the acquisition of skills through training promotes a sense of confidence, competence and control (O’Shea, 2006). Maruna (2009: 117-9) describes this as “generativity as fulfilment.” In other words, the work is fulfilling because of the sense of skill and ability it elicits. Listeners revealed that by far the biggest change experienced after training was a greater level of self-awareness, and feelings of confidence and competence experienced as a result of their new-found ability to support other prisoners:



*It has given me the confidence to grow in myself. Stuff [that] I wouldn't have even tried, I have actually now completed. That's why I am a totally different person. And I am looking forward to life now instead of just living it day by day, I have something to focus on and see what I get out of.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)

*I think even if you didn't get through the training, it is quite useful to anyone, because you learn a lot about yourself through that training. I mean I am quite a shy person and I developed more confidence, and knowing that I help others, and that I am there for them. That's quite fulfilling.* (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)

The quotations above highlight how the process of becoming a Listener enabled prisoners to learn something about themselves, and develop confidence in their own abilities. This also served to give Listeners a sense of purpose, optimism and motivation. While some Listeners rejected the idea that they had 'changed', they all talked of the impact of their work on themselves and how this benefitted them, not only in their listening role, but also in their lives in prison and relationships with people both 'outside' and 'inside'. Approximately half of the Listeners interviewed described how their improved communication skills had enhanced their relationships with family. The development of empathy, and an ability to understand problems from another individual's perspective, played an important role in this process. For one female prisoner, her newfound skills enhanced her relationship with her daughter, who was a self-harmer:

*I found out that when my daughter was about 11 or 12, she used to self-harm, and I'd never ever clicked on. She always blamed the cat, but the signs were there, and I think if I'd been a Listener, or done the training, I could have helped her. But now that I've done the training, I*



*help her more. But I back off, let her do the talking; let her give me the feedback on why she is doing it. (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)*

Listeners said they were forging stronger, better, relationships with people on the outside through making use of more enhanced interpersonal skills. Becoming a Listener was perceived by Listeners as a process where they learned to communicate with others more effectively, both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the prison walls. Therefore becoming a Listener was a process through which prisoners developed certain characteristics – confidence, competence, and communication skills.

### **8.1.3 Being a Listener: volunteering as ‘doing time’**

The discussion turns now to examine the interview data with respect to what being a Listener meant to prisoners who adopted the role, and how they saw it in relation to their imprisonment and future prospects in general. The meaning of Listener work and the Listener role holds importance because Listeners, as prisoners, have their own imprisonment to cope with and adapt to, and time to ‘do’ or ‘use’. As chapter 4 explored the volunteering literature tends to focus on the many and varied positive impacts on volunteers according to functionalist, measurable outcomes such as re-offending, or employment. One branch of this research highlights the potential for volunteering to enable people to cope better with their own circumstances. For example, research has suggested that helping others can improve an individual’s self-image and alleviate depressive symptoms (Kim & Pai, 2010: 186). O’Shea (2006: 276) and Bradley (1999-2000: 49) found that older volunteers felt better able to cope with their own problems through supporting others. Schwartz and Sender (1999) posit that supporting peers enhanced volunteers’ perceptions of self-efficacy, self-acceptance, elicited a sense of purpose in life and counteracted depression. The ‘helper-therapy principle’ has been



proposed as a mechanism through which greater self-awareness arising from helping others, results in ‘self-recovery’ (Reissman, 1965, cited in Soloman, 2004: 395). Midlarsky (1991) identified five core mechanisms through which helping others has the potential to facilitate the coping process: by serving as a distraction; providing a source of meaningfulness and value in life; triggering positive self-evaluations; eliciting a positive mood; and enhancing social integration. Whilst, as Midlarsky (1991: 248) warns, these mechanisms are not entirely distinct from one another, they do provide a useful summary of the ways in which volunteering can assist in the coping process. Among offenders specifically, the ‘therapeutic’ effects of helping others may be enhanced through the development of a positive self-image (Maruna, 2001: 124). Therefore, whilst the nature of the voluntary activity has the potential to benefit the group receiving support or help, there are also potential benefits to volunteers. In fact, the literature focuses on the benefits to volunteers much more than it does the experience of ‘service-users’. Given the above evidence in the volunteering literature, it is not surprising that government has seen volunteering by prisoners as a tool to reduce re-offending. However, this narrow and functionalist approach overlooks the wider and intangible benefits of voluntary work to both volunteers and ‘service-users’ and not only that, it fails to address the specific context of the prison which cannot be assumed to provide a comparable context to the ‘outside’.

Volunteering as a Listener in prison is likely to hold significance among prisoners as a direct consequence of the nature of the environment, which strips prisoners from many of their former roles and activities. Not only that, but engaging in work or voluntary activity can have other effects such as helping to pass the time by and can facilitate coping in prison (e.g. see Liebling, 2012: 58; Taylor, 2008). It must be remembered that there are also more practical benefits of certain roles in prison that serve to ease the pains of imprisonment through enjoying greater freedom and time out of cells, increasing access to facilities, and creating more



opportunities for social interaction. Pryor (2001: 60) suggests that even a mundane job, which is perceived as ‘important’ in the context of the prison environment, can act as a catalyst for feelings of self-worth among prisoners. Devilly et al (2005: 231) propose that helping others can give prisoners a new insight into their own problems. Farrant (2005: no page) posits that Listeners are able to see their problems from an alternative perspective through the training and supporting other prisoners; this, she suggests, has a “protective effect on mental health.” One released Listener explained: “I measured my circumstances against theirs and saw that my suffering was not monumental” (Chinelo, 2010: no page). This demonstrates that exposure to the problems of others has the potential to put Listeners’ own problems into perspective. A common theme in Listeners’ accounts was the two-way helping process of Listener support. Not only did they feel that their work was very important in terms of supporting prisoners, Listeners also felt that it enabled them to step back from their own problems and see them in a new light:

*It helps you to understand people more, and understand yourself then. I mean listening to some people can help me understand my own problems sometimes. It’s almost like amateur psychology, you can learn a lot off other people even though it’s somebody else’s problem.*  
(Adult male Listener, Prison 1)

*Sometimes the callers that you go out to help you, because sometimes they are going through the same thing that you are going through. I know you can’t advise them, we are just there for listening purposes, and understanding. But there [are] some things when you speak to them, and you come out the door and think “she’s helped me” and they’ve not known it. So it works both ways.* (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)



These quotations suggest that supporting other prisoners appeared to help Listeners understand their own problems to a greater extent. Listeners felt that being a Listener was a learning process where talking to others helped them to learn too. Not only that, but as the discussion below outlines, being a Listener was an alternative way of doing time, seen as a legitimate route through which to adopt a reformed identity.

The attitudes and behaviour associated with adopting the Listener role are seen as a key element in both the change that can be observed in those prisoners who have become Listeners, and the change experienced in how Listeners are perceived and treated by others. Listeners portrayed themselves as more mature, better people, even more ‘human’, as a result of their participation. Listeners described, how by adopting the Listener role, this came to enhance and portray certain qualities or characteristics about themselves:

*The minute I joined the Listeners I kind of changed. It's like putting a suit on for the first time. You kind of feel like somebody, you can walk with your head up high. You're not just the average scally kid off the scabby estate in a trackie [tracksuit]. People look at you different, and that's what it was like for me. The Listeners just have people's respect and trust. That's a good thing, and I will never lose it or break it. It is an amazing feeling.[...] It's changed my mind, my heart, my soul, and sent me on a different path from what I was on when I came in. My experiences, and seeing the actual depths you can go to, it changes you as a person to help someone through a bad stage. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

*It has helped and I have got respect from prison officers [...] If you want to be a Listener you want to be a model. You have people around you and you don't do any bad behaviours. You do good things because other people are watching you, and then in a way you are helping yourself be a better person. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*



Being a Listener therefore, was about being a particular kind of prisoner, a ‘better’ one. The quotations above highlight how these prisoners felt that the Listener role represented certain characteristics or qualities that they ‘put on like a new suit’ and ‘wore’. They felt this ultimately influenced how they were seen by other prisoners, and by prison staff, and demonstrated change, reform, and self-betterment. Moreover, it led to a process whereby they behaved in accordance with notions of how Listeners are supposed to behave.

Volunteers have been observed to “fall in love” with their work and feel motivated to change their career aspirations (Golden, 1991: 231). Maruna (1997: 86) utilised McAdams’ (1993) concept of a ‘generative script’ to describe how offenders who engage in generative work articulate their desire to create a legacy to benefit future generations and prevent them from turning to crime. Adopting a helping role therefore, alters how volunteers see themselves (Blair, 2006: 6). However, Devilly et al (2005: 237) argue that it is unwise to expect long-term change in offenders simply through their participation in peer schemes alone. Maruna (1997: 63-4) suggests that whilst ex-offenders’ ‘generative’ notions about their future may be idealized and not entirely realistic, there is reason to believe that their accounts are still insightful and reveal something about the mechanisms of desistance from crime. Moreover:

Trying on a conformist identity in prison, as a purely cognitive process, is much easier than establishing the role commitments that will elevate salience of this identity and guide behaviour of release [...] Nevertheless, in our view, such expressions constitute more than fictive storytelling or fantasizing. We believe that trying on the roles of productive citizen, responsible citizen and active citizen provides, at minimum, an imaginative rehearsal for their assumption on release. (Uggen, Manza & Behrens, 2004: 265)



In my conversations with Listeners, I was often struck by the sense of dedication, of purpose, and of having found a new way of life. Volunteering elicited a sense of achievement and pride among Listeners, particularly where they observed the positive impact they made on their callers, and when callers explicitly expressed gratitude:

*I like helping people, I like the feeling you get, I like the gratitude when someone says “thank you, it did help me.” I like that feeling – a bit of glory. I like to know that I have made a difference.* (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)

This led to a desire to continue this work to make use of these new found skills. The majority of the Listeners interviewed talked of their release and future prospects in extremely positive terms. Many of the Listeners had ambitions to work in related areas of employment on their release such as counselling or social care work, and exhibited a desire to help others who may be experiencing similar problems and prevent them from making the same mistakes; this suggests that their ‘generative’ goals extended beyond the prison walls:

*I’d like at some point to become a probation officer because I truly believe that someone like me, that has gone through a number of years in and out of prison, had a few issues with drugs and drink, I have gone through it enough times to say to somebody “this is what’s happened to me and this is what could happen to you in a few years’ time.”* (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)

*Before I came into doing the Listener work, I wanted to do plumbing. But now I’ve worked with the Listeners and going to listen to people, I wanna do youth work now, actually helping young people who have got into trouble, and help certain things that they are going through.* (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)



These quotations demonstrate that Listeners were motivated to use their new-found skills to good use, and explained that Listening work had changed their direction in life. It reinforces the image of having become a particular kind of prisoner – reformed, pro-social, focussed and determined to put their skills and experiences to good use, both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of the prison walls. In other words, they could do their time, not just as prisoners, but as Listeners.

## **8.2 Doing Listener work**

Samaritans volunteers on the outside take mostly anonymous calls, complete a four hour shift once a week, and are able to return home at the end of their shift. Listeners however, live in close proximity to those they support and are called upon to listen to the complex problems of potentially very vulnerable people. Listeners are therefore not able to disengage from their volunteering in the same way that Samaritans are able to (Dhaliwal & Harrower, 2009: 36). Not only that, but as prisoners themselves, they are subject to the same pains, deprivations and losses of power, that are characteristic of imprisonment, as their callers. It is therefore important to consider how Listeners conduct the specific style of volunteer work in the prison environment, and how they manage their roles as both prisoners and volunteers.

It is useful to begin by reminding ourselves of the specific approach adopted by Samaritans and Listeners (outlined in chapter 3), characterised by the following core features:

- **Caller-centred:** The volunteer asks questions but allows the ‘caller’ to remain in control of the call and determine what is talked about.
- **Non-directive:** This aims to enable the caller to explore their own feelings and options without being advised, or practically helped.
- **Self-determination:** The caller has the right to make decisions about their own lives, even if that decision is to die by suicide.



- Confidentiality: This is the most central and controversial aspect of Samaritan-style listening as anything a caller tells a volunteer remains completely confidential, even with reference to suicidal thoughts or intentions. This policy of complete confidentiality is considered essential to create an environment where callers are able to disclose what is really bothering them

Listeners were asked if the training provided by Samaritans in listening techniques in line with the above guidelines, prepared them for their Listener work in prison. There was agreement among the Listeners interviewed that the training could only teach so much and that the process of becoming a Listener continued after the training, whereby they learned through on-the-job experience:

*No matter how many role plays that you do, it will not prepare you for the first time that you go out, because it is completely different. And you just cope with it the best way that you can.*

(Adult female Listener, Prison 3)

*Everyone's different and if I'm honest there are occasions where speaking to people, you sort of learn as you go along being a Listener. You are pretty much thrown in at the deep end when you first start off, and as long as you just, you know, relax and try to talk to people in a reasonable way, it seems to work.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)

These quotations signal that there is more to doing Listener work than can be taught by Samaritans. The very nature of the setting in which Listeners conduct their work brings with it a series of complex challenges and dilemmas, and led Listeners to interpret how Samaritan listening approaches should be applied in prison. The discussion that follows explores Listeners' experiences of doing Listener work by examining the day to day reality of how Listeners conduct their role listening to prisoners, and the tensions, ambiguities and dilemmas



they face. Furthermore, the discussion considers how Listeners manage their dual role as both Listeners and prisoners, how they ‘slip in and out of roles’, and the battles for power that take place with prison staff who undermine their ‘Listener status’ in favour of their ‘prisoner status’.

### **8.2.1 Supporting prisoners and maintaining confidentiality**

Samaritans have put in place policies that prevent the creation of a close, unhealthy, or dependent relationship between Listeners and their ‘callers’. For example, a rota system decreases the likelihood that a caller will speak to the same Listener each time. In the prison environment however, this is made more problematic because callers i.e. prisoners, are more likely to come into contact with the volunteers. As chapter 7 highlighted, prisoners preferred to select Listeners they knew and there was also evidence for ‘informal’ and less visible forms of help-seeking. Furthermore, Listeners may be privy to information about another prisoner’s well-being that staff are not, and Listeners come into regular contact with issues of distress, self-harm and suicidal feelings because the people experiencing these feelings share the same space and environment (Edgar, Jacobson & Biggar, 2011: 23).

Listeners mentioned the frequency and proximity of contact they had with prisoner vulnerability, distress, suicide and self-harm. Coming into such close contact with self-harm for example, can be quite a dramatic experience. When talking about the kinds of problems prisoners approached them with, one Listener said:

*I went to see someone, and not mentioning any names of course, they had just cut their wrist, and literally, I was in there five minutes after it had been bandaged up. There was still a bit of blood on his trainer and his bed, and he was standing there holding his bandage. And it’s a bit*



*of a shock to think, “Why? Why would you do that?” But other people have different ways of dealing with things which I might not understand. It is my job to try and be open minded, and help them through a tough time. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

This Listener described seeing self-harm as like getting a ‘slap in the face’ suggesting that it can be quite a shock to the system to witness. Another Listener described his experience as ‘scary’:

*There are the self-harmers, who can .... if I am really honest they can be quite scary. Because you know the person is self-harming, and you can see that they are self-harming, and you then know that they can go back to the cell and they might just self-harm. But he might go a little bit too far and he’s dead. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

Whilst, as the first part of this chapter demonstrated, volunteering is described as a very worthwhile and a personally beneficial activity by Listeners, one must not overlook the possibility that the role may be burdensome, particularly where they observe prisoners who do not ‘improve’ or appear ‘helped’ after receiving support; this may therefore be counter-productive to volunteers’ well-being (Salovey, Mayen & Rosenhan, 1991: 221). These quotations also highlight that the very *visible* signs of distress and methods of coping by prisoners, such as self-harm, reinforce to Listeners the potential outcomes for prisoners. People who provide help to others are thought to do so out of a desire to see a positive impact from their help (Brockman et al., 1982), however certain types of volunteering such as that of Samaritans, or in palliative care for example, may not ultimately lead to an improvement of the circumstances of service-users (see Claxton-Oldfield & Claxton-Oldfield, 2008) in the same way that other services might do. To this end, it is understandable that Listeners described feeling a sense of responsibility for callers:



*Sometimes you will see them and they are alright, and sometimes they come crashing back down, and you just think, “Oh no! What am I not doing right?”* (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)

*If you see someone at the night time, and you leave their cell. In the morning if you see them and they are still like that, maybe they have got an injury from the night before, it’s quite difficult, because you think, “what do I do?” You think, maybe, “did I push them over the edge? Did I push them past that point where they wanted to hurt themselves? Or was it just gonna happen anyway?”* (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)

So whilst helping someone may result in feelings of satisfaction and happiness, an individual harming themselves after a contact could result in the Listener feeling of not having done enough to help or feeling a sense of culpability for the consequences. When talking to prisoners who were ‘on the edge’, one female Listener described how she felt a responsibility to respond in the ‘right’ way:

*You get the ones who are suicidal, desperate, self-harming, the ones who have thoughts of suicide and who have actually planned it. They are the ones who you have to be careful how you deal with them. You know you have to be a very good Listener, you have to ask the right questions at the right times. They can be quite difficult really, because your concentration levels have got to be ... all the time, you know you can’t just sit down and relax in case you miss something.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)

However, as one Listener suggested “*You have got to do this job and expect things to go bad.*” Whilst a realistic or more pragmatic attitude could facilitate the process of managing emotions,



the confidential nature of the knowledge they acquired presented additional challenges to which the discussion now turns.

When asked explicitly about Samaritans' policy of confidentiality that Listeners were expected to adhere to, some Listeners described maintaining confidentiality as acquiring the status of confidence keepers:

*The confidentiality I think, that is the main thing, because obviously sometimes when people do something, you can get excited about it and wanna tell other people. But with this job you can't, so it is something that stays with you. And obviously, you know in your head that you want to tell people, and you just can't. It's exciting. On the outside if someone just told me something I would be like "oh he just told me this." And obviously here with this Samaritan thing, it is quite different. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

Thus, being able to maintain confidentiality was seen as associated with greater levels of self-control, as the quotation below reinforces:

*That's why they respect you because they can call you out in the night and tell you their darkest secrets, and be at their weakest; then the next day they will see you and it's just normal. And they respect that. It helps them a lot to know they can trust us. Because trust is a big issue in here. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

Another Listener described how he had once talked to a prisoner who was a renowned 'bully' in the prison. After receiving support, the prisoner indicated that he still intended to 'take the mick' out of the Listener in front of others in order to preserve his reputation. This, taken in conjunction with the above quotations, highlights how prisoners wish to preserve their privacy



by portraying an unaltered relationship with the Listener. Therefore, supporting the findings from chapter 7, it was not Listener actions alone which reinforced trustworthiness, it was also their ‘silence’ about what they had heard, and their subsequent ‘inaction’.

For other Listeners, confidentiality was vested with responsibility. The responsibility associated with confidentiality could bear considerably painful costs given the aforementioned implications of living in close proximity to their callers and their callers’ problems:

*With listening to people, and getting to know everything, and keeping it all confidential, it is quite hard. The majority have the normal problems staying in a prison. But some, if they have serious issues, like with their family, and they’re feeling lonely, and they try suicide or self-harm ... you know, you have got all of the burden. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

*It might bring back old memories and that’s just normal because we are all human, we’ve all got feelings. But at that moment in time, your feelings get put to one side and you listen to their problem, and you offer them some emotional support for what they are going through. And after the call out you might feel so upset because you have just heard something that has brought back old memories. That’s when you have got your fellow colleagues, your fellow Listeners that you can go and talk to, and you can cry your heart out, because we then become the caller. (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)*

These Listeners point to their function in enabling prisoners to ‘off-load’ on to them. Indeed, as chapter 7 explored, prisoners who had talked to Listeners valued the opportunity to release their feelings to an individual who took their feelings on board and empathised with them. However, the second Listener quoted above draws attention to the need for Listeners to ‘off-load’ themselves. De-briefing served to reduce the feeling of burden and helped Listeners to



cope with the problems prisoners had talked to them about, and the confidence they were expected to keep this in. The mutual support between the team of Listeners was noted as important by the majority of the Listeners interviewed, as it provided a sounding board for their concerns, a place to offload their feelings, and it was a group with whom they could talk about their confidential calls. The significance of de-briefing meetings was particularly pertinent among young offender Listeners:

*[A]ll confidentiality can be dropped, everyone can speak openly about everything they have heard and witnessed. It is a good idea for everyone to connect, and open up, let everything out that they have been holding in. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

*It basically a debriefing thing, so it is quite good because obviously sometimes we get bad news as well, and you can't cope in your head, and either you can talk to a Listener, or you can wait for [Samaritans] to come over, and you just talk to everyone and go through it. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

Listeners therefore listened to one another and not only could they provide support, they provided a space where they felt they were not 'holding on to', or 'carrying' that confidential knowledge, could relax and 'off-load' or 'download' the things they had heard. Not only that, but through the formation of a mutually supportive group, Listeners could bond as a team based on their shared experiences as Listeners:

*It starts off as people you have never met before, unless you have seen them around the prison, they put you in a room, and you just talk to each other. It's that building up a bond again, you see each other through things. You can disclose things to them which you can't tell anyone else, and you just talk about things, and it's like meeting some new people, like a social club,*



*talk about things, even if they are on different wings, like branching out.* (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)

Undoubtedly the more ‘social’ aspects of being a Listener and attending de-briefing meetings was an additional benefit to Listeners who might not have other opportunities to interact with others in this way in prison. The above evidence unequivocally highlights the considerable responsibility Listeners are adopting by taking on the role as prisoners themselves, and the significance of effective support system in helping them to deal with this in an environment where the opportunities for escape or withdrawal from associations with their volunteering are limited. This is developed later in discussions of the dilemmas of Listeners’ dual role as both Listeners and prisoners.

### **8.2.2 The boundaries of Listener support**

The interviews with Listeners probed into how proactive they felt they were in supporting prisoners, and what the ‘limits’ to the help that they could offer as Listeners were. This elicited remarks that provided an insight into how Listeners understood and pushed the boundaries of their role and support that they offered as a Listener. Most interviewees described their approach as proactive. They would not just wait to be called out by prisoners, and proactively sought out those prisoners they identified as in need of support in the prison community:

*As a Listener you are always looking out, rather than just waiting for the call, you are looking to see if someone needs you. It’s just a matter of knocking on the door if someone isn’t coming out of their pad, you just knock on the door and say, “Are you alright? Do you want to come up for a brew?”* (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)



*If I see someone that looks like they are having a hard time, for example if they come from the phone and they look down and I see a tear, and they are wiping their eyes, or they are sitting alone on association, I will approach them and say, “I’m a Listener, and even if you don’t want to speak to a Listener, I’m still here to help, you can talk to me. Remember everything is confidential, you can say as much or as little as you want, just want to let you know that I am here if you need to talk to me.” And you get some good response from that, people do wanna talk, if you give them the opportunity and don’t pressure them into it, and say “you know where I am, if you want to talk, come and find me.” (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

These Listeners draw attention to the sense of responsibility they feel to reach out to prisoners as part of the role and an awareness of the benefits of more ‘informal’ support and help-seeking. However, proactivity was exercised within carefully defined bounds, in that Listeners did not want to ‘push themselves’ onto prisoners, and were aware of the high visibility of their discussions with prisoners. Listeners also ‘put themselves out there’ and talked to prisoners in a more informal listening capacity, as the quotations below illustrate:

*When they [healthcare prisoners] get association, I sit with them in the TV room and hear them out, on ‘social’<sup>3</sup> because it’s not like all work and no play. You’ve got to give them something to make them feel normal. You can’t just be there all the time asking them how they feel. There’s listens and there’s socials right? (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

*On association we go up to see someone, and see how they are doing, play a game of pool. In here it’s the little things that really do make a big difference. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

---

<sup>3</sup> ‘Social’ is the term prisoners sometimes refer to when describing their ‘association’ time out of their cells with other prisoners on their wing, which normally takes place during the evenings.



Whilst not all Listeners felt that they should approach prisoners whom they identified as potentially in need of support, as they were ever aware that their being a Listener could expose prisoners' vulnerability to other prisoners, and the risks associated with help-seeking in the prison environment, many Listeners did however see their wider role as promoting prisoner well-being more generally, through supportive gestures or 'reaching-out' to prisoners in these more informal, and less visible, ways.

Listeners were further asked what they considered to be the boundaries of their role and whether it consisted simply of 'listening', if they did more for prisoners, and how they perceived the boundaries or limits to their role. A small number of Listeners clearly maintained that a listening ear was all they offered, and indeed all they could offer. Some expressed feeling powerlessness in helping some prisoners as they could only work within the confines of the support that they were expected to operate under as Listeners. This tension in wanting to do more, but not feeling able to, is illustrated by the below quotation:

*We are there to offer emotional support and just to listen, and as a Listener we can only do what we can do. There is only so much we can do as a Listener and we are not problem solvers unfortunately. So we just have to grin and bear it. It is what comes with being a Listener.*  
(Adult female Listener, Prison 3)

However, some Listeners found ways in which they could assist prisoners that they considered technically within the boundaries of Samaritans' expectations whilst at the same time stretching them. For example, one Listener suggested that as a more effective communicator he could talk to staff on behalf of prisoners:



*We say to them “If you want, I will speak to the staff on your behalf about this problem.” That’s not because you’re the world’s expert on whatever it is bothering them. It’s that they might not be able to speak to staff, their vocabulary might not be up to scratch, they might not know the way to come across and explain themselves. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

Whilst this Listener kept in line with the Samaritans policy of confidentiality as prisoners’ permission to talk to staff was obtained, this quotation highlights the potential for Listeners to become more involved in assisting prisoners. Not only that, but as a more effective communicator, the Listener quoted above felt he was in a better position to be able to engage with staff for prisoners who lacked those skills. Particularly in the male prisons, Listeners often drew attention to the more practical outcomes of their assistance and the mediating role they played between prisoners and staff to ensure that problems, such as a mismatch between cell mates, or a need for a phone call home by a distressed prisoner, could be addressed. Listeners found it necessary to ‘bend the rules’ because of the special conditions in which they are working within the prison environment, and the closer and more complex, relationships they have with their callers than Samaritans on the outside. They recognised that seemingly small issues could be experienced as extremely painful in the restrictive and controlling environment of the prison, and this could have an adverse effect on prisoners who did not know how to resolve them:

*The advantage is that we understand, we know where they are coming from. When we speak to them we speak with feeling, in depth. You know, it is not like an onlooker just looking in and making assumptions. We live the life we live, so when an inmate says something, which could just be a little thing you know, we will know what it means to him because we live in the same environment. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*



Listeners found it difficult to simply listen without offering help based on their knowledge. As one Listener explained:

*It can be difficult, and although we follow the rules as much as possible, there are occasions where they are slightly bent. We have got to, we can't help it because obviously that person is going to go away [and] end up getting in a situation which he really shouldn't be in. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

Given their prison knowledge, Listeners found it difficult not to mention something they felt could prevent a problem, particularly if it meant avoiding antagonising a renowned bully, or approaching an unhelpful member of staff which could have adverse consequences. Many of the Listeners interviewed described other ways that they felt able to help prisoners as knowledgeable agents in the prison environment:

*Well we are mainly there to just listen – obviously! Sometimes listening isn't enough, I tend to go off a little bit and sometimes offer advice, possible solutions. I never sort of say to them "this is what you have to do" I just say "have you thought about maybe trying this..." (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

*I have tried to help sort of along the lines where the other person might be feeling quite down, so I have pointed them in the right direction. You just do. Sometimes you just cannot help it, not if the person is really, really in a lot of stress, or if you can see them going through a lot of despair. It's easy to get involved with that person. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

Listeners were therefore careful not to necessarily become primarily a source of advice to prisoners. They felt a need to more gently, and subtly point prisoners in what they felt was the



right direction based on their knowledge of the prison environment. The fact that Listeners assisted prisoners in more subtle ways demonstrates a recognition that their role is primarily a non-advice or interventionist one, yet it was difficult to stick with this in a strict sense, and easy to become more involved. To this end, the use of prisoners in supporting their peers, justified on the grounds of shared experiences, yet at the same time as expecting them to not use that knowledge to help them, represents a difficulty of the translation of Samaritans' practice in the prison environment. It also helps to explain the origin of some staff suspicion of the contact between prisoners and Listeners who could be seen as joining forces and corroborating together, engaging in illicit activities, or as departing from more formal mechanisms of resolving problems under the auspices of prison staff.

Whilst, as we have seen, the fact that Listeners were 'peers' with experiences as prisoners put them in a position where they felt able to reach out, and at times guide prisoners, this peer identification was not always clear cut. A common quandary for Listeners was in the 'non-judgemental' approach adopted by Samaritans and how this applied in the prison environment supporting people who had been stigmatised by society. This was predominantly the case where prisoners had committed particular crimes, namely sexual offences. One Listener described how prisoners might be discouraged from even becoming a Listener when they found out that they might have to support particular kinds of prisoners:

*People rush into it, and think "oh yeah I'll get this, I'll get that." [...] They don't really know anything about the Listeners. They know basically what they do, but they don't know what they get called out for. And when you say to them that you could get called out to someone who is a sex offender, or someone who is mentally ill, people say "oh I'm not doing that." (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*



Whilst the whole emphasis on peer support is the ‘peer status’ of the helpers, it is important to remember that prisoners are considered by this approach to be peers on the basis on their common imprisonment and the common experiences they may share as a direct result of their loss of liberty. Such a broad categorisation of ‘peer’ in this context can be arbitrary and does not necessarily lead to identification between people (see also Shiner, 1999 for a discussion of this in a non-prison setting). Listening to particular kinds of problems was seen as ‘challenging’ by Listeners:

*Sometimes the things that you hear, you probably have your own opinion on what you think about it, and you have to keep your own opinions to yourself and just be there. So that alone is a challenge, having to – whether you like it or not – just take it. (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)*

*It’s no good being a Listener and you get called out to see a young man who’s had a ‘Dear John’ off his girlfriend and he’s crying – now you could deal with that, it’s not too dramatic a subject, and most people could deal with a subject like that as a Listener. But then you could get another call out and it could be a paedophile who wants to talk about certain issues in his life that you wouldn’t normally listen to, [and] wouldn’t normally associate with that kind of person. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

The quotations above demonstrate how Listeners sometimes suspended their judgement when faced with difficult topics posed by particular groups of prisoners. By putting their opinions and feelings to one side, Listeners then felt more able to continue supporting prisoners and saw it as a feature of the support they offered to them. Despite this, it was clear that they sometimes struggled to suspend this judgement. Where prisoners began to disclose particular details in



relation to the nature of sexual offences for example, some Listeners felt that they were no longer able to support the prisoner themselves:

*You might go through [with] the call, and somebody has told you something about their crime, that you might not agree with, or you definitely don't agree with, and it takes a big person to say "I do not agree with what you just told me, but I am going to ignore it, I didn't hear it, don't say it again." Some people would just react to it straight away. You hear a lot of things listening, and sometimes you just have to think, "can I deal with it in the right way, or is it gonna get the better of me." [...] Abuse is ... the big one. If someone mentions something about abuse, sexual, I don't want to hear it, sorry. I know they've got problems but I am going to give them the Samaritans phone. I can't hear it, sorry. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

The above quotation sheds light on the difficulty of adopting a truly non-judgemental approach where Listeners and their callers live together and have all of their contacts face-to-face. This is an environment where there are long-established norms and values. 'Nonces', i.e. sex offenders, are positioned at the bottom of the prisoner hierarchy and often have to be separated from the mainstream prison population for their own safety. Maruna (2009: 117-9) suggests that the meaning of volunteer work for offenders is enhanced where their offender status or knowledge adds to their ability to relate to the offenders they are helping. However, here we see an example where this common ground and peer identification was less straightforward and difficult for Listeners to come to terms with in the prison environment.



### **8.2.3 Dilemmas of doing Listener work: dual roles**

This chapter has posited that Listeners associate a certain status with the Listener role, and that it was seen by prisoners as a desirable role to adopt. This status arises out of the greater freedom Listeners have, the ‘trusted’ or ‘privileged’ nature of the position and what adopting the role implies in terms of being a changed individual. This has implications for Listeners because they are also simultaneously prisoners. As Richman (2004: no page) suggests: “one minute Listeners are just an inmate, the next, engaged with a ‘client’, are fulfilling a ‘professional’ role.” The impact of their experience of being prisoners and Listeners, and their new-found levels of self-understanding and empathy, help them to make sense of the past and relate to their ‘clients’ in a counselling or mentoring capacity (Brown, 1991: 223). This is also seen as a method of promoting an image of a ‘respectable self’ (Farrall & Calverley, 2006: 104) through promoting qualities such as confidence, competence and maturity:

Work involves the development of new position-practices, such as that of ‘the professional’, which is in many cases the antithesis of ‘the offender’. These position-practices are by their definition more ‘responsible’ and ‘adult’. (Farrall & Calverley, 2006: 185)

However, much of the above research talks of how offenders utilise their role as a ‘professional-ex’ (Brown, 1991) on release and not in prison. Considering prisoners as possessing some form of ‘professional’ status is problematic given the imbalanced power relationships with prison staff can undermine or counteract their professionalism, and reinforce both Listeners’ ‘prisoner status’ and their inferior position in the prison hierarchy (Scott, 2011; see chapter 9). Whilst Listeners did not call themselves ‘professionals’, as the foregoing



findings argued, they nevertheless attributed a certain status to the role, and associated it with being a particular kind of ‘changed’ prisoner, with a focus and desire to do good.

The volunteering literature has recognised that the conduct of volunteers is important because they are representatives of the organisation (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008: 71). However, inside the prison walls, volunteers are highly visible at all times by service users, and prison staff whether they are ‘on duty’ or not. The importance of ‘impression management’ has been raised before by Listeners:

We can’t allow ourselves to be seen as gossips, or even being around – let alone directly involved in – problems, arguments, fights etc. That can be enough to put people off using us. However being accessible can be a difficult balance. We don’t have to be “holier than thou” – it’s just about being safe and keeping in mind how both callers and staff view us, and the potential impact this may have on the scheme. Once a Listener, in just about anything you do or say, both prisoners and staff will identify you as a Listener first. (Anon, 2006: 9)

Goffman (1959; 1967) described the centrality of ‘impression management’ and ‘face-work’ in maintaining the portrayal of an identity to other. In particular, Goffman points to the role of consistency of the behaviour of individuals belonging to a group in maintaining the overall image of the group (Goffman, 1959: 207). In the context of the prison, the Listeners interviewed for the current study reinforced that impression management is an important component of ‘doing Listener work’. Therefore, whilst becoming a Listener was a means through which prisoners could portray a positive identity, the nature of the role which gave them greater freedom around the establishment and bringing them in closer contact with staff, meant that they had to carefully negotiate and manage the portrayal of themselves to both



prisoners and staff. Listeners attempted uphold this identity – both for the benefit of themselves and for the reputation of the scheme as a whole – however recognised that their reputation was inherently fragile:

*You are representing your group and the Samaritans. They put a lot of time and trust in you, and as a prisoner that means a lot. So you would never break that time and trust. And like when you are on [duty], you can't kind of be like messing about if someone's got a problem, you kind of just like stick with the role. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

*Some people you know, if they're banged up and they want to come out, you know they start banging. Even if you are a Listener you start banging the door, the staff are going to be angry. And all these things you have to be very careful, again it's your behaviour, that's very important. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

These Listeners illustrate that being a Listener implied certain behaviours and characteristics and that Listeners behaved in-line with these expectations in order to preserve this reputation and identity (Goffman, 1959: 209). Goffman (1967: 19) explains:

When the participants in an undertaking or encounter fail to prevent the occurrence of an event that is expressively incompatible with the judgements of social worth that are being maintained [...] an attempt must be made to re-establish a satisfactory ritual state for them. I use the term *ritual* because I am dealing with acts through whose symbolic component the actor shows how worthy he is of respect or how worthy he feels others are of it. (Emphasis in original)



Additionally, the behaviour members of the group as a whole served to reinforce the reputation of the group which also reflected on their own identities:

*There was one Listener, he was trafficking drugs and all this stuff, using the Listener passport,<sup>4</sup> and they caught him. Then it's not just him, it's all the Listeners in trouble. And that is really dangerous, that is always very difficult. In fact, not just for Listeners, for Samaritans, and everyone. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

*There are Listeners in here that will misuse the system, that will use us as getting time out of the cell to get them from one place over to the Listener suite and then back to the cell, [prisoners] might ask for tobacco, or you know a Rizla [cigarette paper] or something, and they are all told the same thing. Because if one Listener starts to give something, then [another prisoner] hears about it, and then all night every night we are being called out for silly little things. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

A number of Listeners interviewed were involved in coming together with their team when one Listener had breached the rules by trafficking drugs. In such instances, after consultation with Samaritans, the Listeners collectively dismissed the individual from the scheme. This collective action served to publicly display to prisoners and staff the behaviour was not deemed acceptable or characteristic of the Listener role. Listeners argued that abuses of the scheme by Listeners threaten the reputation of the group as a whole.

Not only is the dual role of Listeners' as prisoners and Listeners potentially problematic in terms of their relationships with prison staff, it can also have an impact on their relationships

---

<sup>4</sup> The Listener passport is a special identity pass with a photo of the Listener on. It is used by Listeners and presented to staff so that they can identify prisoners as Listeners and facilitate their movements of Listeners.



with prisoners and lead to their being approached for support whether ‘on duty’ or not (Davies, 1994: 128) on a more ‘informal’ and less visible basis, as one released Listener describes:

Without the badge, cons would still approach me in state of distress knowing that I was a Listener, yet pretending that they didn’t require a Listener. I would sometimes have to clearly ascertain whether they were chatting to me as a mate or a Listener. Over the years as I grew into my role, the distinction narrowed between prisoner and Listener. (Chinelo, 2010: no page)

Many of the Listeners described how in the process of becoming a Listener their communication skills had improved and that this had also become part of how they saw themselves as changed individuals:

*Well, we have the friendships, but I think we are always Listeners. [...] I am always talking to people. I probably wouldn’t do it that much if I wasn’t a Listener. Does that make sense? But because I am a Listener, I put myself out there and put myself on offer and then give people that support more often than before, because I feel that is what we are here for.* (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)

This provides support for the earlier discussion where it was identified that whilst Listeners were not necessarily overtly proactive, the nature of the role elicited a source of general concern for the well-being of other prisoners. This not only pushed the boundaries of the Listener role, but also blurred the boundaries between being a prisoner and a Listener. Another female Listener described how she found herself ‘slipping in and out’ of her roles as a Listener and prisoner, which she felt was a direct result of her newly acquired skills that had enabled



her to listen and communicate effectively with friends, as well as those prisoners she was called upon to support:

*I would say that I'm not two people, but one's my Listener hat and one's my friend hat. So when I am talking to my friends, you know most of my friends will come to me for advice, opinions and everything, and I will sit there with my friends and I will talk to them as a friend and give them my advice and give them my opinion. But as soon as I get called as a Listener, my Listener hat goes on, and I go into the contact with the caller, and I'm just a Listener, I'm just there to listen to you, for you, emotional support. So I guess I'm not two different people, but one's my Listener hat and one's my friend hat. (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)*

Whilst Listeners could theoretically separate the nature of supporting others as a friend and as a Listener, in practice, this was less clear cut and the two roles overlapped. Volunteers in non-prison settings form an identity more closely affiliated with their volunteering as they dedicate more time to it (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Laverie & McDonald, 2007). In the prison environment Listeners do not have a retreat or escape from associations with their volunteering and this blurs the boundaries between their volunteering and their daily lives as prisoners. Furthermore, in forging relationships with other prisoners, they could act as a 'Listener' as defined by their formal role, yet at other times they were seen as listening ears more generally. Establishing this was not always clear and involved a tacit process of navigation.

Listeners sometimes described the nature and 'boundaries' of their roles as Listeners and prisoners with contradictory explanations. Interviewees explained that they felt that they could clearly demarcate times when they were a Listener and 'on duty', and times when they were a prisoner and 'off duty'.



*When I'm upstairs I'm always a Listener, when I am on a wing, I'm myself. I don't take no problems from here back to there, otherwise the feelings would be stressful for me. I have to keep everything ... what's here stays here. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

The Listener quoted above therefore attempted to distinguish between his Listener-self and prisoner-self according to where he was located at the time. This enabled him to leave stressful or potentially burdensome feelings elsewhere. It also enabled him to maintain his own privacy. However, as the quotation below illustrates, prisoners could identify these prisoners as Listeners and this could lead to a 'spill-over' of the role into their own personal time. The Listener below describes how a lack of privacy can lead to feelings of burden and invasion. When asked if he felt he was always a Listener, he replied:

*It's like, yeah I'm a Listener but if it's on the same wing, then they tend to come to your pad all the time and you do need your space sometimes because everyone's got their own problems, and you can't put your own problems on the back burner every time [a prisoner] wants help. So you have got to have that space where you can get away from that. It gets too much when people are like coming to your pad all the time just coming by or sitting down. (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)*

These Listeners demonstrate that they required a 'retreat' from the Listener role and work. However, the nature of prison, being surrounded by, and socialising with, potential 'callers' made achieving retreat or escape problematic. Furthermore, Listeners described how some 'calls' took up large amounts of time, or required that their emotional resources were entirely dedicated to one person in need. One Listener mentioned being with a caller from 7.30pm in the evening to 8am in the morning. Whilst Listeners can sleep during the following day after a busy night,<sup>5</sup> it can nevertheless be challenging to be called out repeatedly in the night to

---

<sup>5</sup> Listeners do not suffer from a loss of wages if they are unable to attend work as a result of their Listener duties.



support people, particularly when suicidal and self-harming thoughts are most likely to materialise at nights when prisoners are locked up. Further to this, at times Listeners can understandably feel fatigued or overloaded, they may feel like they do not want to go to see a prisoner who has called them out, or that they need the support of their fellow Listeners:

*Sometimes I might be tired, I don't know, you know your mind might be tired, I'll tell you the truth you know, sometimes you do it [and] it must be a burden I suppose. But you still do it because these guys really need someone to talk to, you know express themselves. Sometimes you can't be bothered. It's like sometimes you're good and sometimes you just do it just because you have to. (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)*

Whilst there was an element of 'burden' associated with being seen as a Listener by other prisoners, the very nature of their Listener work, which was deemed meaningful, was used to describe a situation that at first was described as burdensome and as something they felt they had to do, to something that was worthwhile to them personally:

*A lot of people know that I am a Listener, especially a certain person on our wing, and it's like "I'm not on duty!" Sometimes it's a burden to you because you need a break, but you just kind of like all of a sudden get your Listener head on. Sometimes that's hard, especially if you are not on duty. But you do it; you do it because you need to. Someone out there is in pain. [...]* Sometimes you think, "no, I can't do this", especially when you head is a little bit over run, and then you get a callout and it's then more like "I'm glad I went to that one." It's brilliant. Without them knowing - they've helped you. (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)

This highlights the tension that Listeners experience as being a Listener and a prisoner. Whilst Listeners may not always be 'on duty', they are nevertheless always regarded as Listeners by



prisoners and staff. There are times where they have to slip back into the role of a Listener, even when not on duty and sometimes when they would have preferred to step back from the Listener role. It is therefore not surprising that many felt that being a Listener had become part of who they were, as they were often called upon to do Listener work.

#### **8.2.4 Tension and conflict with prison staff**

Tait (2012: 20) suggests that adopting ‘responsible’ roles enables prisoners to enjoy relationships with staff where they are on more of an “equal-footing.” This is further supported by claims that the presence of opportunities for prisoners to adopt greater levels of responsibility fosters good relationships between staff and prisoner volunteers (Davies, 1994; Edgar, Jacobson & Biggar, 2011; Farrant & Levenson, 2002; NOMS 2006b). However, there is a need to understand these relationships further, and the extent to which prisoners who volunteer truly experience a degree of ‘empowerment’, and relationships with staff that are less imbalanced. Many of the Listeners interviewed did in fact describe how, since becoming a Listener, they had enjoyed more positive and respectful relationships with prison staff arising out of recognition for the nature of the work Listeners conducted:

*[T]he staff, officers and prison governors, have a different level of respect for me than they would if I was just another prisoner. Because some of the things we do, they understand how difficult it is to do the job that we do, and it's just they know that we are not just messing about, we are actually trying to help, actively trying to make the prison environment a better place for everyone. (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)*

Moreover, Listeners felt that staff recognised the contribution that they were making to the prison ‘community’ through supporting their peers and as part of a suicide prevention strategy.



Despite their difference in statuses and power, Listeners also revealed that at times they were in fact working *with* staff:

*I mean obviously there is a big difference. We are here for what we are here for, [staff are] here for what they are here for. But there are a number of officers that know what we do, appreciate what we do, and try and work with us at the same time. You know if they spot someone they might try and point us in the right direction, or vice versa.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)

*The majority of staff are absolutely fine with the Listeners and our effort to reduce the levels of suicide and self-harm. Because it is not just the Listeners' input, it's the staff input as well. [...] We do our bit as inmates to help other inmates, but the staff do their bit as well to listen to us.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 1)

These quotations suggest that there is a further blurring of the boundaries with respect to Listener work and prison work, particularly with respect to suicide prevention in prison. By engaging with prisoners in this way, staff were expressing a recognition of Listener work, however at the same time this has the potential to share a sense of responsibility for the duty of care of prisoners with Listeners too. This is worrying because:

Our one reservation about [the Listener scheme] is that it may place a share of the responsibility for suicide with prisoners without giving them a say in the measures that might prevent it. (Coles & Ward, 1994: 141)

However, whilst it appears that Listeners felt they were afforded a degree of respect by working 'with' staff, some Listeners experienced 'respect' differently and felt that they were



primarily seen as prisoners, but that their ‘Listener status’ provided only limited opportunities to be ‘heard’ by staff:

*When you are not a Listener, you are one of 1,000 people in prison, you know you are treated the same as everybody else. But when you are a Listener and you have been on a call, and you need to speak to the staff, then the staff have to put any thoughts they have about you personally [to one side] because it is benefiting other people. So they have to listen to you for that 5 or 10 minutes, whereas any other time you are just one of 1,000 people, and you are nothing special, you’re no different to anybody else. [...] So you don’t get treated any differently, but you do get listened to and treated with a bit of respect for that five minutes.*

(Adult male Listener, Prison 1)

Therefore, whilst being a Listener made them stand out from the crowd, this was curbed by staff still seeing them as ‘prisoners’ and not ‘Listeners’ at other times. Hence, although Listeners appeared to enjoy an enhanced status among the prison ‘community’, and felt that the gap had narrowed between themselves and staff, their relationships with staff were still characterised by a larger power imbalance. There were also examples of Listeners being ‘used’ by staff. A number of interviewees noted that sometimes staff on their wing used them instead of adhering to the rota, out of convenience. One Listener who spent a period of time living on a healthcare wing, a wing renowned for severe prisoner distress and acute mental health problems, was over-used by prison staff:

*I was on call every second I was on [healthcare] for two years. I couldn’t sleep. I think [the officers] used me as much as they could.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)



Listeners reported that staff also utilised their powerful position to put pressure on Listeners to disclose the nature of their discussions with prisoners. For example, one Listener explained that officers asked questions when she came out from her calls:

*“Are they OK? What were they talking about? What were you saying to them?” And we just say, “no comment”, we can’t say anything. But I think that was because we were new. I think they do it with all the new [Listeners].* (Adult female Listener, Prison 3)

*There are a few [staff] that now and again think I’m being rude or cantankerous for the sake of it. They think that I am using that power not to be able to speak to those officers. It’s nothing to do with that. If it’s confidential then it is confidential.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)

Listeners therefore are at times put under additional pressure to demonstrate that they are working *with* staff. The relationship between staff and Listeners then might not always be a case of working together, but staff appear to feel that Listeners work *for* them and attempt to exert influence. This is a theme that will be explored in staff accounts of using Listeners to do prison work in chapter 9.

Whilst not all staff explicitly put pressure on Listeners to disclose information, they sometimes exerted control over a situation where the confidentiality meant that their suspicions about illicit activity could not be confirmed or alleviated by Listeners:

*There was one lad, he gave us a call, and because we are so confident with him and he started talking to us, [prison staff] think we are just friends. So they stop me going to him, which is wrong because when I last saw him, he said he sometimes thinks of doing things to himself and*



*that he doesn't want to talk to anyone else but me. The officers ain't happy with that.* (Male young offender Listener, Prison 4)

Listeners felt they were treated with suspicion by staff. This was particularly frustrating for Listeners who sometimes fought back in this power struggle. This could have adverse consequences, as a Listener who appeared to challenge the 'authority' of a member of staff describes:

*There was this lad and I knew he was down, and one night he finally approached me with tears in his eyes. Then all of a sudden the officer was banging on the doors saying "come on" and I said "listen, I don't care if everybody's behind their doors, look at him, he's crying and is upset and just approached me." [...] So she said that we can go in the Listener suite after roll count which is protocol. But I said, "Surely what should happen is Listeners' protocol?" but she didn't want to know. So twenty minutes later another officer is calling her [the officer] down, "Quick, quick, this lad is trying to take his own life." It was almost a near miss. The next day, I get a nicking. This officer who I had the argument with had put in a nicking saying that I had assaulted her and I got suspended while there was the investigation.* (Adult male Listener, Prison 2)

This illuminating quotation shows the power struggle between Listeners and staff that sometimes occurs when the policies of Listeners and Samaritans conflict with the prison regime. In other words, staff were reminding the Listener that regardless of any perceived importance of their work, the security intentions are the number one priority, because they are prisoners. Listeners who challenge staff authority therefore can be 'put back in their place' via formal discipline mechanisms imposed at the discretion of officers. This example further highlights a clear case of victimisation on part of the officer. It is also interesting to note that



this Listener was eventually cleared of the allegations after a protracted battle with the system, and having already been punished for challenging a member of staff.

### **8.3 Conclusion**

This chapter has asserted that volunteering as a prisoner presents a unique series of challenges and dilemmas that prisoners have to manage. The significance of adopting the role of a Listener should not be underestimated. Listeners experience tensions created by their dual role as prisoners and Listeners. Fostering a more altruistic and pro-social identity was a clear positive outcome, and gave Listeners an incentive to ‘wear’ the role, or behave in accordance with the expectations it was associated with. However, the adoption of this identity meant that Listeners had little opportunity to fully withdraw or retreat from being a Listener, and the potential for Listener support being requested was never far away. Prisoners conducting Listener work have to carefully negotiate their way through the prison environment and the relationships they maintain with potential service-users, who they are surrounded by and have little escape from. Listeners engaged in acts of formal and informal support with prisoners, which meant that they slipped in and out of their Listener role according to when it was needed or requested. Whilst Davies (1994: 134) suggested that Listeners “stepped out of the role” the current research asserts that Listeners adapt and push the boundaries of Samaritans’ guidelines to support prisoners. Listeners felt it was part of their role to assist and guide prisoners in subtle yet significant ways based on their own prison knowledge.

Listeners reported that they had adopted many desirable characteristics through their volunteering, and spoke about their Listener work, and the meaning and significance it held for them as they served their sentences, in extremely positive terms. The findings of this chapter highlight the enormity of the task they are taking on, and a need to ensure that support systems



are very strongly in place to support Listeners volunteering in prisons. In fact, the de-briefing meetings with Samaritans may be one of the few opportunities Listeners have to withdraw and off-load themselves. Not only that, but more attention needs to be paid to the context in which their volunteering takes place – a context that is characterised by control and enforces powerlessness. The Samaritans' policy of confidentiality put Listeners in a challenging position as prisoners. Not only did they experience dilemmas of how to deal with the information they were told, it put staff in an uneasy situation, who at times attempted to compromise confidentiality, or undermine Listener work. This reinforced their 'prisoner status' in favour of their 'Listener status'. In other words, the accounts of Listeners indicate that staff engage and disengage with Listeners, and have the power to champion or undermine Listener work. Whilst the current study advocates volunteering by prisoners as a potentially beneficial way of 'doing time', it asserts that claims that prisoners are 'empowered' and that they enjoy more equal relationships through their volunteering need to be challenged.



## **Chapter 9**

### **Gatekeepers: prison staff and the Listener scheme**

Whilst the organisational research literature might shed light on some cultural and operational aspects of work in prisons, it does not mean that working in a prison is like working for another organisation (Triplett, Mullings & Scarborough, 1996: 294). Prisons are not ‘normal’ working environments (Braggins & Talbot, 2005: 14). It is important not to overlook the perspective of prison staff who are described as “invisible ghosts of penality” (Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 492; Liebling, 2000: 337) as a consequence of the paucity of research dedicated to their experiences. Guidance material on setting up peer support schemes in prison emphasises the importance of obtaining staff support to establish credibility among other staff and prisoners in order to ensure the smooth running of a scheme (e.g. see Snow & Biggar, 2006: 165). Indeed, the implementation of any policy, scheme or rule, is heavily dependent on staff co-operation (Liebling & Price, 2001: 84; Liebling, 2012: 62). In other words, staff are gatekeepers and have the power to facilitate or restrict the operation and ultimate success of a scheme.

Considering the nature of the relationship between staff and Listeners is beneficial because “exploring staff-prisoner relationships raises questions about what people do with power, and how others react to powerlessness” (Liebling, 2000: 350). When the Listener scheme was rolled out by Samaritans and the Prison Service, many prison staff were concerned about the level of responsibility being handed to Listeners and the impact it would have on their authority in the prison community (Davies, 1994: 134). As we have seen in chapter 8 however,



Listeners acquire a degree of status, and have some power being the bearers of confidential knowledge. These accounts however indicated that staff attempted to exert control over Listeners in response to the confidential nature of Listener work. The discussion that follows presents the accounts of prison staff in relation to their contact with Listeners and prisoners who seek help from Listeners. We first briefly consider how prison staff and prison work have been portrayed in the literature, and how the Listener scheme creates an entry point into the discussion about how staff see their work and the complex relationships they have with prisoners who engage in activities claimed to be empowering.

## **9.1 Prison staff and prison work**

Crawley (2002: 281) argues that prison officers are often “stereotyped as an aggressive, unintelligent and insensitive group.” Officers feel that they are misunderstood and that little value is attributed to their role and work (Liebling & Tait, 2006: 108). Indeed, staff are routinely exposed to difficult and dangerous situations where a high level of skill, mastery and care is required (Sands & Rendle, 2001: 208-9), yet they are often depicted as “monolithic, male, power hungry enforcers of authority” (Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 471). Prison work is much more complex and challenging than has been appreciated by policy-makers; it is also often overlooked by prison researchers whose gaze is more often drawn to prisoners. Research has consistently highlighted the ‘tension’ that exists between prison staff and senior managers (e.g. see Crawley, 2004a; Duffee, 1974). This has been heightened in the late modern context of the prison as power has shifted further up the hierarchy. There is now a focus on how prisoners perform according to specific ‘indicators’. Prison staff have expressed concern about the degree to which measurable indicators truly reflect the range of work they conduct, not all of which is highly visible or easily measurable (Bryans, 2007; Liebling & Tait, 2006: 110). Not only that, but ‘success’, as measured by rates of self-harm for example, puts staff under



pressure (Howard League, 2003: 12), without adequate tools or assistance to realistically meet such goals.

Currently, the role of the prison officer is attractive because of the low educational qualifications required, and the relatively high income and benefits they can enjoy compared with other comparable employment opportunities (Howard League, 2009: 5). Sim (2008: 199-200) argues however that the recruitment of prison officers is problematic because there does not appear to be a coherent notion of the ideal candidate, or of the role of officers. Officers have been reported to talk about their role in terms of ‘security’ and ‘discipline’ (Braggins & Talbot, 2005: 22), and there is debate as to whether their role extends beyond security concerns (Braggins & Talbot, 2005: 47) to assisting with the reform or rehabilitation of prisoners. The Howard League for Penal Reform (2009: 6) argue that the role of the prison officer should be professionalised and require a higher level of more multidisciplinary training in order to equip staff with the tools they need to assist prisoners with a range of needs, to facilitate prisoner rehabilitation, and also to enhance staff commitment to, and pride in, their work. This, it is argued, will move the prison officer role away from being a ‘turnkey’, predominantly concerned with security.

Prison staff report a wide variety of different conceptions about what their role consists of (Liebling & Price, 2001: 136) to the extent that Sands and Rendle (2001: 207) argue that “there is no such thing as a typical prison officer.” How staff see their work also varies due to the degree of discretion officers hold, and the ethical dilemmas they face (Stohr et al, 2000). Furthermore, both prisoners and staff have emphasised the need for flexibility and care in how rules are applied, and carefully negotiating the boundaries of relationships that are formed (Liebling & Tait, 2006: 109). Therefore, Liebling (2000: 335) argues that officers’ verbal skills are more heavily relied upon than explicit forms of coercion. It is via prison staff that prison



policy is translated into practice because they represent the “human face of the Prison Service” (Liebling & Tait, 2006: 103). How prison staff exercise discretion and deploy authority, their relationships with senior management, their relationships with prisoners, and how they see their work, all influence the “legitimacy of the Prison Service, the regime and the experience of imprisonment for prisoners” (Liebling, & Tait, 2006: 106-7). For example, staff have the ability to vary the speed of their responses to prisoner requests, overlook rules, and engage with prisoners more or less formally (Bryans, 2001: 159) and hence alter the quality of life prisoners enjoy (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996: 153). Further to this, the discretion given to prison staff means that the enforcement of rules and exercise of power might be “variable, inconsistent or unfair” (Liebling, 2004: 345-6). For example, prison officers who ‘relate’ to prisoners more closely are less likely to over-enforce the rules (Freeman, 2003). Whilst there is a stark power imbalance between prisoners and staff, early prison scholars such as Sykes (1958) recognised that staff do not fully enforce their power, and rather engage in a series of accommodations with prisoners. More contemporary prison research has reinforced this, for example, Liebling (2000: 347) contends that staff under-use their power which helps to foster more positive and legitimate relationships with prisoners (Liebling & Price, 1998: 4). Drake (2008) suggests that staff have to very carefully negotiate and manage how they use their power, in terms of how much of it they use and the choices they make for action or inaction (Drake, 2008: 155), which in turn influences how prisoners respond to them. Relatedly, it has been noted that prisoners are more acutely aware of the exercise of power over them than the staff exercising it (Liebling, Price & Elliot, 1999: 92). Discretionary decision making therefore is the real ‘power’ prison staff hold over Listeners as they have the ability to facilitate or hinder Listener work. It is therefore worthwhile dedicating further attention to the power exchanges that take place between prison staff and a group of prisoners who consider themselves to have achieved a certain ‘status’, and who are claimed by government to be ‘empowered’ in prison – Listeners.



Genders and Players (1995) described the tensions evident in the Grendon Therapeutic community where the goals of control and support were at odds. The authors contend that this, in part, arose from the more hierarchical structure of prison compared with the flatter hierarchy of the therapeutic community (Genders & Players, 1995: 21). Staff in therapeutic communities were required to be more tolerant and respectful of prisoners, and rely more on interpersonal skills instead of their authority (Genders & Players, 1995: 124-5). However, whilst fostering good relationships with prisoners provided some degree of ‘security’, the closeness also reinforced a degree of ‘insecurity’ (ibid.: 134) because relationships that are too close may render staff vulnerable. This suggests that staff are motivated to keep prisoners at a safe distance, despite any position of responsibility they adopt, and despite any demonstration of ‘change’ or reform. Liebling (2004: 206-213) contends that respect implies values of acceptance, autonomy, and individualism. Liebling goes on to assert that:

Because power is corruptible, and security values inherently involve scepticism and detachment, it is extraordinarily difficult to pursue respect and security values simultaneously. (Liebling, 2004: 442)

Security is engrained in prison officer culture (Crawley, 2002: 278). This is unlikely to change because the routinised locking and unlocking of gates and doors places security at the heart of prison work (Bryans, 2001: 157). Not only that but security is the default reaction for prison staff who exhibit “an overwhelming aversion to taking the short-term risks of providing prisoners with responsibility and the skills and autonomy to re-enter mainstream society” (Farrant & Levenson, 2002: 37).

Research has not to date been concerned with staff perspectives on roles adopted by prisoners that imply notions of ‘empowerment’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘autonomy’, particularly where they



are linked with outside organisations which have their own policies and practices that appear to be at odds with those of the prison:

[T]rusted prisoners ('trustees' or red bands, Listeners and so on) are given small duties and responsibilities (powers) which they deploy in different ways. Such positions may bring influence beyond the strict definition of their role – and in this sense, the staff have 'given away' a certain degree of power, and may not be fully aware of how it is being used. (Liebling & Price, 2001: 124-5)

A number of unpublished reviews of the Listener scheme reported by Snow and Biggar (2006) highlight that whilst staff recognised the benefits of Listener work to both prisoners and staff, officers were nevertheless concerned with potential security concerns, and the risk status (in terms of suicide and self-harm) of Listeners' callers. The nature of prison staff's relationships with Listeners can shed light on how staff manage, use, and communicate with prisoners conducting particular roles, and the implications of this 'quasi-working relationship.'

## **9.2 The 'prisoner status' of Listeners**

Prisoners have traditionally been portrayed as 'passive' subjects of institutional life (Soloman & Edgar, 2004: 1), yet there are an increasing number of ways in which prisoners are claimed to be granted more responsibility, autonomy and ability to influence conditions on the grounds that they facilitate prisoner rehabilitation and prevent re-offending (see chapter 2). Sands and Rendle (2001: 213) suggest that prison officers are the most influential group that can facilitate the adoption of personal responsibility and development of self-confidence by prisoners. However, as we saw in chapter 8, the degree to which prisoners are realistically permitted to adopt greater autonomy appears to be undermined by the fact they are subject to attempts to



counter this by staff. Crewe (2009: 143) observed that prisoners who adopted roles of responsibility were subject to more drug tests because of the greater risk they posed having greater access around the establishment. Furthermore, in the restricted environment of the prison, with limited opportunities, prisoners might only be able to adopt certain roles, or become involved in specific tasks that staff perceive as less risky (Crewe, 2009: 137), therefore the extent to which they adopt responsibility is possible only in a very restricted sense. Soloman and Edgar (2004: 19) note that prisoners report even seemingly small requests to influence their environment or exercise greater autonomy via prisoner councils were denied by staff on grounds of security concerns, often with very little discussion or justification. The sections that follow explore how staff responded to Listeners, as prisoners.

### **9.2.1 ‘Listener status’ versus ‘prisoner status’**

Chapter 8 asserted that Listeners felt that staff tended to undermine their ‘Listener status’ acquired through adopting the Listener role, and instead placed emphasis on their ‘prisoner status’. Prisoners might be treated with caution because they have incentives and earn privileges through adopting particular behaviours, yet at other times they might not comply with staff requests despite the incentives to do so (Mathiesen, 1965: 116), and furthermore might be compelled to comply for the ‘wrong’ motives (Soloman & Edgar, 2004: 5-6). Through adapting to restricted liberty and autonomy, it is not surprising that prisoners are compelled to exercise their agency and test boundaries when, and how, they can (Crewe, 2012: 35). This however incites suspicion among staff with reference to prisoners’ motives for behaving in particular ways or choosing particular courses of action. Staff are more supportive of the pursuits of prisoners if they perceive them to be ‘genuine’ (Braggins & Talbot, 20005: 32). The policy of confidentiality that Listeners are expected to uphold however acts as a barrier in any assessment of ‘genuineness’.



A significant theme in the interviews with staff was their observation that prisoners benefitted from becoming Listeners by becoming ‘better prisoners’ who had adjusted to institutional life more effectively. Prison staff therefore recognised that Listeners were a particular type of prisoner, who stood out because they were generally well behaved, and could engage in what they regarded as ‘appropriate’ and ‘effective’ interaction:

*They have been well behaved on the wings; they’ve been confident. When I’ve said no to something, instead of flaring up, or starting to shout, they have gone away, and then come back and argued it in a sensible matter, in a normal human fashion. As opposed to if they hadn’t had that course [Listener Initial Training] they would have been blaring and screaming without using people skills. (Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 3)*

*When I first met [name of Listener] that was in Separation and Care, she used to self-harm, and she was very withdrawn, had got a lot of problems. She applied to be a Listener and she got through and it changed her completely. She was so much more confident and she came off her ACCT book. (Prison officer, Safer Custody, Prison 3)*

*I suppose it develops their confidence actually. And it helps with their maturity, responsibilities, it’s just another feather in their cap towards becoming better people, taking on more responsibility and wanting to help actually. It has turned a lot of people round. (Senior officer, Residential wing, Prison 4)*

The quotations above highlight how officers recognise that being given a degree of responsibility can have a beneficial effect on prisoners, in terms of enhancing their confidence, and can mark an important step in their reform or adaptation to institutional life. However the ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners is highlighted by use of language that indicates that these



prisoners were seen as immature, irresponsible, poor-copers and unable to communicate effectively, or even less ‘human’ prior to becoming a Listener. Staff regarded Listeners as more stable, mature, and reliable prisoners. This made them easier to manage and less of a risk to the order of the establishment. When asked about what their initial thoughts were when they heard about the Listener scheme, staff interviewed in the YOI felt that it was a ‘strange’ role to want to take on, but were often pleasantly surprised when they saw it working. Other staff also described initially treating it with caution, or being sceptical about prisoners conducting this type of work that implied higher degrees of trust than normal:

*At first I was like quite surprised. I thought, “Prisoners? Doing this?” I think that’s going to be anyone’s reaction when you are new in a prison, until you see them and they prove themselves, and then you realise they are actually very good. (Prison officer, Lifer wing, Prison 3)*

The quotation above highlights that staff may doubt the ability of prisoners to conduct this kind of work. However, Listeners who ‘proved themselves’ earned a certain level of respect for the nature of the work they conducted being seen to act appropriately, and their willingness to adopt this kind of role. It was apparent that there were some staff however who were more insistent on the ‘place’ of prisoners regardless of any role they adopt (Liebling, 2012: 59). One senior officer described the prevalence of this viewpoint among prison staff:

*I would say quite a lot of staff, they know about the Listeners, they know where they are, but they just see them as prisoners. They just cannot get it out of their head that they are prisoners. They treat them like prisoners, and that they shouldn’t be allowed to do this, that and the other, and there is a lot of conflict there. (Senior officer, Safer Custody, Prison 2)*



It is not possible to verify the prevalence of this kind of attitude and its expression in such a discernible manner by prison staff, however, as this chapter argues, even if staff supported Listener support in principle, in practice Listeners were treated as prisoners first and foremost.

Interviewees asserted that Listeners enjoyed greater freedom of movement and implied that this was readily facilitated by staff. However, there was a conditional understanding that this freedom was dependent on the respect that Listeners showed to staff, as one officer explained:

*The Listeners are normally treated like any normal landing cleaners. They are allowed to be unlocked every time the wing cleaners are unlocked, the Listeners and the wing rep are allowed to be. And they carry a pass with their photographs on the front of it, so they are allowed to walk around freely really on the wings. They have the uniform now, the orange T-shirts. Everybody knows who they are so the staff are very co-operative. They are not treated like any other normal prisoner on the wing. As long as they respect staff, staff will give them access. (Senior officer, Residential wing, Prison 2)*

Whilst this senior officer suggests that Listeners are not treated the same as other prisoners because of the role they adopt, it also highlights that Listeners have to demonstrate respect for staff. It is therefore not the fact that they have become a Listener that makes the difference; it is their behaviour towards staff. Staff were gatekeepers to Listeners' access to callers and could restrict or block that access if Listeners did not behave in line with their expectations, thus reinforcing the staff position of power and Listeners' positions of relative powerlessness.

One officer observed that the way Listeners behaved suggested that they felt they achieved a certain status through adopting the role. However, this more limited understanding of the 'responsibility' Listeners adopted, undermined the multifaceted and challenging nature of



Listener work that was accentuated in chapter 8 via the accounts of Listeners. For instance, one officer observed:

*The first thing you see is that they walk around with their Listener T-shirts on. They are quite proud to display to everyone about the fact that they are a Listener. [...] I think the other thing is that some of the ladies have not really got a lot, or had a lot in their lives, and suddenly now they have got, it's almost like a bit of status. You know "I'm a Listener and I've got a respected job." It's good to give them that sometimes, when they have never had it before. It's responsibility. (Prison officer, Lifer wing, Prison 3)*

Listeners are seen as adopting responsibility within limited and restricted bounds, overseen by prison staff have the ability to enhance or restrict it. Describing Listeners achieving “*almost like a bit of status*” demeans the degree of the supposed ‘empowerment’ and ‘responsibility’ Listeners are claimed to achieve. Whilst therefore the quotations above illustrate that becoming a Listener, symbolised by a coloured T-shirt, implies that Listeners are prisoners who receive a degree of trust and respect given the nature of the role, the skills they have developed and the importance of their work, however it was very clear that this was limited and heavily monitored because of the ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners. Drake (2008: 159-160) suggests that staff feel a need to reinforce their authority by ‘remaining in charge’. In order to remain in charge, officers have to reinforce their position of power and the prisoners’ position of powerlessness. In other words, prisoners should be put in their place and kept there. It is therefore significant that the second officer quoted above describes how the responsibility acquired through becoming Listeners has been ‘given’ to them. Prisoners had to earn this and prove they were worthy of such responsibility (Crewe, 2009: 63), or in the words of the senior officer above, they needed to show ‘respect’, thus reinforcing the power imbalance between staff and Listeners.



Staff might be suspicious that Listeners adopt the role with illicit or selfish intentions (Crewe, 2009: 209). Staff evidenced their emphasis on the ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners by being keen to note that despite becoming Listeners, these prisoners were not immune to indiscretions or illicit activity, as one officer explained:

*[Listeners] can be used as a dealer as well you know. Because they have the access to go to various places to see any prisoners asking to be seen by them. I’m not saying all of them, but we had a case of an SIR [Security Information Report]<sup>1</sup> on one particular one in those days who was believed to be delivering drugs. [...] One thing they have to be careful with is the selection of the Listeners. I know they go through some training, but I would expect them to recruit those who are mature in age and seen some life. (Senior officer, Residential wing, Prison 2)*

It was clear in all four establishments that there were past occasions where Listeners had ‘abused’ their freedom by moving drugs around the establishment. Whilst this was not a very common occurrence, it was not unheard of. The normal response to such instances would be the immediate removal of the Listener from the scheme by the Listeners themselves (as described in chapter 8) who were very aware of the need to protect the image of the scheme as a whole and the potential damage one Listener could do to this reputation. Staff therefore might have reservations about particular Listeners, and were particularly sensitive to these kinds of concerns given the freedom of movement Listeners enjoyed. As highlighted in the quotation below, staff felt that it was crucial to recruit the ‘right’ prisoners for the role who were ‘genuine’:

---

<sup>1</sup> A Security Information Report is a report forwarded to the security department of the prison raising concerns about prisoners suspected of activities that breach security – for example dealing drugs or passing or using mobile phones. They are submitted by staff, but may be done so in light of information provided by prisoners, who if found out, might be known as ‘grasses’ by other prisoners.



*The hardest thing I think for the staff is to monitor it and to get the right boys to do it. You don't want somebody who is going to go around feeding burn [tobacco] to people and stuff like that. If a prisoner asks for burn, obviously offering a roll up, that's different, that's just chatting isn't it? But obviously if they start asking for burn, or about somebody else who's in the jail, just walk out, is what they should do really. (Prison officer, Induction, Prison 4)*

Where Listeners were perceived as genuine and having the right motives reassured prison staff that Listeners would act appropriately when confronted with a dilemma or opportunity for illicit activity. The officer quoted above also highlights the perceived difficulty in 'monitoring' Listener work. This is explicitly explored in the following section of this chapter, with reference to the policy of confidentiality to which Listeners are expected to adhere. One member of staff argued that indiscretions such as trafficking drugs, selling 'roll-ups' or passing on information by Listeners represented a 'misuse' of the freedom that had been given to Listeners when they had been allowed to take on the role. When asked how he felt prisoners could misuse their freedom, one senior officer explained:

*They've got freedom in order to visit other Listeners for their support and feedback, they've got freedom around the jail to be able to follow up prisoners that are at risk that they have seen previously, and they've got freedom to carry out their duties as the duty Listener. What happens is that some of the Listeners use that freedom to go and see their mates, pass information – not Listener information or Samaritan information - just general chit-chat information from one wing to another. Some staff see this happening and that de-values the process. (Senior officer, Safer Custody, Prison 2)*



Where Listeners are seen to make use of their greater freedom by engaging in information exchange or talking to friends, the value of their work, and the degree to which staff could trust that they were facilitating something genuine and worthwhile was reduced, or ‘de-valued’.

Not only were staff acutely aware of the risks of Listeners’ greater freedom, and the ‘prisoner-status’ of Listeners that posed these risks, staff also responded by exerting control over Listeners. This served as a reminder to Listeners that their freedom was limited and not irrevocable. Some staff subjected Listeners to high levels of scrutiny and repeatedly raised concerns about Listeners:

*I will say to the wing staff that I’ve suspended him to (a) take the pressure off him and to (b) shut the wing staff up, because they’ve got what they want then. If it turns out it’s true, fine, he stays suspended or he’s sacked. But generally after a month of being suspended we put him back on because things have generally moved on then and the staff are not focussing on him. I say to staff if a lad was taken off because he was under suspicion of something, that’s fine, not a problem, but if we keep doing it, and keep doing it to the same individual, there’s only so much we can do. Because how can you keep taking somebody off if they’ve been suspended for something where there is no evidence, and we get quite a lot of that. (Senior officer, Safer Custody, Prison 4)*

This quotation demonstrates that senior staff might remove Listeners, albeit temporarily, from the Listener scheme in the name of security, when in fact to placate officers who take issue with particular Listeners despite the lack of any solid evidence. Some staff disliked prisoners whom they perceived as ‘sure’ or ‘full’ of themselves. Prisoners whom are disliked or distrusted by staff, may experience adverse effects (Rowe, 2012: 107) and staff can remove prisoners from empowering roles on grounds of security or punishment (Black, 2008: 7). The



staff interviewed recognised that some staff disliked or distrusted particular Listeners, and liked and trusted other Listeners. Prison staff preferred to select Listeners in close proximity to them, who they knew better when a prisoner requested to speak to a Listener. This reassured staff that the risk of a Listener going to talk to a prisoner was minimised, compared with a Listener on another wing who they did not know, and therefore it was deemed riskier. This illustrates that ‘Listeners’ were not judged as a group who were trustworthy by virtue of the role they adopted. Staff were suspicious of Listeners they did not know as well. Moreover, they felt that using Listeners located on their own wing reduced the risks that giving Listeners greater freedom across the establishment posed:

*Some of the wings are not unlocking the rep [Listener] like they are supposed to. They believe that every wing has got their own Listener rep, so they suggest that it should be restricted within their wing. They believe that some of these reps because they have access around, they tend to take drugs around and mobile phone dealing. (Senior officer, Residential wing, Prison 2)*

Some members of staff therefore put the ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners at the forefront of their minds in their dealing with them. Listeners were therefore only ‘trusted’ in a very limited sense because they still posed the same risks as other prisoners.

The foregoing discussion illustrates that staff are particularly sensitive to how Listeners see and use their freedom and autonomy that they are ‘given’ and that it is only given in a very limited form, subject to good behaviour, respect for staff and a belief that Listeners are not misusing their freedom. The ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners is reinforced because security remains a priority. Prisoners who become Listeners are expected to demonstrate change and good behaviour in order to progress, and to be allowed to continue with the role. As this



section and later sections in this chapter illustrate, this sense of hierarchy was imposed by staff by exercising their discretionary decision-making power.

### **9.2.2 Confidentiality and ‘signposting’**

Despite the evidence that staff attempted to closely monitor and control Listener movements and work, it was noted by a small number of the staff interviewed for the current research that the Listeners were largely ‘self-managing’ and they could be relied upon to respond appropriately to prisoners. However, an issue evident since the inception of the Listener scheme in prisons is the tension and conflict elicited as a result of Samaritans’ policy of confidentiality which goes against the grain of Prison Service approaches and duty of care. As outlined in chapter 3, staff have struggled to come to terms with the confidential nature of Listeners’ contacts with their prisoner ‘callers’, through which Listeners have access to knowledge that could be used to assess or act upon a potentially vulnerable prisoner’s risk status. Staff are only too aware that they can be a ‘lifeline’ for prisoners (Tait, 2012L 22). This is knowledge which according to this policy of confidentiality, they are unable to share with staff. The private and ‘secret’ nature of the contact between Listeners and prisoners undoubtedly contributes to staff suspicion and as found in chapter 8, Listeners reported that some members of staff actively attempted to influence Listeners and get them to disclose confidential information. Research in non-prison settings has shown that confidentiality can be difficult to accept by those who are responsible for the care and well-being of others. For example, Wynaden and Orb (2005) found that patient-doctor confidentiality led carers of the patient to feel excluded, and that it had a negative impact both on their commitment to caring, and their ability to care for the patient. Whilst the prisoner, Listener and prison officer relationship dynamics are extremely different in the prison environment, Wynaden and Orb highlight the potential impact of Listener-prisoner confidentiality on staff responsible for the



well-being and welfare of prisoners. Whilst Listeners are trained to operate according to a policy of complete confidentiality, prison staff can identify prisoners who have talked to Listeners, often because they have facilitated the contact by retrieving a Listener at a prisoner's request. This has implications for confidentiality, since the nature of the contact in theory remains confidential, yet the fact that a prisoner has a problem has been highlighted by the fact that they have requested Listener support. Furthermore, when prisoners repeatedly call for Listeners, staff felt compelled to intervene so that an assessment can be made of a prisoner's risk status, or to establish the authenticity of their problems.

During the course of the interviews with both Listeners and prison staff, it was acknowledged that a breach of confidentiality, as defined by the sharing of the content of a conversation with a member of staff or other prisoner, was frowned upon and extremely rare. However, mechanisms of 'signposting', whereby a Listener gave an indication to a member of staff if a particular prisoner was either misusing the scheme, or was in severe distress, was reported as something that occurred with greater regularity, and was valued by staff. 'Signposting' was a particularly significant theme in two of the prisons where data was collected – the male young offender's institution (Prison 4) and the adult male local prison which also held a small number of young offenders (Prison 1), but was nevertheless also evident to a lesser degree in the other prisons too. Evidence was found for Listeners indicating to staff when a caller was not 'genuine', or conversely, if a prisoner needed 'keeping an eye on' which signalled a potential suicide risk for example. Either way, the prisoner who had spoken to the Listener would be subject to greater levels of surveillance.

*Sometimes we do get an odd prisoner that tends to ... they'll call them [Listeners] out constantly. But we've had girls where it's not a Listener that they need, so then we have to deal with that and say "Right, you are abusing the system, what we are going to do now is you will*



*have the Samaritans phone.” Sometimes the Listeners will come back and say they don’t know what they are doing there really it’s just for a general chit chat. (Prison officer, Safer Custody, Prison 3)*

The responses of prison staff to help-seeking by prisoners is explored in section 9.4 of this chapter. However this quotation highlights that staff responses here are supported and confirmed by the ‘signposting’ gestures made by Listeners. Whilst in extreme cases, where supporting a prisoner considered to be misusing the scheme is disruptive to supporting other prisoners, would justify liaising with staff in this manner, staff reported that it took place more informally and on a relatively frequent basis. In fact, it was one way in which Listeners worked ‘with’ or ‘for’ them. Staff recognised this was not in line with confidentiality in the strictest sense, however they nevertheless emphasised the lack of detail provided by Listeners which justified the disclosure, by pushing the boundaries of confidentiality to ensure both that prisoners in need were supported, and prolonged misuse of Listener support was avoided:

*I’m sure that I have been in some meeting somewhere, where we were told that [Listeners] are not allowed to tell you unless it’s of an escape, or attacking an officer or something like that. We’ve been lucky on [this wing], if [Listener] thought [a prisoner] was going to do something you know he’d tell us. If the lad said “I’m going to hang myself tonight”, perhaps he might not say – “he’s gonna hang himself tonight”, but he might say “I’d keep an eye on him tonight”. So there’s a way round of saying things isn’t there? Instead of saying that such and such is going to hang themselves tonight? [...] I think he does it because he [Listener] knows it’s right. I mean at the end of that day, if I was sat with somebody and he says “I’m gonna hang myself tonight” you’d have that on your conscience that you hadn’t told anybody, you would, wouldn’t you? (Prison officer, Induction, Prison 1)*



*We had a lad on here, and he requested a Listener a few days in a row. So I said to one of my Listeners, “Is he abusing you? Or does he really have problems?” And he kind of like closed off, and I said “I am not asking what he said”, and as soon as he realised I’m not prying he said, “No his problems are real.” And that was it. [...] You can kind of tell by the reaction of the Listeners when you open up and say, “right, I’ve got prisoner so and so has requested a Listener”, and they either go, “OK” or “uh OK” and roll their eyes. You know so you can kind of tell whether the users are abusing or whether it is genuine. (Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 4)*

Whilst staff maintained that they respected confidentiality, some nevertheless felt that it was justifiable for Listeners to give an indication to staff of misuse or risk and made this clear to Listeners. However, these quotations illustrate that staff do not necessarily equate ‘signposting’ to a breach of confidentiality, and was a desirable practice of ‘good’ Listeners who responded to situations appropriately in their eyes. ‘Signposting’ was justified on the basis that it protected Listeners from what staff perceived to be abuse or misuse of the scheme and also ‘protected’ the interests of vulnerable prisoners. Staff used their power to glean information from Listeners on grounds that it was in theirs, and the prisoner’s, best interests. Listeners, as prisoners, are in a difficult and emotionally burdensome situation if they find out another prisoner’s life or well-being is under threat and bearing the weight of the information that they are expected to keep in confidence is clearly a serious issue and not to be taken lightly. However, staff could make the confidentiality burden even greater by putting pressure on Listeners, or expecting ‘signposting’ gestures. In a sense, confidentiality becomes problematic not just because Listeners are prisoners per se, but because staff reinforce the ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners in their dealings with them.



It is significant to note however, that despite the evidence found for ‘signposting’, and the staff expressions of the desirability of signposting, some interviewees, in particular those most closely affiliated with promoting and facilitating the Listener scheme on Safer Custody teams, strongly emphasised the importance of upholding confidentiality and its centrality in establishing the integrity of the scheme among prisoners that it was a trustworthy source of support. Further, other officers recognised that whilst it was difficult to ‘come to terms with’ and ‘accept’, that it was a core feature of Listener support:

*[Confidentiality] is just something we’ve come to terms with over the years. We understand why and just accept it really. We understand that that’s the way it has to be, because you start breaking their confidence, the system will break down and won’t work because the lad won’t trust them. (Prison officer, Safer Custody, Prison 4)*

Confidentiality was therefore officially understood as a core aspect of the approach adopted by Listeners. Whilst it was generally claimed to be advocated and its logic understood, it was acknowledged that it was not easy or straightforward. Furthermore, as the foregoing analysis concedes, in practice, prison staff attempted to influence the boundaries of Listener confidentiality.

### **9.3 The ‘value’ of Listeners: time**

*[Listeners] are a tool to use. You know, for the staff to use. We know they are there, and we know they are a good tool at times and they are used. I have not seen a member of staff that doesn’t use them, to be honest. (Prison officer, Lifer wing, Prison 3)*



The discussion turns now to explore how staff saw the role of Listeners in relation to their own role. The quotation above draws attention to a dominant theme in the way prison staff talked about Listeners in the interviews – as ‘tools’, and as ‘useful’ in relation to conducting prison work. Indeed, the previous section highlighted the benefits to staff of Listeners who ‘signposted’ misuse of the scheme, and prisoners at risk. This discussion goes further to explore how Listeners were considered useful ‘tools’, as a resource staff had at their ‘disposal’, to be utilised as the situation demanded. Research on prison officers has described how officers draw from a variety of ‘tools’ or ‘qualities’ according to the requirements of the situation (see Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 477), and how staff only have limited tools and resources available to them with which to conduct their prison work (Duffee, 1974: 155). Demands on staff to support prisoners with specific and more complex needs, adds to the staff workload and can put pressure on staff (e.g. see Cooney & Braggins, 2010: 23); in particular ‘time’ is a scarce resource for prison staff whose workload outweighs the time they have available (Howard League, 2009: 5). ‘Time’ is a necessary ingredient facilitating the process of prisoners ‘opening-up’ about their problems, particularly given that some struggle to articulate their feelings (Liebling, 2012: 64). Listeners potentially fill a gap in staff provision of support for prisoners (Howard League, 2008: 18) as they offer time and emotional support, and are accessible at times when other sources of support are not, for example during the night (see chapter 7).

It is important to acknowledge that the degree and form of contact staff have with Listeners and Samaritans could influence how staff use, promote, or facilitate Listener support as they conduct prison work. Staff might have a variety of different forms of contact and engagement with both Listeners and Samaritans: promoting or explaining Listener support to prisoners, facilitating the movements of Listeners to prisoners, facilitating the movement of Listeners to meetings or other Listeners for mutual support, dealing with operational difficulties reported



by Listeners, liaising (or as one officer described ‘conflict management’) between staff and Samaritans/Listeners, involvement in the recruitment and initial selection of prospective Listeners, or being supported by Samaritans’ support after a death in custody. During the interviews it was evident that staff tended to distance themselves from the Listener scheme and Samaritans and Listeners by claiming that they did not have much contact, and only that they had facilitated a prisoners’ request for a Listener. However, as the interviews delved further into how the work of Listeners fitted with their role and within the prison regime, officers revealed that they used and monitored Listeners more frequently and closely, and that they saw the presence of the Listener scheme as having a positive impact on the prison environment and their workload. Staff interviewed tended to describe Listeners in terms of the perceived outcomes that Listener work had for themselves and prisoners. For example, staff described Listeners as a ‘help’ to them, as doing a ‘good job’, as conducting ‘important work’, or as ‘working well’. Listeners were therefore viewed in terms of their operational functions:

*The only thing I can say is that the Listener scheme, as it is at the moment, I can only say works because when we need a Listener there is one available. And as far as I am concerned, as long as someone is available, that is all that matters to me.* (Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 3)

This officer highlights how the availability of the Listeners is important. ‘Working well’ in this instance therefore equated to staff being able to access it when they needed it. A number of prison staff further noted the positive contribution that Listeners made to the prison ‘community’ as a whole:

*We got a lad on here, who when he first came on here was struggling a little bit and he was asking for a Listener. The Listener came out and he said “Can I go downstairs on association*



*later?” I said “Why? Do you need to talk to somebody?” and he was like “yeah.” The prisoner was actually getting bullied, and this Listener, because he is well respected by other lads – which makes a big difference – he was able to come down, and approach the lads that were bullying [the prisoner], and nipped it in the bud. As far as I am aware, the bullying stopped. So he has kind of done a mix of a violence reduction and a Listener thing there.*  
(Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 4)

The quotation above highlights the benefit to staff of Listeners adopting other roles such as a ‘Violence Reduction Representative’, ‘Wing Representative’, or ‘Peer Mentor’. The skills for these roles overlapped significantly with the Listener role, and moreover, many issues taken to Listeners by prisoners were cross-cutting, in that prisoners might benefit from both emotional support and support outside the official remit of Listeners, such as guidance or practical assistance. For example a distressed prisoner may also be being bullied because of his or her race, and may therefore benefit from talking to a Listener who is also a race relations representative. As each role is likely to have its own boundaries, and specific policies of confidentiality, this could lead to role conflict for prisoner volunteers. For example, anecdotal evidence suggests that prisoners feel a need to be clear about the capacity in which they are approached by prisoners when they adopt more than one role (Stewart, 2004: 10). From the staff perspective, by not just simply listening, Listeners could support a prisoner, and resolve issues or conflicts in the prison ‘community’. Listeners were therefore not always seen by staff simply as a ‘listening ear’ for prisoners. They had the ability to assist prisoners and at times informally reduce issues such as conflict or bullying between prisoners. This was further beneficial for staff as it reduced their paperwork by avoiding the escalation of problems. The prison Chaplain below highlights the benefits of this ‘informal’ or ‘unofficial’ work by Listeners:



*I mean on the wing they probably wouldn't class it as a call out, you know a guy will come to them and say "I'm having problems with..." whatever, and the Listener might only sit with the prisoner for fifteen/twenty minutes, they just do it as a buddy rather than log it as a Listener thing. It's not officially logged or recorded and you would have problems doing it, but on the wings where there are Listeners based, they tend to be quieter, settled, you get less hassle, less problems from those wings than the ones that don't. (Prison Chaplain, Prison 1)*

This unofficial work by Listeners was seen by this chaplain as serving to make the prison environment more stable and predictable. As chapter 8 highlighted, Listeners described socialising and informally reaching out to prisoners within carefully defined bounds as ensuring the well-being of prisoners more generally. Here, staff highlight the instrumental benefit of this support in ensuring a degree of stability on the wings where Listeners were located. Related to this, some interviewees also suggested that Listener support had a preventative effect; being able to give prisoners access to a listening ear during a period of lockdown prevented the escalation of problems and negative feelings. For example, when asked what the advantages of having Listeners were, one officer replied:

*Safety really. In that, if a boy has got to be banged up, he can release some of his pressure to another lad through talking and it will take his mind off things. Because it is easy for them to get pushed over the edge over stupid little things. If you get wound up in the night over something really silly, in the morning they come out and it just goes blazing, and they do something really stupid. So I think it is a good idea for safety, it calms them down. (Prison officer, Induction, Prison 4)*

This supports the findings from chapter 7 where prisoners described 'tipping points' where Listener support was more urgently needed in order to prevent 'explosions' through the



‘release’ of feelings, problems and emotions at particularly difficult times. Whilst the Listener scheme was primarily associated with suicide prevention, it appears that Listeners contributed to the prevention of other incidents and outbursts more generally. As chapter 7 highlighted this benefitted prisoners, but here we see staff reported that it benefitted them by preventing the creation of a further workload and making the environment more predictable and stable.

A significant theme in staff accounts of how Listeners fitted with, or were used for facilitating prison work was how the presence of Listener support ‘saved staff time’, ‘reduced time’ spent talking to prisoners, reduced their workload, and ‘gave time’ that staff did not themselves have free to support prisoners. This was mentioned by ten out of twelve of the staff members interviewed. In the YOI visited, staff tended to talk of the reduced pressure staff were under as a result of the time it saved them talking to prisoners, many of whom being younger were more dependent on support from others, and often complex backgrounds and problems. In the adult male prisons, staff also described how the availability of Listener support reduced their workload. For example:

*It reduces work for them [staff]. I always try to promote the Listeners in staff training to say, “look, by allowing a Listener to go and see a prisoner, they actually reduce or stop a prisoner from self-harming or killing themselves.” And actually the amount of paperwork that goes with either of those instances can impact on staff. If a prisoner just cuts up, he has got to be seen by healthcare, the forms have got to be done, he’s got to be watched regular. That all impacts on their daily routine. So by a Listener going to see a prisoner, and stop him from doing that, has a massive impact on their workload. (Senior officer, Safer Custody, Prison 2)*

This quotation highlights not only the potential for Listeners to reduce staff workload, but also the perceived role they have in suicide prevention in prison. The benefit of time that Listeners



could offer was most clearly evident in the female establishment where all three members of staff interviewed mentioned it. This is not surprising given the complex needs and backgrounds of the female prison population and the inadequacy of the prison environment for women in particular (Carlen & Worrall, 2004; 2006; Corston, 2007; Prison Reform Trust, 2011: 31). Staff clearly felt under pressure from the volume of time women needed to talk, which they felt unable to offer themselves:

*I think it can make our job easier. I think for the wing staff, they've got a full wing of 33 girls on there, they haven't always got the time to be sat talking to a prisoner. You know and if they think they can use a Listener, or recommend a Listener to a prisoner, then it does make their job a bit easier. [Listeners] can sit with them a couple of hours; you know where you just haven't got the time to do that as wing staff. (Prison officer, Safer Custody, Prison 3)*

Another officer echoed this:

*I would say having a Listener is a god send, in the sense that they can then take that time with that prisoner, while I can then deal with all the other prisoners that need all their issues dealing with. Especially when the Listener is on the wing, because I haven't even got to go off the wing and find one. (Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 3)*

It is evident, therefore, that the time Listener could dedicate to prisoners was a significant resource for prison staff who found that Listeners relieved them from time spent with prisoners. Notwithstanding the foregoing finding that staff also preferred to select prisoners in whom they had confidence, it was also beneficial for staff when a Listener was located on the wing where they were working as they had Listener support as an easily accessible tool or



resource. This enabled staff to spend less time with prisoners in need of support and prioritise their efforts elsewhere.

Although staff clearly highlighted the benefits of the scheme, particularly in terms of the limits of their own role, and the limited resources, time and tools they had at their disposal to meet prisoner needs and demands, staff interviewed still described difficulty in facilitating the scheme, and the practical and operational difficulties they experienced. This illuminates the degree of dependency Listeners had on staff facilitation and cooperation. Despite the fact that the majority of staff recognised the benefits to staff workload and time, they also described how facilitating the scheme took time, or was experienced as an inconvenience. For example, when asked if there were any problems with the running of the scheme, one officer replied:

*When it is five to eight and staff are ready for going home, or any other time staff are going home and a lad says he wants a Listener, then of course it delays staff going off on time. Which I am sure you can appreciate, when staff have been at work all day, they would like to get off on time.* (Senior officer, Skills and Development unit, Prison 4)

Here we also see that at particular times, Listener support might save staff time, however at others, it might encroach on their time. Furthermore, staff also highlighted how the scheme was more difficult to facilitate at particular times of the day, and requests to speak to a Listener might not be facilitated promptly:

*If the cell bell has been pressed and the lad is asking for a Listener, instead of maybe getting them in ten minutes it might be an hour. Generally the calls are at night time, so we do say to the lads “look there’s less staffing, they might be dealing with another issue.”* (Senior officer, Safer Custody, Prison 4)



The restrictive prison environment, that restricted the ease of access to Listeners by prison staff, could therefore lead staff to resent time spent locating and moving a Listener to enable them to support a prisoner, despite the perceived benefits. Staff were supportive of the Listener scheme and valued Listeners in terms of the relief it gave them from a certain workload. Yet staff were less supportive when it conflicted with other priorities or encroached on time.

The accounts presented in this section remind us that despite the concerns or reservations that staff have about Listeners, or the Listener scheme, that Listener support was valued, and staff recognised that alleviating the problems of prisoners had the added value of reducing their work-load through the provision of time that they did not possess themselves. In fact, staff saw Listeners as a tool which they had at their disposal and this reinforced their role as gatekeepers for Listeners' access to their callers. The next section explores the gatekeeping role of staff in prisoners' access to Listeners as staff responses to help-seeking by prisoners are explored.

#### **9.4 Staff responses to help-seeking**

Uniformed officers spend more time in close contact with prisoners than any other body of staff (Hay & Sparks, 1991: 5). In fact, prison officers are likely to spend more time inside the prison walls than do most prisoners (Crawley, 2002: 277). The classical sub-cultural literature places emphasis on the distance between staff and prisoners. Liebling (2004: 242) suggests that low trust in, and social distance from, prisoners is characteristic of the prison officer's 'working personality' (see also Liebling & Price, 2001: 90). Moreover, officers' positive attitudes to prisoners are inhibited by concerns that other officers will perceive them as 'liking prisoners' (Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 489) or 'care bears'. It has recently been observed that whilst prison officers often do engage with prisoners in kind and caring ways, "they were not particularly sympathetic to prisoners' frustrations" as this concern was not characteristic of



prison officer culture (Crewe, 2009: 60). Whilst prison staff recognise the importance of prisoner well-being, self-esteem, and personal development (Braggins & Talbot, 2005: 25), not all staff see themselves a source of support for prisoners (Liebling, 2004: 251).

Arnold (2005: 416) suggests that empathy was an essential quality in staff treatment of prisoners' problems. However, officers needed to be cautious because an excess of empathy could render staff unable to maintain objectivity, emotionally burdened, and vulnerable. In contrast, a lack of empathy could result in staff being perceived as uncaring. Officers have been observed to rely less on narrowing the gap between 'them' (prisoners) and 'us' (staff) and are more likely to resort to formal, distant and controlling styles of communication with prisoners (e.g. see Crewe, 2009; Drake, 2008). Indeed, contemporary research has also reinforced that creating distance, and putting up emotional barriers, serve as coping mechanisms to the stressful aspects of prison work (Arnold, 2005: 405; Crawley, 2004b: 418) such as contact with prisoners who have a variety of complex problems and challenging behaviour (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Launay & Fielding, 1989; Triplett, Mullings & Scarborough, 1996: 302). Staff report avoiding being seen as emotional as it is perceived as 'unprofessional' (Arnold, 2005: 410); therefore, as Crawley (2004b: 414) has noted, staff not only have to manage the emotions of prisoners, but also their own in order to conduct their work. Suicide and self-harm are particularly stressful and emotional aspects of prison work (Cliquennois, 2010: 1032; Crawley, 2004a: 155; Liebling, 2007: 424). Not only that, but staff have to cope with the limits to which they are able to help prisoners; even with good intentions prisoners are still subject to the deeply depriving pains of imprisonment, and are likely to go outside to difficult circumstances (Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 478; Coles & Ward, 1994: 127). Borrill et al (2004: 2-3) highlight the extreme stress staff experience after a death in custody, particularly whether they had fostered a positive relationship with the prisoner, with almost a third showing signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. This literature highlights a need



therefore to consider not only the staff response to Listeners, but also to their ‘callers’ who have chosen to seek help from Listeners.

In the current study, evidence was found for staff care and concern for prisoners. Some staff described how they were proactive in responding to prisoners who were struggling to cope. For example, one officer mentioned that she kept word searches and crosswords with pens in a drawer and gave them out to prisoners if she felt they were struggling to cope and needed something to keep them occupied and chapter 6 highlighted that such efforts by staff to reach out to prisoners was duly noted and appreciated by prisoners. Moreover:

Prison staff are not appropriately qualified to deal with this distressing and challenging behaviour, an appalling and unsatisfactory situation for both hard-pressed staff members and the individuals in their care. It is also true that some prison officers take as a starting point the notion that the people in their custody are troublemakers and not to be trusted. This can lead them to interpret self-harming behaviour as manipulative, designed to procure a benefit for the prisoner, to annoy staff or to get attention. (Howard League, 2009: 10)

The importance of staff attitudes and beliefs and their relationships towards management can influence the effectiveness of suicide prevention (Arnold, Liebling & Tait, 2007: 486; Crawley, 2004b: 424). Suicide prevention training has been shown to improve officer attitudes, knowledge and confidence in dealing suicidal and self-harming prisoners (Hayes et al, 2008). One officer interviewed for the current research described contact with self-harm as ‘unbelievable’ and it was evident that it had a strong emotional impact on him. Despite this, there was some evidence that self-harm is sometimes interpreted as ‘manipulative’, as the quotation below illustrates:



*I've had a particularly difficult morning. There's a particular lady who got caught concealing her medication last night. We knew she was doing it - it was just actually proving it and catching her. So healthcare have stopped that medication this morning so she is not happy about that. When I caught her last night she self-harmed, which sometimes is a normal reaction. And then this morning because they stopped her medication she self-harmed again, and then she has just self-harmed again now. The problem with this is that there are only two officers on the wing and she is taking up all our resources at the moment. Every time she self-harms we have to get healthcare in, we have a load of paperwork to fill in, we have to do computer entries, and it's time consuming. So she has took up the time of two officers this morning. And why has she self-harmed? Well it seems to be because she is not getting her own way at the moment. So that can be frustrating. (Prison officer. Lifer wing Prison 3)*

The officer quoted above justifies the removal of responsibility for taking medication from the prisoner in the interests of her well-being. The prisoner was seen as manipulative for self-harming and for demanding a 'disproportionate' amount of time from prison staff. This officer went on to express how difficult self-harm was to deal with and the need to deal with 'genuine' and 'non-genuine' prisoner distress in the same way:

*So you see two sides there. But we treat them all the same, if they self-harm they go through the care map, on the ACCT process so they get the same support no matter what. You have to be non-judgemental to work here, otherwise you are in the wrong job. (Prison officer, Lifer wing, Prison 3)*

This quotation reveals underlying resentment of the undifferentiated treatment afforded to prisoners who are genuinely experiencing difficulties, and those perceived as manipulative. This view is not uncommon (Medlicott, 2011: 21; Borrill et al, 2007: 7; Short et al, 2009: 413).



Officers experience difficulty in dealing with the complex behaviour of prisoners; they attempt to interpret what the self-harm communicates about what prisoners want, as opposed to how they are feeling or coping. This viewpoint overlooks the fact that in the prison environment self-harm might be the only avenue that prisoners feel they have available to exercise agency over their own problems (Bosworth, 1999: 142).

Guidance material suggests that staff should monitor prisoners' use of peer support, preserving confidentiality, but using it as an opportunity to identify problems, looking for indicators of risk (Prison Service Order 2700; Safer Custody Group, no date). As already noted, whilst the issue of confidentiality was extremely controversial and has been difficult for many to accept, the fact that prisoners who talk to Listeners can be clearly identified and that staff felt Listeners sometimes 'signposted' potentially at risk prisoners, eased this situation. Whilst therefore, staff might not be privy to the conversation between the Listener and the prisoner, they could use the knowledge that a prisoner had called out a Listener to indicate that the prisoner might be distressed or experiencing problems. To this end, a number of staff explained that they used the knowledge that a prisoner had requested to talk to a Listener as a sign that a prisoner was potentially at risk or vulnerable and furthermore that it presented an opportunity to 'screen' prisoners for their problems prior to bringing a Listener:

*Well if somebody said to me "Can I see a Listener?" I would probably say "Why what's up, has something happened?" Maybe then, nine times out of ten they might say "I've just had some bad news in a letter." They'd probably tell you, but some of them would say, "Piss off I'm not telling you, it's got nothing to do with you." But I'd say most of them would tell you.*  
(Prison officer, Induction wing, Prison 1)



Not only did this enquiring enable officers to screen prisoners for their problems, it also served to put prisoners in a position where they were justifying their need for support, or their selection of Listener support in particular. Another member of staff said:

*I have always asked what the problem is, and if it is something I feel I can help them with, or if they are willing to talk to me, I've then played that role and then done my best to help them out as best I can. That doesn't always work. Sometimes they just don't want to talk to me. But sometimes they have wanted to talk to me, and I have been able to sort it. Then I've said "Do you still want a Listener?" and then they've said no they don't.* (Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 3)

The quotations above imply that staff see the support they offer prisoners as potentially more beneficial for prisoners and that Listener support might act more as a last resort. Furthermore, staff could view a prisoner's request to talk to a Listener as a cry for help more generally and felt it important to offer staff support *before* getting the Listener as requested. This approach might be experienced as intrusive by prisoners who have selected Listeners to talk to among all the available sources of support. As chapters 6 and 7 illustrated, help-seeking involves a process of assessment involving the strategic selection of the most legitimate source of support according to the nature of the problem, their relationship with the source of support, and time when support is needed. Whilst staff might have good intentions, their lack of attention to prisoners' help-seeking choices might have adverse consequences, for example by inhibiting them from seeking help from sources of support they perceive as legitimate but that they feel are questioned by prison staff who are gatekeepers to sources of support. Given these findings, it is hardly surprising that more positive relationships with staff, and an increased willingness to seek help from staff emerged as central to the likelihood that prisoners would seek help from Listeners from the survey data considered in chapter 7.



Furthermore, staff noted how they often made an assessment about how genuine a prisoner requesting Listener support was, and if they frequently requested to talk to a Listener how they were often suspicious that the scheme was being ‘misused’ or ‘abused’. One officer described a prisoner who was considered to be abusing the Listener scheme by repeatedly calling for a Listener because he was ‘bored’ after losing all his privileges. In particular, this prisoner was ‘demanding’ to see a particular Listener, and ‘demanding’ that he saw the Listener promptly. The officer explained:

*We did the old explaining of “it happens when it happens and we will get one over to you when we can, we get whichever Listener we can to you. You don’t demand!” In the end we had to approach him and said “look we think we are going to put you on an ACCT book” and he looked a bit shocked, and [we explained] “there’s obviously problems because you have been calling out a Listener every night for the last seven nights. There’s obviously something wrong so we need to keep an eye on you.” He stopped calling out Listeners then because he didn’t want to be on an ACCT book. [...] The biggest thing is the lads demand, thinking they can choose which Listener they get, and then we just tell them that it’s not their turn, or they are off the wing, or they are doing something else. And that goes both ways to avoid not tiring the Listener, and not using the same one all the time, and also not letting a prisoner demand what happens. (Prison officer, Residential wing, Prison 4)*

The quotation above highlights how staff felt that it was particularly important not to let prisoners ‘demand’ who they wished to talk to when requesting Listener support. Prisoners’ help-seeking choices were therefore monitored by prison staff who acted as gatekeepers to different sources of support and particular individuals. Staff had at their discretion, tools such as the ACCT care planning system that would subject the prisoner to greater levels of surveillance. The officer quoted above interpreted the prisoner’s lack of willingness to be put



on the ACCT care plan as an indication that his problems were not genuine. Whilst it is not possible to establish, in this instance, if the prisoner was ‘genuine’ or not, this quotation highlights how staff see a lack of willingness to engage with Prison Service procedures as an indication of deceit. Put another way, prisoners who prefer to manage their own problems and exercise choice and autonomy over who they talk to are seen as ‘demanding’ and treated with caution. Thus, staff authority is reinforced through their claimed knowledge of prisoners (Drake, 2008: 160), and their ability to question, influence, or restrict their help-seeking choices. In the case of Listener-prisoner contacts, staff are not superseded as a source of support for prisoners, they were also heavily influenced by the confidential nature of the contact between Listeners and prisoners.

Staff reinforced their role as gatekeepers of Listener support through justifications based on ‘risk’ in that it was deemed too ‘risky’ for particular prisoners to converse with Listeners. Staff have the power to facilitate or block contact between Listeners and prisoners on the grounds of security and risk as one officer explained:

*The issue with Listeners is of course that if our lads are a high risk, as in high risk for anybody else to share their cell, that we can't put a Listener in there. So the lads that are high risk, through their crimes or their behaviour or mental state, are not allowed Listeners. Therefore the only alternative they've got is to have the Samaritans phone.* (Senior officer, Skills and Development unit, Prison 4)

Staff felt it necessary to monitor how the Listeners were used by particular prisoners. On the surface this was justified as protecting Listeners, but this was framed within broader concerns about maintaining the security intentions of the establishment. Whilst in part staff actions served to protect Listeners from burden and manipulation by prisoners, it meant that prisoners’



help-seeking choices were monitored and restricted, particularly with respect to Listeners. It is important to note that this was a particularly pertinent theme in interviews conducted with staff from the YOI visited where younger prisoners were seen as less trustworthy, mature and responsible individuals (see also Crawley, 2004b: 102). Prison staff appear to question use of the Listeners by prisoners and do not automatically presume that distress is the most probable motive for requesting to speak to a Listener. Whilst staff were concerned about the safety of, and burden on, Listeners, they were primarily motivated by concerns of security, and preventing time-wasting or illicit activities that are made possible by the confidential nature of the support Listeners offered to prisoners.

## **9.5 Conclusion**

Prisons are organised to limit individual expressions of autonomy, control and choice. They are sites of repression, wherein there is an undeniable imbalance in the relations of power between the ‘keepers’ and the ‘kept’. Rarely are the ‘keepers’ able or willing to relinquish their power, to facilitate empowerment. (Hannah-Moffat, 2000: 521)

Despite the fact that the existence of the Listener scheme has been accepted and adopted by the Prison Service nationally, that does not mean that it is easily accepted by staff as they conduct their work on a daily basis. This is particularly the case when the freedom Listeners require, and confidentiality policy they are expected to adhere to, are at odds with staff interpretations of prison rules. This chapter has demonstrated that in practice, Listeners are allowed only limited and heavily monitored forms of freedom and autonomy. Despite claims that Listeners are ‘self-managing’, ‘trusted’ and ‘respected’, their status as prisoners reinforces their ‘lesser eligibility’ and results in their actions and work coming under close scrutiny by staff. In fact, the greater autonomy might subject Listeners to greater levels of surveillance, thus



undermining the so called responsibility and trust it is claimed are afforded to Listeners. Staff may be aware that prisoners might be motivated to adopt roles to portray a positive image of themselves. However, prisoner engagement has to be of a type and level which officers endorse. Rather than truly ‘responsibilising’ prisoners, volunteering serves to reinforce their ‘prisoner status’ further. This also reinforces staff suspicion of prisoners’ motivations.

It was important to staff that both Listeners and prisoners who wished to talk to Listeners were ‘genuine’. This, they felt, required on-going supervision. Therefore it was not only Listeners whose activities were monitored and restricted. Staff were also suspicious of prisoners who requested to talk to Listeners and questioned if they had genuine motivations. Staff were gatekeepers of prisoners’ access to Listener support and used this position to attempt to identify prisoners engaging in illicit activities and prisoners whose vulnerability or risk they needed to be aware of. They subsequently put prisoners in a place where they questioned the authenticity of prisoners’ problems and their choice to seek help and support from Listeners; this appeared to be intrusive despite claims of best intentions. Whilst Listeners, and prisoners who chose to talk to them, were closely scrutinised, prison staff recognised the benefits of the Listener scheme. In fact, the existence of the scheme was justified in terms of its ‘use’ and ‘benefit’ to staff by reducing their workload through saving them time (a resource that Listeners were in greater supply of), and preventing the escalation of prisoners’ negative feelings.

The focus on security that staff adopt neutralizes attempts to responsibilise prisoners, and in fact appears to intensify the scrutiny prisoners are subject to. For several reasons outlined here, staff cannot truly enable prisoners to exercise autonomy, adopt responsibility or become fully trusted because, above all else, security concerns prevail. Listeners (and the distressed and vulnerable people that seek out Listener support) are primarily regarded as *prisoners*.



## **Chapter 10**

### **Peer support and seeking help in the prison environment**

[O]ne of the problematic legacies of our dependence on psychological individualism – the belief that persons matter much more than contexts – has been its tendency to deflect attention away from the destructive effects of imprisonment. (Haney, 2005: 84)

This doctoral research aimed to study and analyse the operation of the Listener scheme in prisons. It investigated how prisoners used (or did not use) Listener support in their patterns of coping and help-seeking in prison, how the Listener scheme was perceived and used by prisoners, Listeners and prison staff, and how Listeners described their experiences of conducting their voluntary work in prison. The analysis was underpinned by the assumption that voluntary work and help-seeking are influenced and shaped by social and structural conditions of the prison environment. As Haney (above) suggests, the influence of the discipline of psychology, and I would also argue neo-liberal strategies of responsibilisation, have led too often to conclusions that prisoners must take charge of their reform, be active help-seekers, and engage in activities that demonstrate their commitment to society. Such a view neglects to appreciate the effects of the ‘pains of imprisonment’ and the context of the prison environment in which prisoners are expected to conduct these activities. This thesis has expanded current knowledge on help-seeking and peer support and has offered a more balanced understanding of both the benefits *and* challenges prisoners, peer supporters and staff experience. This final chapter draws together the implications of these findings.



This thesis has provided a more nuanced understanding of help-seeking in prison. It challenges the ‘myth’ and common assumptions that help-seekers are in some way ‘weak’ or ‘inadequate’ (Garvey et al, 2008: 93). A lack of help-seeking tends to be regarded as ‘maladaptive’; this view overlooks the importance of the factors that drive prisoners’ *choice* in the prison environment, and the spectrum of help-seeking activity that prisoners exhibit. Not only were prisoners ‘strategic’ in terms of the source of ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ support selected for different types of problems, they were also ‘strategic’ in the selection of particular individuals from within those groups to seek help from. Prisoners’ relationships with potential sources of support (people on the ‘outside’, prison staff, prisoners and Listeners), played an important role in encouraging or inhibiting help-seeking intentions. Trust is considered important in the help-seeking literature (Garvey et al, 2008: 46) and was found to be pertinent for intentions to seek help from staff and prisoners. The perceived level of conflict between prisoners was found to inhibit prisoners’ intentions to seek help from staff. This finding is noteworthy because perceived conflict between prisoners, such as fighting or grassing, makes seeking help from staff riskier. This marks a departure from the classic sub-cultural prison scholars who would predict that prisoner solidarity would expand the social ‘distance’ between prisoners and staff (e.g. Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958), thus making contact between staff and prisoners less probable and reducing the likelihood of help-seeking. Solidarity is no longer considered to be such a powerful force in the late modern prison (Crewe, 2009), however, where conflict between prisoners is evident, it appears to elicit a more cautious approach among prisoners in their help-seeking with respect to prison staff. The ‘strategic’ responses of prisoners reinforce that prisoners make informed decisions about which problems to take to particular sources, which individuals in particular should be approached, and the environmental conditions that make help-seeking riskier. Furthermore, relationships with potential sources of support provided opportunities for more informal help-seeking, mutually supportive gestures, and ‘reaching out’ to others, which served to reduce the visibility of help-seeking.



It has been asserted in this thesis that help-seeking by prisoners is ‘strategic’, in that prisoners select different ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ sources of support according to the specific nature of the problem they experience. It is recognised that the ‘inside’/‘outside’ distinction used in these analyses is worthy of further exploration in future research projects through an investigation of help-seeking in ‘outside’ settings, and in considering those sources that serve to blur the boundaries of the ‘outside’ and ‘inside’. As noted in chapter 6, the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, mental health services, or substance misuse support are all examples of sources of support that individuals could seek help in prison and non-prison settings. This research supports the notion that the nature of the prison environment serves to alter how these sources of support are perceived and used. It could be argued that support is more readily available ‘inside’ due to the opportunities prisoners have to seek out support, and their proximity to different sources of support. At the same time, help-seeking in prison is subject to additional barriers and risks created by the coercive and visible nature of the closed environment in which help-seeking takes place.

Whilst it has been claimed that prisoners are unlikely to talk to prison staff (Blair, 2006: 9), this research found that staff play a key role, because not only are staff a source of support selected by prisoners, they are also gatekeepers for access to other sources of support. Furthermore staff are discretionary decision-makers about factors that can improve or worsen prisoners’ experience of imprisonment (Crewe, 2005: 98; Short et al, 2009: 421; Vuole & Kruttschnitt, 2008: 331). Prison staff play a crucial role in prisoners’ help-seeking activity. It was clear that many prison staff interviewed for this research genuinely cared for prisoner well-being, but they found it extremely difficult in dealing with complex behaviour and working under tight resource and time constraints. The literature on prison staff suggests that reconciling the goals of ‘custody’ and ‘care’ are problematic (Braggins & Talbot, 2005;



Genders & Players, 1995; Tait, 2012: 17-18;). Staff use their position as gatekeepers to ‘screen’ prisoners’ help-seeking choices, probe further into prisoners’ problems, and attempt to get prisoners to justify their help-seeking choices. Whilst framed in terms of concerns for the well-being of prisoners, and protecting the Listeners from manipulation or misuse, staff concerns over security dominated their responses to prisoner help-seeking requests. This further helps us to understand the ‘strategic’ help-seeking that was evident in the survey data, because different staff responded differently towards prisoners and prisoners selected staff according to the probable responses by particular individuals. These responses to help-seeking by staff risk altering prisoners’ selections for different sources of support, thus undermining the degree to which *choice* can be fully exercised.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data in chapter 7 lead to the conclusion that Listeners assist prisoners with coming to terms with their imprisonment and periods of confinement. It is asserted that prisoners reach ‘tipping points’ characterised by a build-up of problems and frustrations with prison life, more often during their first experience of imprisonment, prior to sentencing, and during the initial period of incarceration, that elicit a more urgent need to talk and ‘off-load’ in an environment where listening ears are scarce, and feeling heard and understood is desired but rare. Further to this however, the fact that Listeners are mainly accessed at these times suggests that a primary motivation for selecting Listeners is not always their ‘peer status’ as suggested by the small number of reviews on the use of peer supporters or peer mentors (Davidson et al, 2006: 446-7; Devilly et al, 2005: 231; Philip & Sprat, 2007: 49; Soloman, 2004: 395; White, 2004:3). However, prisoners did reveal that the peer empathy and understanding that Listeners offered prisoners, often expressed through informal gestures and practical assistance, was valued, as it demonstrated that Listeners understood prisoners’ problems, and even cared, in an environment where more caring relationships were rare.



Garvey et al, (2008: 92) recommend adopting an approach taking into consideration the perspective and experiences of help-seekers. This is a particularly pertinent recommendation with reference to prisoners, as this thesis has demonstrated that the prison environment presents a series of unique and important challenges for help-seeking. Peer support was clearly something that prisoners knew was available to them. However, whilst peer support was used by prisoners, it was by far not among the most favoured sources of support across all problems. This research asserts that Listeners were a source of support, selected among others, and that prisoners had ‘strategic’ reasons for doing so. Despite plans by NOMS (2011) to eventually offer mentoring to *all* offenders, it is important to remember that mentoring and peer support are not favoured by everyone (Brown & Ross, 2010: 45-6). In the prison setting ‘choice’ is problematic because

In effect, prison creates the problems, defines the possible responses to those problems, and then requires the inmate to choose from among the available options. (Zamble & Porporino, 1988: 99)

Government needs to take into consideration prisoner *choice*, their help-seeking preferences, and the constraints of the environment under which choices are made, so that a more informed range of provision, that more closely reflects prisoners’ and offenders’ preferences, can be offered.

It is evident that one of the main benefits of being able to talk to a Listener when prisoners reached ‘tipping points’ was the ‘cathartic’ effect of talking and ‘releasing’ or ‘off-loading’ their thoughts and feelings (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987: 33; Brannon & Larson, 1991) in relation to problems created or worsened by their imprisonment and the nature of the environment they live in. Listeners provided a forum for prisoners to release feelings that otherwise might have resulted in ‘explosions’ or ‘outbursts’ caused by pent up frustration and



emotions. This sometimes also led them to assess the problem in a new light and feel able to move on from it once they had been able to talk. Clearly then, at particular times, this form of ‘listening therapy’ is considered worthwhile by prisoners. Sparks (2002: 567) contends that one of the most powerful features of the Barlinnie special unit, a therapeutic community operated in Scotland until the 1990s, was the space and time prisoners had to talk; ‘talk’ was powerful for prisoners in alleviating the feelings associated with being in prison. For prison staff, Listeners offered the time for ‘talk’ that they could not. Regardless of any other potential outcomes then, the opportunity for ‘talk’, the key aim of the Listener scheme and Samaritans’ services more generally, is not to be underestimated. As outlined in part 1 of this thesis, government has centred upon narrow, quantitative outcomes such as ‘reducing re-offending’ and ‘reducing suicide’, against which the ‘value’ or ‘benefit’ of peer mentoring and support schemes are to be measured. Listener support is seen as a tool of suicide prevention by the Prison Service, however, Carlen (2001b), in the context of women’s imprisonment, suggests that we must be wary of associating efforts such as these directly with suicide prevention because:

the effective recognition and address of individual and differing physical, psychological, emotional and social needs of women in prison should be seen *as a good in itself*, and not merely as a strategy to reduce the incidence of suicide. (Carlen, 2001b: 462. Emphasis in original)

Furthermore, focussing on functionalist outcomes such as ‘reducing re-offending’ or ‘suicide prevention’, diverts attention from issues such as the effects of imprisonment (Liebling, 2012: 66). The evidence presented in this thesis, and considered in the foregoing discussion, point to the positive impacts of the Listener scheme on prisoners, Listeners and prison staff, and challenge the narrow definitions of ‘value’ and ‘impact’ to single quantifiable outcomes for



service-users only. As Carlen (2001b: 459) contends, “inappropriate quantitative criteria” can overlook “genuinely therapeutic practices”. However, we must be wary not to draw conclusions that the presence of schemes such as the Listener scheme can, or should, legitimise the use of imprisonment (Bosworth, 2007; Faulkner, 2006). After all, alleviating the effects of prison, for both prisoners *and* staff, does not address the problematic nature of the prison environment itself.

The findings in this thesis bring to the fore issues about how peer schemes and models of support are stretched or adapted when located within the prison environment. Staff, prisoners and Listeners all verified that Listeners did much more than provide an opportunity for prisoners to talk. Whilst systems are in place to ensure that any prisoner can call out a Listener at any time of the day or night, it was evident that there was ‘value’ in the more ‘informal’ and ‘unofficial’ work that Listeners conducted which ‘stretched the boundaries’ of Samaritans’ guidelines about their Listener role. Listeners did this in response to an awareness of how their prison knowledge could help other prisoners, and the ambiguities they faced arising from their dual role as Listeners and prisoners. Listeners socialised with prisoners to make their support available, made informal supportive gestures, and sometimes resolved problems for prisoners. Listeners clearly took their work very seriously, and were sensitive to the potential outcomes of their support for their callers and the heightened meaning or potentially large consequences of seemingly small issues in the prison environment. Listeners, as peers to their ‘callers’, did not feel able to let prisoners go and make a mistake they felt was avoidable. It was also a two-way process as informal social contact with Listeners provided opportunities for prisoners to develop views towards individual Listeners and created opportunities for informal help-seeking. Thus, it was not just relationships with the potential sources of support that was important, it was also *proximity* and ease of access that made seeking help from Listeners more achievable. Staff observed the informal work by Listeners and felt it benefitted them by



contributing to the stability of the prison ‘community’ by avoiding the escalation of prisoners problems or conflicts with one another, thus preventing additional workloads.

The more ‘proactive’ and ‘informal’ support from Listeners has implications for how Listener contacts are recorded. Under the current partnership agreement with NOMS, Samaritans maintain records of the number of contacts Listeners have with prisoners. Park and Ward (2009: 14) contend that simply recording that a contact has taken place does not show how the ‘caller’ has been helped. Nor can it reflect how help was sought out or offered. Furthermore, in a school setting, Parkin and McKegany (2000: 32) suggest that recording the work of peer supporters using a diary, enabled an understanding of how they helped service-users, and moreover their relationships with those who facilitated the service, to be achieved. This would be particularly difficult to maintain in the prison environment where the ‘prisoner status’ of Listeners means that their personal possessions could be searched at any time by staff thus putting at risk the confidentiality of their ‘callers’. These are two ends of the extreme in the possibilities of recording Listener contacts. The data presented in this thesis brings to the fore the complex, varied, and ‘stretched boundaries’ of Listener work. This impacted on staff, Listeners and prisoners in a number of ways that is not reflected through the current recording practices. Demonstrating the ‘impact’ or ‘value’ of Listener support is essential given the contractual relationship Samaritans established with NOMS since 2011 (Samaritans, 2011b: 34) and the evidence that Samaritans will undoubtedly need in order to secure the continuation of this contract when its renewal is considered. Moreover, this is a concern for voluntary sector organisations leading mentoring or peer support schemes, that need to carefully consider how services are measured. Furthermore, both government and voluntary organisations need to be clearer about what the objective of such schemes should, or realistically can, be (Brown & Ross, 2010: 48), or indeed the degree of congruency between their aims and those that the government are asking them to achieve. This is particularly important given the tendency to



regard mentoring and peer support as a monolithic practice, when in fact they are more appropriately considered umbrella terms grouping together a wide variety of practices and aims. Unfortunately, under the current ‘payment by results’ approach adopted by the coalition government, the focus is no less likely to move from ‘reducing re-offending’. Voluntary organisations need to be careful that they do not become responsible for what may be an unlikely outcome for those individuals sent to prison.

A recurrent assertion of this thesis is that volunteering in prison is not the same as volunteering on the outside as a free citizen, and that there are dilemmas and contradictions that arise as prisoners attempt to engage as citizens in prison. The findings explored in this thesis revealed that there was much more to conducting Listener peer support work as a prisoner volunteer, than meets the eye. Prisoners who become Listeners, as prisoners themselves, are being asked to adopt a considerable task. This was brought to the fore by all three groups participating in this research, who highlighted that the implications of Listeners living in close proximity to prisoners they supported and other potential ‘service-users’, meant that it is questionable as to whether Listeners are really able to ‘withdraw’ or step back from their role during periods when they were technically ‘off duty’ or wish to take time out. Evaluative work conducted by Samaritans recommended that “Listeners should have time for themselves built into their daily schedule” (The Samaritans, 2001b). However, a consistent story that emerged from the accounts provided by Listeners was that volunteering as a prisoner, surrounded by potential service-users often led to a blurring of the roles of ‘Listener’ and ‘prisoner’. Listeners found themselves ‘slipping in and out’ of the role. As already noted, Listeners were sometimes approached by prisoners who knew they were Listeners, and Listeners would ‘reach out’ to prisoners during their social time. Further to this, both staff and prisoners explained that they selected Listeners in close proximity to them, who they knew and trusted, and that this minimised ‘risk’. For prisoners this minimised the help-seeking risk of talking to someone who



they did not know, and for staff it minimised the security risk of bringing in a Listener from another part of the establishment. This blurring of the distinction between ‘prisoner’ and ‘Listener’, and informal nature of much of their Listener work, created the potential for Listeners to be ‘over-used’. This reduced the ability of Listeners to ‘step back’ or ‘withdraw’ from their volunteering or the role and have their own privacy. Indeed, being a Listener was associated with being a generally friendly and helpful individual, and Listeners were used by staff and prisoners as such.

The Listener role was undoubtedly made more complex by the confidential nature of their contact with prisoners. At times, it was burdensome to come to terms with the disclosures made to them by prisoners and the very visible signs of prisoner distress. Prisoners had essentially ‘off-loaded’ their problems onto Listeners, and Listeners needed a forum to be able to ‘off-load’ too. This is where supportive structures were crucial. Regular de-briefing meetings with Samaritans were considered important by Listeners; however they did not always occur with the frequency that Listeners would have liked. Whilst ‘best practice’ in peer support is claimed to arise out of having clear role descriptions (Cooney & Braggins, 2010: 39), there is a need to take into account how the prison environment, and the position of relative powerlessness prisoners are in, blurs the boundaries of volunteer roles. The enormity of what prisoner peer supporters are taking on needs to be remembered. Clearly these findings indicate the need to ensure Listeners are supported, and their responsibilities are carefully considered in relation to their subordinate position as prisoners. Samaritans need to ensure that regular de-briefing meetings do take place, and for other peer schemes, it means putting an effective support system in place.

Listeners very clearly felt that they could identify the benefits of their volunteering on themselves personally and their own lives, supporting the wealth of literature reviewed in



chapter 4, of the benefits of volunteering among non-prisoner populations (e.g. Kim & Pai, 2010; Musick & Wilson, 2003; O'Shea, 2006), and prisoner populations (e.g. Farrant & Levenson, 2002; Maruna, 2001). Becoming a Listener was about becoming an effective communicator. The skills, developed through becoming a Listener, meant that people around them responded to them more favourably, and this made them feel respected and was a source of self-worth and confidence. Being a Listener was a way of 'doing time' rather than just passing time. Furthermore, being a Listener was also about 'doing time' as a particular kind of prisoner who had achieved some kind of status (a 'Listener status') and identity as a prisoner on the path to reform. Indeed, patterns of help-seeking by prisoners suggested that Listeners were not regarded in the same way as other prisoners, and might be thought of as 'quasi-professionals' (Richman, 2004). It was particularly illuminating that a common way of describing the qualities and characteristics that they had adopted through becoming a Listener, was in terms of 'putting a new suit', 'wearing the Listener hat', and behaving in line with the expectations of the role. It is not surprising then that offenders (and this case prisoners) will select roles on the basis that they have the potential to showcase that they are making use of opportunities for 'reform' (Maruna, 2001: 13). Whilst it is yet to be established through future research if volunteering as a Listener is linked to longer term impacts on desistance from crime, and if 'wearing' these characteristics is more than "imaginative rehearsal for their assumption on release" (Uggen, Manza & Behrens, 2004: 265), it is nevertheless evident that becoming a Listener helps prisoners to 'do time', as a particular kind of 'generative' prisoner. This is an important outcome that should not be overlooked – regardless of whether any potential longer term impacts can be established or not.

Despite the above, the coercive nature of the prison environment, and the structuring of the choices prisoners have available to them means that 'opportunities' are in reality 'obligations' (Crewe, 2009: 454) which are framed in the 'altruistic' and 'pro-social' concerns that are



presumed to characterise volunteering. Listeners were keen to preserve the reputation of the Listener scheme because of the way that reputation reflected on them as individuals and wished to dissociate themselves from illicit activities or their ‘prisoner status’. Both staff and Listeners emphasised the importance for prisoners to have the ‘right’ or ‘genuine’ motivations to volunteer. For Listeners this protected the reputation of the scheme; for staff it reduced the likelihood that Listeners would ‘misuse’ their freedom.

It has been claimed that volunteering by prisoners, through adopting roles such as that of the Listener, provide an opportunity for prisoners to engage with staff on more of an “equal footing” (Tait, 2012: 20) and neo-liberal strategies of responsibilisation promote volunteering as a means of demonstrating ‘active citizenship’ and ‘empowerment’ (Gibson, 2008: 45; Hannah-Moffat, 2000; 2001). Indeed, staff did express some respect for Listeners given the nature of the work they conducted and the contribution they felt Listeners made to the prison ‘community’. At times too, Listeners implied a feeling of working *with* staff through trying to help prisoners, and trying to make the prison environment a better, more bearable, place for everyone living and working there. However, the respect staff afforded Listeners was contingent on a number of factors. First of all, just as staff assessed the ‘genuineness’ of prisoners seeking help from Listeners, they also assessed the ‘genuineness’ of Listeners. Whilst Listeners were regarded as more mature and better behaved prisoners who were subsequently easier to manage, staff nevertheless treated them with suspicion. Listeners ‘earned’ respect by adopting what staff perceived more legitimate forms of communication – being calm, respectful and not demanding. ‘Respect’ was therefore conditional, and subject to the on-going demonstration by Listeners that they were worthy recipients of this respect.

Not only was staff respect for Listeners conditional, but so was the level of ‘responsibility’ Listeners were granted. The discretionary power of staff, which gave them the ability to



remove responsibility from Listeners, highlighted that as staff, their ability to punish, gave them a position of power (Bosworth, 2007: 74).

[T]his can feel as though individuals charged with delivering the regime are actively undermining the ability even of prisoners motivated by ideas of self-improvement or rehabilitation to address problems and develop skills, and thereby comply with the professed goals of imprisonment. (Rowe, 2012: 113)

Listeners, as prisoners, were extremely dependent on staff co-operation and facilitation of their movements. Some staff were very sensitive to, suspicious of, and concerned with, how Listeners used their 'freedom' and were keen to avoid unnecessary movements where possible. This predicament undoubtedly arises as a result of the difficulties of transferring power to prisoners in an environment not designed (physically or socially) to allow prisoners responsibility, autonomy or freedom. Staff, who are entrusted to maintain the security intentions of prisons, experience difficulty in facilitating and monitoring a scheme like the Listener scheme where 'Listener protocol' is sometimes at odds with 'prison protocol', particularly with respect to confidentiality in the case of the Listener scheme. Staff are depicted in the prison literature as 'under-using' their power (Liebling, 2000: 347; Liebling & Price, 1998: 4; Sykes, 1958). However power is exercised by staff in sometimes subtle and less visible ways, which helps to explain prisoners' acute awareness of power exercised over them (Liebling, Price & Elliot, 1999: 92). To a certain extent, it can be claimed that one source of 'power' that Listeners achieve through their volunteering is via the policy of confidentiality that Samaritans require them to adhere to. An implication of this is that they may be privy to knowledge about prisoners that staff do not possess. Full and serious breaches of confidentiality were considered rare. Despite this, staff explained how Listeners often 'signposted' to prisoners who were 'at risk' or who were misusing Listener support which



served to enable the closer monitoring of both the help-seeking of prisoners and Listener work. Listeners described occasions where staff pressured them to disclose the nature of a conversation they had with a prisoner. Not only then was there the potential for Listeners to feel ‘burdened’ by prisoners, staff could make the burden of confidentiality more problematic by using their position of power in this way. In reality it was difficult to pursue the goals of respect and security (Liebling, 2004: 442) and the implication of this, as evident in the examination of the accounts provided by both staff and Listeners in part 3 of this thesis, was an attempt by staff to regain some of this power. Staff, at times, re-framed the nature of their working relationships with Listeners by describing them as ‘tools’ of prison work and suggesting that Listeners worked *for* them. Although responsibilisation strategies appear less oppressive, a discourse of ‘empowerment’ conceals the enhanced governance prisoners are in reality subjected to (Bosworth, 2007: 73; Hannah-Moffat, 2001: 172). Not only that, but claims that prisoners are ‘empowered’ are problematic because it implies a range of definitions and degrees of power (Hannah-Moffat, 2001: 169), and as Adair (2005: 13) astutely points out, the “resistance of some custodial officers to peer support projects may be in part due to a blurring of the distinction between objective power and subjective empowerment.”

There is much research to suggest that prisoners are not simply ‘passive’ subjects of institutional life as they have traditionally been seen (Soloman & Edgar, 2004: 1), and indeed this thesis has highlighted that Listeners, as prisoner volunteers, were active and engaged. The notion of ‘active citizenship’ is contradictory. For example, prisoners have been denied the right to vote on the grounds that

if leading prisoners to the goal of becoming responsible citizens is a critical element in reintegrating them into society (rehabilitation), alienating prisoners from citizenry



through disenfranchisement must be part of the punishment (just deserts/retribution). (Cheney, 2008: 138).

However, as Cheney (2008: 139) further points out, the “rhetoric of citizenship” is used, yet prisoners are still deprived of basic rights such as the vote, which reinforces the fact that they are not regarded as citizens. The degree to which ‘active citizenship’ is achievable in the prison environment is questionable; firstly because prison officers are a barrier to change (Carlen, 2001b: 464) and as this thesis has demonstrated, resistant to the transfer of power; and secondly, because the structural characteristics of prisons and systems of power in place, constrain attempts to change prison regimes (Hannah-Moffat, 2001: 197). Whilst this is undeniably a pessimistic, although somewhat more realistic conclusion, the fact remains that prisons, as institutions, are unlikely to ever become places that ‘empower’ prisoners as citizens. That does not mean that efforts are wasted or not worthwhile, as the current study identified all three groups of the prison ‘community’ (prisoners, Listeners and prison staff) benefitted in unique ways. However, more honesty is needed about the extent to which government are engaging with the voluntary sector to legitimise prisons as sites where offenders can be ‘reformed’, and the extent to which volunteering by prisoners is used to create ‘model prisoners’ rather than ‘model citizens’.



## References

Active Community Unit (2004) *Think Smart, Think Voluntary Sector*. Retrieved November 2006 from <http://commercial.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/thinksmart.pdf?view=Binary>.  
<http://commercial.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/thinksmart.pdf?view=Binary>.

Adair, D. (2005). *Peer Support Programs Within Prisons*. Tasmania: School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania. November 2011, Retrieved from  
[http://wopared.parl.net/Senate/committee/mentalhealth\\_ctte/submissions/addinfo022.pdf](http://wopared.parl.net/Senate/committee/mentalhealth_ctte/submissions/addinfo022.pdf).

Adams, K. (1992) 'Adjusting to prison life' in Tonry, M. (Ed.) *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. p16.

Addis, M. E. and Mahalik, J. R. (2003) 'Men, masculinity, and the contexts of help-seeking', *American Psychologist*, 58(1): 5-17.

Adkins, L. (2003) 'Reflexivity and the politics of qualitative research' in May, T. (Ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage. p332-348.

Albrecht, T. L. and Adelman, M. B. (1987) 'Communicating social support: A theoretical perspective' Albrecht, T. L. and Adelman, M. B. (Eds.) *Communicating Social Support*. London: Sage. p18-39.



Anon (1999a) 'Comments from a Parkhurst Listener', *Prison Service Journal*, 124: 19.

Anon (1999b) 'The Listeners: from a Parkhurst Listener', *Prison Service Journal*, 126: 25.

Anon (2006) 'What is a Listener?', *Safer Custody News*, July/August: 8-9.

Archer, R. (1994) 'Markets and good government', in Clayton, A. (Ed.) *Governance, Democracy & Conditionality: What Role for NGOs?* Oxford: Intrac. p7-34.

Armstrong, G. S. and Griffin, M. L. (2004) 'Does the job matter? Comparing correlates of stress among treatment and correctional staff in prisons', *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 32: 577-592.

Arnold, H. (2005) 'The effects of prison work' in Liebling, A. and Maruna, S. (Eds.). *The Effects of Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p391-420.

Arnold, H., Liebling, A. and Tait, S. (2007). 'Prison officers and prison culture' in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p471-495.

Arntson, P. and Droge, D. (1987) 'Social support in self-help groups: the role of communication in enabling perceptions of control', in Albrecht, T. L. and M. B. Adelman, M. B. (Eds.) *Communicating Social Support*. London: Sage. p148-171.

Ashcroft, R. and Pfeffer, N. (2001) 'Ethics behind closed doors: do research ethics committees need secrecy?' *British Medical Journal*, 322(May): 1294-1296.



- Backett, S. A. (1987) 'Suicide in Scottish prisons', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 151: 218-221.
- Baer, L. D. and. Ravneberg, B. (2008) 'The outside and inside in Norwegian and English prisons', *Geografiska Annaler, Series B Human Geography*, 90(2): 205-216.
- Batchelder, J. S. and Pippert, J. M. (2002) 'Hard time or idle time: factors affecting inmate choices between participation in prison work and education programmes', *The Prison Journal*, 82(2): 269-280.
- Beck, A. T., Weissman, A., Lester, D. and Trexler, L. (1974) 'The measurement of pessimism: the hopelessness scale', *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 42(6): 861-865.
- Behan, C. and O'Donnell, I. (2008) 'Prisoners, politics and the polls: enfranchisement and the burden of responsibility', *British Journal of Criminology*, 48(3): 319-336.
- Bekkers, R. (2005) 'Participation in voluntary associations: relations with resources, personality and political values', *Political Psychology*, 26(3): 439-454.
- Biggar, K. (1996). 'Befriending in prison', in Liebling, A. (Ed.) *Deaths in Custody: Caring for People at Risk*. London: Whiting & Birch. p143-148.
- Biggar, K. (1999) 'Caring for the suicidal in custody', *Prison Service Journal*, 127: 44-46.
- Biggar, K. and Neal, D. (1996) 'Caring for the suicidal in custody: developing a multi-disciplinary approach', *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, 33(3): 207-213.



- Biles, D. (1994) 'Deaths in custody: the nature and scope of the problem' in Liebling, A. & Ward, T. (Eds.) *Deaths in Custody: International Perspectives*. London: Whiting & Birch. p14-27.
- Bille-Brahe, U., Egebo, H., Crepet, P., De Leo, D., Hjelmeland, H., Kerlkof, A., Lonnqvist, J., Michel, K., Renberg, E. S., Schmidtke, A. & Wasserman, D. (1999) 'Social support among European suicide attempters', *Archives of Suicide Research*, 5: 215-231.
- Black, J. (2008) 'Prison works?' *Criminal Justice Matters*, 74: 6-7.
- Black, D. R., Tobler, N. S. and Sciacca, J. P. (1998) 'Peer helping/involvement: an efficacious way to meet the challenge of reducing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among youth?', *Journal of School Health*, 68(3): 87-93.
- Blair, J. (2006) 'Self-discovered learning - peer tutoring at Blundeston prison', *The Research and Development Bulletin*, 4(2): 5-10.
- Blechman, E. A., Maurice, A. Buecker, B. and Helberg, C. (2000) Can mentoring or skill training reduce recidivism? Observational study with propensity analysis', *Prevention Analysis*, 1(3): 139-155.
- Borgonovi, F. (2008) 'Doing well by doing good. The relationship between formal volunteering and self-reported health and happiness', *Social Science and Medicine*, 66: 2321-2334.



- Bond, G. D. and Lee, A. Y. (2005) 'The darkest side of trust: validating the generalized communication suspicion scale with prison inmates', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 38: 1429-1438.
- Bonner, R. L. (2006) 'Research note: Stressful segregation housing and psychosocial vulnerability in prison suicide ideators', *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 36(2): 250-254.
- Borrill, J., Snow, L. Medlicott, D., Teers, R. and Paton, J. (2005) 'Learning from "near misses": interviews with women who survived an incident of severe self-harm in prison', *The Howard Journal*, 44(1): 57-69.
- Borrill, J., Teers, R., Paton, J., Regan, L. and Cassidy, T. (2004) 'The impact on staff of a self-inflicted death in custody', *Prison Service Journal*, 151: 2-10.
- Bosworth, M. (1999) *Engendering Resistance: Agency and Power in Women's Prisons*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Bosworth, M. (2007) 'Creating the responsible prisoner: Federal admission and orientation packs', *Punishment & Society*, 9(1): 67-85.
- Bosworth, M., Campbell, D., Demby, B., Ferranti, S. M. and Santos, M. (2005) 'Doing prison research: views from inside', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2): 249-264.
- Bosworth, M. and Carrabine, E. (2001) 'Reassessing resistance: role, gender and sexuality in prison', *Punishment & Society*, 3: 501-515.



- Bradley, D. B. (1999-2000) 'A reason to rise each morning: the meaning of volunteering in the lives of older adults', *Generations*, XXIII(4): 45-50.
- Braggins, J. and Talbot, J. (2005) *Wings of Learning: The Role of the Prison Officer in Supporting Prisoner Education*. London: CCJS and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.
- Brannen, J. (1992) 'Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches: an overview' in Brannen, J. (Ed.) *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*. Aldershot: Avebury. p3-37.
- Brannon, J. M. and Larson, B. (1991) Peer counselling strategies: facilitating self-disclosure among sexually victimised juvenile offenders', *Journal of Addictions and Offender Counselling*, 11(2): 51-58.
- Brenton, M. (1985) *The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services*. London: Longman.
- Brooker, C., Flynn, J. and Fox, C. (2010) Trends in self-inflicted deaths and self-harm in prisons in England and Wales (2001-2008): in search of a new research paradigm', Retrieved July 2011, from <http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/cjmh/SIDS%20and%20Self%20harm%20pub%20Lincoln.pdf>.
- Brown, D. J. (1991) 'The professional ex-: an alternative for exiting the deviant career', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 32(2): 219-230.
- Brown, S. L. and Ireland, C. A. (2006) 'Coping style and stress in newly incarcerated male adolescents', *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38: 656-661.



- Brown, M. and S. Ross (2010) 'Mentoring, social capital and desistance: a study of women released from prison', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 43(1): 31-50.
- Brownlee, I. (1998) 'New Labour - new penology? Punitive rhetoric and the limits of managerialism in criminal justice policy', *Journal of Law and Society*, 25(3): 313-335.
- Bruce, I. (1994) *Charity Marketing: Meeting Need Through Customer Focus*. London: ICSA Publishing Limited.
- Bryans, S. (2001) 'Prison service staff' in Bryans, S, and Jones, R (Eds.) *Prisons and the Prisoner: An Introduction to the Work of Her Majesty's Prison Service*. London: The Stationary Office. p153-181.
- Bryans, S. (2007) *Prison Governors: Managing Prisons in a Time of Change*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Bryans, S., Martin, C. & Walker, R. (2002) 'The road ahead: issues and strategies for future joint working', in Bryans, S., Martin, C. and Walker, R. (Eds.) *Prisons and the Voluntary Sector*. Winchester: Waterside Press. p162-173.
- Bryman, A. (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Bryman, A. (1992) 'Quantitative and qualitative research: further reflections on their integration' in Brannen, J. (Ed.) *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*. Aldershot: Avebury. p57-78.



- Butler, M. (2008) 'What are you looking at? Prisoner confrontations and the search for respect', *British Journal of Criminology*, 48(6): 856-873.
- Byrne, M. W. (2005) 'Conducting research as a visiting scientist in a women's prison', *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 21(4): 223-230.
- Cahill, T. J., Jessell, J. C. and Thorne, A. M. (1979) 'Peer and professional counsellors: prisoners' preferences and evaluations', *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 6(4): 400-415.
- Carey, M. and Walker, R. (2002) 'The penal voluntary sector', in Bryans, S., Martin, C. and Walker, R. (Eds.) *Prisons and the Voluntary Sector*. Winchester: Waterside Press.
- Carlen, P. (1983) *Women's Imprisonment: A Study of Social Control*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Carlen, P. (2001a) 'Why study women's imprisonment? Or anyone else's? An indefinite article', in King, R. D. and Maguire, B. (Ed.) *Prisons in Context*. Oxford: Clarendon. p131-140.
- Carlen, P. (2001b) 'Death and the triumph of governance? Lessons from the Scottish Women's Prison', *Punishment & Society*, 3(4): 459-471.
- Carlen, P. (2002) 'Women's imprisonment: models of reform and change', *Probation Journal*, 49(2): 76-87.



- Carlen, P. and Worrall, A. (2004) *Analysing Women's Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Carlen, P. and Worrall, A. (2006) 'Analysing women's imprisonment' in Jewkes, Y. and Johnston, H. (Eds.) *Prison Readings: A Critical Introduction to Prisons and Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p121-128.
- Carlton, P. A. and Deane, F. P. (2000) 'Impact of attitudes and suicidal ideation on adolescents' intentions to seek professional psychological help', *Journal of Adolescence*, 23: 35-45.
- Carolissen, M. (1996) 'The Wandsworth Listeners: befriending in prison from a Listener point of view', in Liebling, A. (Ed.) *Deaths in Custody: Caring for People at Risk*. London: Whiting & Birch. p143-154.
- Carter, K. W. (1994) 'Access: my flexible friend', *Prison Service Journal*, 93: 30-35.
- Carter, P (2003) *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime*. London: Prime Minister's Strategy Unit.
- Chan, J. B. L. (1994) 'The privatisation of punishment: a review of the key issues', in Moyle, P. (Ed.) *Private Prisons and Police: Recent Australian Trends*. Leichardt: Pluto Press. p37-59.
- Charity Commission (2007) *Stand and Deliver: The Future for Charities Providing Public Services*. Liverpool: Crown Copyright.



- Cheliotis, L. K. (2006) 'How iron is the iron cage of new penology: the role of human agency in the implementation of criminal justice policy', *Punishment & Society*, 8(3): 313-340.
- Chinelo, A. (2010) 'Listening in prison', Prisoner Education Trust. Retrieved April 2010, from <http://pet.netefficiency.co.uk/index.php?id=371>.
- Cheney, D. (2008) 'Prisoners as citizens in a democracy', *The Howard Journal*, 47(2): 134-145.
- Christie, N. (1993) *Crime Control as Industry*. London: Routledge.
- Clark, A. (2007) *Realities working paper 7 - Understanding community: a review of Networks, ties and contacts*. Retrieved August 2009, from <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/realities/publications/workingpapers/>.
- Claxton-Oldfield, S. and Claxton-Oldfield, J. (2008) 'Keeping hospice palliative care volunteers on board: dealing with issues of volunteer attrition, stress, and retention', *Indian Journal of Palliative Care*, 14(1): 30-37.
- Clear, T. R. and Sumter, M. T. (2002) 'Prisoners, prison and religion: religion and adjustment in prison', *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35: 127-159.
- Clegg, S., Bradley, S. and Smith, K. (2006) "'I've had to swallow my pride": help-seeking and self-esteem', *Higher Education Research & Development*, 25(2): 101-113.
- Clemmer, D. (1940/58) *The Prison Community*. London, Holt: Rinehart & Winston.



- Codd, H. (2008) *In the Shadow of Prison: Families, Imprisonment and Criminal Justice*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Cohen, S. and Taylor, L. (1972) *Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-Term Imprisonment*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Cohen, S., & Taylor, L. (1975) 'Prison research: A cautionary tale', *New Society*, 31: 253–255.
- Cohen, S. and Taylor, L. (1977) 'Talking about prison blues' in Bell, C. and Newby, H. (Eds.) *Doing Sociological Research*. London: Allen & Unwin. p67-86.
- Cohen, S. and Wills, T. A. (1985) 'Stress, social support and the buffering hypothesis', *Psychological Bulletin*, 98(2): 310-357.
- Coles, D. & Ward, T. (1994) 'Failure stories: prison suicides and how not to prevent them', Liebling, A. and Ward, T. (Ed.) *Deaths in Custody: International Perspectives*. London: Whiting & Birch Ltd. p127-142.
- Collins, J. (2011) 'Payment by results in the criminal justice system', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 85: 8-9.
- Coloma, R. S. (2008) Border crossing subjectivities and research: through the prism of feminists of color, *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 11 (1): 11-27.
- Condry, R. (2012) 'Prisoners and their families', in Crewe, B. and Bennett, J. (Eds.) *The Prisoner*. Abingdon: Routledge. p67-78.



- Cooney, F. and J. Braggins (2010) *Doing Time: Good Practice with Older People in Prison - The Views of Prison Staff*. London, Prison Reform Trust.
- Corcoran, M. (2006) *Out of Order: The Political Imprisonment of Women in Northern Ireland 1972-1998*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Corcoran, M. (2008) 'What does government want from the penal voluntary sector?', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 71: 36-37.
- Corcoran, M. (2009) 'Bringing the penal voluntary sector to market', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 77: 32-33.
- Corcoran, M. (2010) 'Snakes and ladders: women's imprisonment and official reform discourse under New Labour', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 22(2): 233-251.
- Corcoran, M. (2011) 'Dilemmas of institutionalization in the penal voluntary sector', *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1): 30-52.
- Corston, J. (2007) *The Corston Report*. London: Home Office.
- Cowie, H., Naylor, P., Talamelli, L., Chauhan, P. and Smith, P. K. (2002) 'Knowledge, use of and attitudes towards peer support: a two-year follow up to the Prince's Trust survey', *Journal of Adolescence*, 25: 453-467.
- Cowie, H. and Wallace, P. (2000) *Peer Support in Action: From Bystanding to Standing By*. London: Sage.



- Crasnow, S. (2008) 'Feminist philosophy of science: 'standpoint' and knowledge', *Science & Education*, 17: 1089-1110.
- Crawford, A. (1997) *The Local Governance of Crime: Appeals to Community and Partnerships*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Crawley, E. (2002) 'Bringing it all back home? The impact of prison officers' work on their families', *Probation Journal*, 49(4): 277-286.
- Crawley, E. (2004a) *Doing Prison Work: The Public and Private Lives of Prison Officers*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Crawley, E. (2004b) 'Emotion and performance: prison officers and the presentation of the self in prisons', *Punishment & Society*, 6(4): 411-427.
- Crewe, B. (2005a) 'Codes and conventions: the terms and conditions of contemporary inmate values', in Liebling, A. and Maruna, S. (Eds.) *The Effects of Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p177-208.
- Crewe, B. (2005b) 'Prisoner society in the era of hard drugs', *Punishment & Society*, 7(4): 457-481.
- Crewe, B. (2006) 'Prison drug dealing and the ethnographic lens', *The Howard Journal*, 45(4): 347-368.



- Crewe, B. (2009) *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation, and Social Life in an English Prison*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crewe, B. (2012) 'Prison culture and the prisoner society', in Crewe, B. and Bennett, J. (Eds.) *The Prisoner*. Abingdon: Routledge. p27-39.
- Crisis Recovery Unit (no date) *The Crisis Recovery Unit: Working with the Work*. South London and Maudsley NHS.
- Crook, F. (2007) 'Counterblast: real work in prisons?', *The Howard Journal*, 46(3): 303-306.
- Crow, I. (2001) *The Treatment and Rehabilitation of Offenders*. London: Sage.
- Crowe, M., Dayson, C. and Wells, P. (2010) 'Prospects for the third sector', *People, Place & Policy Online*, 4(1): 29-32.
- Cusack, J., Deane, F. P., Wilson, C. J. and Ciarrochi, J. (2006) 'Emotional expression, perceptions of therapy, and help-seeking: Intentions in men attending therapy services', *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 7(2): 69-82.
- Dahlberg, L. (2005) 'Interaction between voluntary and statutory social service provision in Sweden: a matter of welfare pluralism, substitution or complementarity?', *Social Policy and Administration*, 39(7): 740-763.
- Davidson, L., Chinman, M., Sells, D. and Rowe, M. (2006) 'Peer support among adults with serious mental illness: a report from the field', *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 32(3): 443-450.



- Davies, B. (1994) 'The Swansea Listener scheme: views from the prison landings', *The Howard Journal*, 33(2): 125-135.
- Davison, K. P., Pennebaker, J. W. & Dickerson, S. S. (2000). 'Who talks? The social psychology of illness support groups', *American Psychologist*, 55(2): 205-217.
- de Vaus, D. (2002a) *Analyzing Social Science Data: 50 Key Problems in Data Analysis*. London: Sage.
- de Vaus, D. (2002b) *Surveys in Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Deakin, N. (1995) 'The perils of partnership: the voluntary sector and the state 1945-1992', in Smith, J. D., Rochester, C. and Hedley, R. (Eds.) *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector*. London: Routledge. p40-65.
- Deane, F. P., Skogstad, P. and Williams, M. W. (1999) 'Impact of attitudes, ethnicity and quality of prior therapy on New Zealand male prisoners' intentions to seek professional psychological help', *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 21: 55-67.
- Dear, G. E., Boriril, J., Kirchner, T., Forns, M., Daigle, M. and Biggam, H. (2006) 'Enhancing prisoners' coping skills', in Dear, G. E. (Ed.) *Preventing Suicide and Other Self-Harm in Prison*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p131-142.
- Dear, G. E., Thomson, D. M., Howells, K. and Hall, G. J. (2001) 'Self-harm in Western Australian prisons: differences between prisoners who have self-harmed and those who have not', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 34(3): 277-292.



- Denzin, N. K. (1987) *The Recovering Alcoholic*. London: Sage.
- Devilly, G. J., Sorbello, L., Eccleston, L. and Ward, T. (2005) 'Prison-based peer-education schemes', *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 10: 219-240.
- Ditchburn, D. (2003) 'Midnight in solitary', *Prison Report*, 60: 18-19.
- Dhaliwal, R. and Harrower, J. (2009) 'Reducing prisoner vulnerability and providing a means of empowerment: evaluating the impact of the Listener scheme on the Listeners', *British Journal of Forensic Practice*, 11(3): 35-43.
- Dooley, E. (1990) 'Prison suicide in England and Wales. 1972-1987', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 156: 40-45.
- Dooley, E. (1994) 'Unnatural deaths in prison: is there a future?' in Liebling, A. and Ward, T. (Eds.) *Deaths in Custody: International Perspectives*. London: Whiting & Birch.
- Drake, D. H. (2008) 'Staff and order in prisons' in Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. (Eds.) *Understanding Prison Staff*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p153-167.
- Duffee, D. (1974) 'The correction officer subculture and organizational change', *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 11: 155-205.
- Dwyer, S. C. & Buckle, J. L. (2009) The space between: on being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8 (1): 54-63.



- Edgar, K., Jacobson, J. and Biggar, K (2011). *Time well spent: a practical guide to active citizenship and volunteering in prison*. London: Prison Reform Trust.
- Einat, T. and Einat, H. (2000) 'Inmate argot as an expression of prison subculture: the Israeli case', *The Prison Journal*, 80: 309-325.
- Etherington, S. and Passey, A. (2002) 'The United Kingdom voluntary sector' in Bryans, S., Martin, C. and Walker, R. (Eds.) *Prisons and the Voluntary Sector*. Winchester: Waterside Press. p17-26.
- Evans, K., Fraser, P. and Walklate, S. (1996) 'Whom can you trust? The politics of 'grassing' on an inner city housing estate', *The Sociological Review*, 44(3): 361-380.
- Farrall, S. and Calverley, A. (2006) *Understanding Desistance from Crime: Theoretical Directions in Resettlement and Rehabilitation*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Farrant, B. (2005) *The causes and Consequences of Prisoners becoming Listeners* (Executive Summary). Exeter: School of Psychology, The University of Exeter.
- Farrant, F. and Levenson, J. (2002) *Barred Citizens: Volunteering and Active Citizenship by Prisoners*. London: Prison Reform Trust.
- Faulkner, D. (2005) 'Taking citizenship seriously: social capital and criminal justice in a changing world', *Criminal Justice*, 3(3): 287-315.



- Faulkner, D. (2006) 'A modern service, fit for purpose?' in Hough, M., Allen, R. and Padel, U. (Eds.) *Reshaping Probation and Prisons: The New Offender Management Framework*. Bristol: Policy Press. p79-94.
- Faulkner, D. (2007) 'Prospects for progress in penal reform', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 7(2): 135-152.
- Field, A. (2005) *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS*. London: Sage.
- Fitzgerald, M. and Sim, J. (1982) *British Prisons*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Fletcher, R. C., Sherk, J. & Jucovy, L. (2009) *Mentoring Former Prisoners: A Guide for Re-entry Programs*. Public/Private Ventures. Retrieved September 2010, from [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/316\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/316_publication.pdf).
- Forrest, H. (2003) *Ears to Hear: 50 Years of Samaritan Listening*. Manchester: Sedjem Press.
- Fox, C. and Albertson, K. (2011) 'Payment by results and social impact bonds in the new criminal justice sector: new challenges for the concept of evidence-based policy.' *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 11(5): 395-413.
- Freeman, R. B. (1997) 'Working for nothing: the supply of volunteer labor', *Journal of Labor Economics*, 15(No.1 Part 2): 5140-5165.
- Freeman, R. M. (2003) 'Social distance and discretionary rule enforcement in a women's prison', *The Prison Journal*, 83(2): 191-205.



- Garabedian, P. G. (1982) Social Roles and Processes of Socialization in the Prison Community, In Rose, G. (Ed) *Deciphering Sociological Research..* London, Macmillan. p180-191.
- Garland, D. (1985) *Punishment and Welfare: A History of Penal Strategies*. Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Ltd.
- Garland, D. (1996) 'The limits of the sovereign state: strategies of crime control in contemporary society', *British Journal of Criminology*, 36(4): 445-71.
- Garland, D. (2001) *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Garvey, B., Madden, M., Violi, C., Vitali, C., Spigelman, A. and Tracey, G. (2008) *Help-seeking Behaviour in Young Adults*. An nfpSynergy report, funded by the Vodafone Foundation. June 2011, from [http://www.nfpsynergy.net/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2009/n/nfpsynergy\\_report\\_help\\_seek\\_ing\\_behaviour\\_in\\_young\\_adults.pdf](http://www.nfpsynergy.net/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/n/nfpsynergy_report_help_seek_ing_behaviour_in_young_adults.pdf).
- Genders, E. (2002). 'Legitimacy, accountability and private prisons.' *Punishment & Society*, 4(3): 285-303.
- Genders, E. and Player, E. (1995). *Grendon: A Study of a Therapeutic Prison*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.



Gibbs, J. J. (1982) 'The first cut is the deepest - psychological breakdown and survival in the detention setting' in Johnson, R. and Toch, H. (Eds.) *The Pains of Imprisonment*. California: Sage. p97-114.

Gibson, B. (2008). *The New Ministry of Justice: An Introduction*. Hook: Waterside Press.

Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Glaser, R. (1999) 'Expert knowledge and processes of thinking' in McCormaick, R. & Paechter, C. (Eds.) *Learning Knowledge*. London: Sage. p88-102.

Goffman, E. (1957/1999) The characteristics of total institutions. *Imprisonment*. Matthews, R. (Ed.) Aldershot: Ashgate. p3-29. Reprinted in part from Goffman, E. (1957) 'The characteristics of total institutions' in *Symposium on Preventive and Social Psychiatry*. Walter Reed Army Institute of Research: Washington, DC.

Goffman, E. (1961) *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. London: Penguin Books.

Goffman, E. (1967) *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*. New Brunswick: Aldin Transaction.

Golden, G. K. (1991) 'Volunteer counselors: an innovative, economic response to mental health service gaps', *Social Work*, 36(1): 230-232.



Goldsmith, D. and Parks, M. R. (1990) 'Communicative strategies for managing the risks of seeking social support' in Duck, S. (Ed.) *Personal Relationships and Social Support*.

London: Sage. p104-121.

Gostin, L. and Staunton, M. (1985) 'The case for prison standards: conditions of confinement, segregation, and medical treatment' in Maguire, M., Vagg, J. and Morgan, R. (Eds.)

*Accountability and Prisons: Opening up a Closed World*. London: Tavistock Publications.

p81-96.

Goulding, D. (2007) *Recapturing Freedom: Issues Relating to the Release of Long-term*

*Prisoners into the Community*. Sydney: Hawkins Press.

Gourash, N. (1978) 'Help-seeking: a review of the literature', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 6(5): 413-423.

Graham, K. and Wells, S. (2003) "'Somebody's gonna get their head kicked in tonight!'"

Aggression among young males behind bars - a question of values?', *British Journal of Criminology*, 43: 546-566.

Greer, K. R. (2000) 'The changing nature of interpersonal relationships in a women's prison',

*The Prison Journal*, 80(4): 447-468.

Greer, S. and Anderson, M. (1979) 'Samaritan contact among 325 parasuicide patients', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 135: 263-268.



- Griffiths, A., W. (1990) 'Correlates of suicidal history in male prisoners', *Medical Science Law*, 30(3): 217-218.
- Grix, J. (2001) 'Social capital as a concept in the social sciences: the current state of the debate', *Democratization*, 8(3): 189-210.
- Groves, A. (2004) Blood on the walls: self-mutilation in prisons', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 37(1): 49-64.
- Gruber, J. E. (1998) The impact of male work environments and organizational policies on women's experiences of sexual harassment. *Gender & Society*, 12 (3): 301-320.
- Gurney, J. N. (1991) Female researchers in male-dominated settings. In Pogrebin, M. (Ed) *Qualitative Approaches to Criminal Justice: Perspectives from the Field*. London: Sage. p377-381.
- Habermann, U. (1990) 'Self-help groups: a minefield for professionals', *Groupwork*, 3(3): 221-235.
- Hadenius, A. and Ugglå, F. (1996) 'Making civil society work, promoting democratic development: what can states and donors do?', *World Development*, 24(10): 1621-1639.
- Håkansson, J & Montgomery, H. (2003) 'Empathy as an interpersonal phenomenon', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 20(4), 267-284.
- Hall, P. A. (1999) 'Social capital in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 29: 417-461.



- Hall, B. and Gabor, P. (2004) 'Peer suicide prevention in a prison', *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention*, 25(1): 19-26.
- Hammersley, M. (1992) 'Deconstructing the qualitative-quantitative divide', in Brannen, J. (Ed.) *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*. Aldershot: Avebury. p39-55.
- Haney, C. (2005) 'The contextual revolution in psychology and the question of prison effects', in Liebling, A. and Maruna, S. (Eds.) *The Effects of Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p66-93.
- Hannah-Moffat, K. (2000) 'Prisons that empower: neo-liberal governance in Canadian women's prisons', *British Journal of Criminology*, 40: 510-531
- Hannah-Moffat, K. (2001) *Punishment in Disguise: Penal Governance and Federal Imprisonment of Women in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Harvey, J. (2005) 'Crossing the boundary: the transition of young adults into prison' in Liebling, A. and S. Maruna, S. (Eds.) *The Effects of Imprisonment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p232-254.
- Haski-Leventhal, D. and Bargal, D. (2008) 'The volunteer stages and transitions model: organizational socialization of volunteers', *Human Relations*, 61(1): 67-102.
- Hay, W. and Sparks, R. (1991) 'What is a prison officer?', *Prison Service Journal*, Summer Issue: 2-7.



- Hayashi, Y. and O'Donnell, C. R. (2004) *A Review of Mentoring Studies and Websites: A report for the Melissa Institute for the Prevention and Treatment of Violence*. Retrieved 1st May 2010, from [http://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/TMI\\_Mentoring\\_Report51-2.pdf](http://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/TMI_Mentoring_Report51-2.pdf).
- Hayes, L. M. (1995) Prison suicide: an overview and a guide to prevention' *The Prison Journal*, 75(4): 431-456.
- Hayes, A. J., Shaw, J. J., Lever-Green, G., Parker, D., and Gask, L. (2008) 'Improvements to suicide prevention training for prison staff in England and Wales', *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 38(6): 708-713.
- Hindman, R. L. (1971) 'Research and methodology: inmate interaction as a determinant of response to incarceration', *British Journal of Criminology*, 11: 382-390.
- HMCIP (1990) *Report of a Review of Suicide and Self-Harm in Prison Service Establishments in England and Wales*. (CM1383). London: HMSO.
- HMCIP (1999) *Suicide is Everyone's Concern: A Thematic Review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales*. London: Home Office.
- HMIP (2007) *The Mental Health of Prisoners: A Thematic Review of the Care and Support of Prisoners with Mental Health Needs*. London: HMIP.
- HMPS (1992) *Caring for Prisoners at Risk of Suicide and Self-Injury: The Way Forward*. S.A.S. Unit: London.
- HMPS (1993) *New Suicide Awareness Training Pack*. AG3/1993. London: HMPS.



- HMPS (1994) *Caring for the Suicidal in Custody*. IG 1/1994. London: HMPS.
- HMPS (2001) *Getting it Right Together. Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector*. London: HMPS.
- HMPS/Clinks. (2001) *Good Practice Guide: Getting it Right Together - Prisons and the Voluntary and Community-based Sector*. Retrieved December, 2006, from [http://www.clinks.org/\(S\(xie2wu45jcptjh45qsybgliy\)\)/downloads/publications/ReportsConsCools/02goodpracticeguide.pdf](http://www.clinks.org/(S(xie2wu45jcptjh45qsybgliy))/downloads/publications/ReportsConsCools/02goodpracticeguide.pdf).
- Hobbs, G. S. and Dear, G. E. (2000) Prisoners' perceptions of prison officers as sources of support', *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 31(1/2): 127-142.
- Hobfall, S. E. and Schröder, K. E. E. (2001) 'Distinguishing between passive and active prosocial coping: bridging inner-city women's mental health and AIDS risk behavior', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 18(2): 201-217.
- Hogarth, D. J. (1984) *Lifeline: Manual of Suicide Prevention*. Suffolk County Jail, Boston: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Holland, J. (2000) 'The managerial impact of partnerships with youth offender teams', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 40: 21-22.
- Holland, J. (2007) 'Emotions and research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 10(3): 195-209.



Home Office (1984) *Suicide in Prison: A Report by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons*. London: Home Office.

Home Office (1986) *Report of the Working Group on Suicide Prevention*. London: Home Office.

Home Office (1991) *Home Office Research Study No.128. The National Prison Survey 1991 Main Findings*. London: HMSO.

Home Office (1998) *Getting it Right Together: Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England*. Retrieved October 2007, from [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ERO/records/ho415/1/acu/compact.pdf](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ERO/records/ho415/1/acu/compact.pdf).

Home Office (2003) *Civil Renewal: A New Agenda*. London: HO Communication Directorate.

Home Office (2006) *Respect Action Plan*. London: Home Office. Retrieved January 2007, from <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/respect-action-plan>.

Hooper, R. (2002) 'The contribution of volunteers in the penal system' in Bryans, S., Martin, C. and Walker, R. (Eds.) *Prisons and the Voluntary Sector*.. Winchester: Waterside Press. p92-105.

Hough, M. (2006) 'Introduction' in Hough, M., Allen, R. and Padel, U. (Eds.) *Reshaping Probation and Prisons: The New Offender Management Framework*. Bristol: Policy Press. p1-6.



Howard League (1999) *Desperate Measures: Prison Suicides and their Prevention*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Howard League (2001a) *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention 1: Court Cells and Prison Vans*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Howard League (2001b) *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention 2: Repetitive Self-harm Among Women and Girls in Prison*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Howard League (2003) *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention 4: The Management of Self-Injury in Prisons*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Howard League (2009) *Turnkeys or professionals? A vision for the 21st century prison officer*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Howard League (2011) *No Winners: The Reality of Short Term Prison Sentences*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Howerton, A., Byng, R., Campbell, J., Hess, D., Owens, C. and Aitken, P. (2007) 'Understanding help-seeking behaviour among male offenders: qualitative interview study', *British Medical Journal*, 334: 303-306.

Hudson, K., Maguire, M. and Raynor, P. (2007) 'Through the prison gate: resettlement, offender management and the "seamless sentence"', in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p629-649.



- Hughes, G. (1996) 'The politics of criminological research' in Sapsford, R. (Ed.) *Researching Crime & Criminal Justice*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press. p57-106.
- Hunter, G. and Boyce, I. (2009) 'Preparing for employment: prisoners' experience of participating in a prison training programme', *The Howard Journal*, 48(2): 117-131.
- Inch, H., Rowlands, P. and Soliman, A. (1995) 'Deliberate self-harm in a young offenders' institution', *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 6(1): 161-171.
- Irwin, J. (1970) *The Felon*. Englewood Cliffs: NJ, Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Irwin, J. (1972) 'The prison experience: the convict world' Carter, R. M., Glaser, D. and Wilkins, L. T. (Eds.) in *Correctional Institutions*. Philadelphia, NY, Toronto: J. B. Lippincott Company.
- Irwin, S. (2006) *Realities Working Paper - Combining Data, Enhancing Explanation*. Manchester/Leeds: Real Life Methods. Retrieved January 2008, from <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/realities/publications/workingpapers/>.
- Israel, M. (2004) 'Strictly confidential? Integrity and the disclosure of criminological and socio-legal research', *British Journal of Criminology*. 44: 715-740.
- Ivanoff, A. and Schmidt III, H. (2006) 'Reducing suicidal behaviours in custodial settings: Administrative challenges' in Dear, G. E. (Ed.) *Preventing Suicide and Other Self-Harm in Prison*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p88-99.



- Jacobs, J. B. (1977) *The Penitentiary in Mass Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Jacobson, J., Edgar, K. and Loucks, N. (2007) *There When You Need Them Most: pact's First Night in Custody Services*. London: Prison Reform Trust.
- James, E. (2006) 'Life inside', in Jones, D. (Ed.) *Humane Prisons*. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing Ltd. p19-27.
- Jewkes, Y. (2002) *Captive Audience: Media, Masculinity, and Power in Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Jobe, J. B. (2003) 'Cognitive psychology and self-reports: models and methods', *Quality of Life Research*, 12: 219-227.
- Johnson, E. H. (1972) 'Sociology of confinement: assimilation and the prison "rat"', in Carter, R. M., Glaser, D. and Wilkins, L. T. (Eds.) *Correctional Institutions*. Philadelphia, NY, Toronto: J. B. Lippincott Company.
- Johnson, N. (1981) *Voluntary Social Services*. Oxford: Basis Blackwell & Martin Robertson.
- Johnson, R. B. and A. J. Onwuegbuzie (2004) 'Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come', *Educational Researcher*, 33(7): 14-26.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Turner, L. A. (2007) 'Toward a definition of mixed methods research', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2): 112-133.



- Jolliffe, D. and Farrington, D. P. (2007) *A Rapid Evidence Assessment of the Impact of Mentoring on Re-Offending: A Summary* (HO online report 11/07). London: Home Office.  
Retrieved April 2009. from:  
[http://www.youthmentoring.org.nz/content/docs/Home\\_Office\\_Impact\\_of\\_mentoring.pdf](http://www.youthmentoring.org.nz/content/docs/Home_Office_Impact_of_mentoring.pdf).
- Kanuha, V. K. (2000) "Being native" versus "going native": conducting social work research as an insider. *Social Work*, 45 (5): 439-447.
- Keats, D. M. (2000) *Interviewing: A Practical Guide for Students and Professionals*.  
Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Kendall, J. (2003) *The Voluntary Sector*. London: Routledge.
- Kenemore, T. K. and Roldan, I. (2006) 'Staying straight: lessons from ex-Offenders', *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 34(1): 5-21.
- Kent, R. (2001) *Data Construction and Data Analysis for Survey Research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Kerley, K. R., Matthews, T. L. and Blanchard, T. C. (2005) 'Religiosity, religious participation, and negative prison behaviours', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 44(4): 443-457.
- Kessler, R. C. (1992) 'Perceived support and adjustment to stress: methodological considerations' in: Veiel, H. O. F. and Baumann, U. (Eds.) *The Meaning and Measurement of Social Support*. London: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. p259-271.



- Kim, J. and Pai, M.(2010) 'Volunteering and trajectories of depression', *Journal of Aging Health*, 22(1): 84-105.
- King, R. D. (2000) 'Doing research in prisons' in King, R. D. and Wincup, E. (Eds.) *Doing Research on Crime and Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p281-312.
- Kleinman, S. (2003) 'Emotions, fieldwork and professional lives', in May, T. (Ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage. p375-394.
- Kleinman, S. and Copp, M. A. (1993) *Emotions and Fieldwork*. London: Sage.
- Krause, N. (2009) 'Church-based volunteering, providing informal support at church, and self-rated health in late life', *Journal of Aging Health*, 21(1): 63-84.
- Larson, J. H. and Nelson, J. (1984) 'Women, friendship and adaptation to prison', *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 12: 601-615.
- Launay, G. and Fielding, P. J. (1989) 'Stress among prison officers: some empirical evidence based on self-report', *The Howard Journal*, 28(2): 138-147.
- Levit, N. (2001) 'Male prisoners: privacy, suffering, and the legal construction of masculinity' in Sabo, D., Kupers, T. A. and London, W. (Eds.) *Prison Masculinities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 93-102



- Lewig, K. A., Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A. B., Dollard, M. F. and Metzger, J. C. (2007) 'Burnout and connectedness among Australian volunteers: a test of the job demands-resources model', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71: 429-445.
- Liebling, A. (1992). *Suicides in Prison*. London: Routledge.
- Liebling, A. (1994) 'Suicide among women prisoners', *The Howard Journal*, 33(1): 1-9.
- Liebling, A. (1995). 'Vulnerability and prison suicide', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 35(2): 173-187.
- Liebling, A. (1999a) 'Prisoner suicide and prisoner coping', in Tonry, M. and Petersilia, J. (Eds.) *Prisons (Crime and Justice: A Review of Research, Volume 26)*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. p283-359.
- Liebling, A. (1999b) 'Doing research in prison: breaking the silence?', *Theoretical Criminology*, 3: 147-173.
- Liebling, A. (2000) 'Prison officers, policing and the use of discretion', *Theoretical Criminology*, 4(3): 333-357.
- Liebling, A. (2001) 'Suicides in prison: ten years on', *Prison Service Journal*, 138: 35-41.
- Liebling, A. (Assisted by H. Arnold) (2004) *Prisons and Their Moral Performance: A Study of Values, Quality and Prison Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



- Liebling, A. (2006a) 'Prisons in transition', *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 29: 422-430.
- Liebling, A. (2006b) 'The role of the prison environment in prison suicide and prisoner distress' in Dear, G. E. (Ed.) *Preventing Suicide and Other Self-harm in Prison*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p16-28.
- Liebling, A. (2007) 'Prison suicide and its prevention', in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p423-446.
- Liebling, A. (2012) 'Vulnerability, struggling and coping in prison' in Crewe, B. and Bennett, J. *The Prisoner*. Abingdon: Routledge. p53-66.
- Liebling, A., Elliot, C. and Arnold, H. (2001) 'Transforming the prison: romantic optimism or appreciative realism?', *Criminal Justice*, 1(2): 161-180.
- Liebling, A. and Price, D. (1998) 'Staff-prisoner relationships', *Prison Service Journal*, 120: 3-6.
- Liebling, A. and Price, D. (2001) *The Prison Officer*. HMP Leyhill: Prison Service Journal.
- Liebling, A., Price, D. and Elliot, C. (1999) 'Appreciative inquiry and relationships in prison', *Punishment & Society*, 1(1): 71-98.
- Liebling, A. and B. Stanko (2001) 'Allegiance and ambivalence: Some dilemmas in researching disorder and violence', *British Journal of Criminology*, 41: 421-430.



- Liebling, A. and Tait, S. (2006) 'Improving staff-prisoner relationships', in Dear, G. E. (Ed.) *Preventing Suicide and Other Self-Harm in Prison*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p103-117.
- Lindquist, C. H. (2000) 'Social integration and mental well-being among jail inmates', *Sociological Forum*, 15(3): 431-455.
- Livingstone, S., Owen, T. and Macdonald, A. (2003) *Prison Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lloyd, C. (1990) *Home Office Research Study 115: Suicide and Self-Injury in Prison: A Literature Review*. London: HMSO.
- Macadam, E. (1934) *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- MacInnes, J. (2009) Mixed methods studies: a guide to critical appraisal, *British Journal of Cardiac Nursing*, 4 (12): 588-591.
- Maguire, M. and Raynor, P. (2006) 'How the resettlement of prisoners promotes desistance from crime: or does it?', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 6: 19-38.
- Maguire, M., Clancy, A., Lane, J. and Morgan, B. (2006) *Moving Forward with Mentoring: An Evaluation of the Transitional Support Scheme in Wales*. Retrieved January 2010, from [http://hass.glam.ac.uk/media/files/documents/2010-01-07/Moving\\_Forward\\_with\\_Mentoring.pdf](http://hass.glam.ac.uk/media/files/documents/2010-01-07/Moving_Forward_with_Mentoring.pdf).



- Marsh, C. (1982) *The Survey Method: The Contribution of Surveys to Sociological Explanation*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Martin, C. (2000) 'Doing research in a prison setting', in Jupp, V., Davies, P. and Francis, P. (Eds.) *Doing Criminological Research*. London: Sage. p215-233.
- Martin, C. (2004) 'The voluntary and community sector and NOMS', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 57: 24-25.
- Martin, C. (2007) 'The voluntary sector and New Labour: how civil is the partnership?', *Criminal Justice Matters* 67: 40-41.
- Maruna, S. (1997) 'Going straight: desistance from crime and life narratives of reform' in Lieblich, A. and Josselson, R. (Eds.) *The Narrative Study of Lives*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. p59-93.
- Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Mason, J. (2006) *Realities Working Paper - Six Strategies for Mixing Methods and Linking Data in Social Science Research*. Manchester/Leeds: Real Life Methods. Retrieved January 2008, from: <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/realities/publications/workingpapers/>.
- Mathiesen, T. (1965) *The Defences of the Weak: A Sociological Study of a Norwegian Correctional Institution*. London: Tavistock Publications.



Matthews, R. (1999) *Doing Time: An Introduction to the Sociology of Imprisonment*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

McAdams, D. P. (1993) *Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.

McCarthy, C. (2003) 'Hurting Inside', *Prison Service Journal*, 148: 23-25.

McClanahan, W. S. (2007) 'Mentoring ex-prisoners in the ready4work re-entry initiative', *Public/Private Ventures Preview*, March.

McColl, E., Meadows, K. and Barofsky, I. (2003) 'Cognitive aspects of survey methodology and quality of life assessment', *Quality of Life Research*, 12: 217-218.

McDonald, D. C. (2001) 'Public imprisonment by private means: the re-emergence of private prisons and jails in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia' in King, R. D. and Maguire, M. (Ed.) *Prisons in Context*. Oxford: Clarendon. p29-48.

McGowen, R. (1995) 'The well-ordered prison: England 1780-1865' in Morris, N. and Rothman, D. J. (Eds.) *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p71-99.

McHugh, M. (1999) 'Suicide and its aftermath', *Prison Service Journal*, 124: 19-22.



- McHugh, M. and Towl, G. (1997) 'Organizational reactions and reflections on suicide and self-injury' in Towl, G. J. (Ed.) *Suicide and Self-Injury in Prisons, Issues in Criminological and Legal Psychology*, 28. Leicester: BPS. p5-11.
- McKee, L. and M. O'Brien (1983) 'Interviewing men: "taking gender seriously"', in E. Gamarnikow, E., Morgan, D. H. J. Purvis, J. and Taylorson, D. (Eds.) *The Public and the Private*. London: Heinemann. p147-161.
- McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J. (2000) 'The criminal justice system: New Labour's new partnerships' in Clarke, J., Gewirtz, S. and McLaughlin, E. (Eds.) *New Managerialism, New Welfare?* London: Sage. p169-185.
- McLaughlin, E., Muncie, J. and Hughes, G. (2001) 'The permanent revolution: New Labour, new public management and the modernization of criminal justice', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 1(3): 301-318.
- Medlicott, D. (1999) 'Surviving in the time machine: suicidal prisoner sand the pains of prison time', *Time and Society*, 8(2): 211-230.
- Medlicott, D. (2001) *Surviving the Prison Place: Narratives of Suicidal Prisoners*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Mehigan, J. and Rowe, A. (2007) 'Problematizing prison privatization: an overview of the debate' in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p356-376.



Midlarsky, E. (1991) 'Helping as coping' in Clark, M. S. (Ed.) *Prosocial Behavior*. London: Sage. p238-264.

Middleton, F. and Lloyd, S. (1992) *Charities - The New Law: The Charities Act 1992*. Bristol: Jordan & Sons Ltd.

Miles, J. and Shevlin, M. (2001) *Applying Regression and Correlation*. London: Sage.

Miller, R. L., Acton, C., Fullerton, D. A. and Maltby, J. (2002) *SPSS for Social Scientists*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mills, A. (2005) *Settling into the Life Sentence: Life Sentence Prisoners and Family Ties*. Paper presented to the European Society of Criminology Conference, 31st August-3rd September 2005: Poland.

Mills, A. and Codd, H. (2007) 'Prisoners' families' in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p672-695.

MIND. from [www.mind.org/Information/Factsheets/Men](http://www.mind.org/Information/Factsheets/Men).

Ministry of Justice (2008) *Third Sector Strategy: Improving Policies and Securing Better Public Services through Effective Partnerships 2008-2011*. London: MoJ.

Minkes, H., Hammersley, R. and Raynor, P. (2005) 'Partnership working with young offenders with substance misuse problems', *The Howard Journal*, 44(3): 254-268.



- Mishara, B. L. and Daigle, M. S. (1997) 'Effects of different telephone intervention styles with suicidal callers at two suicide prevention centres: an empirical investigation', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 25(6): 861-885.
- Moos, R. H. (1975) *Evaluating Correctional and Community Settings*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Morgan, G. G. (2008) *The Spirit of Charity*. Professorial Lecture - Faculty of Organisation and Management. Sheffield Hallam University, 3 April 2008.
- Musick, M. A. and Wilson, J. (2003) 'Volunteering and depression: the role of psychological and social resources in different age groups', *Social Science and Medicine*, 56: 259-269.
- Nadler, A. (1991) 'Help-seeking behavior: psychological costs and instrumental benefits' in Clark, M. S. (Ed.) *Prosocial Behavior*. California: Sage. p290-311.
- Naylor, P. and Cowie, H. (1999) 'The effectiveness of peer support systems in challenging school bullying: the perspectives and experiences of teachers and pupils', *Journal of Adolescence*, 22: 467-479.
- Neilson, A. (2009) A crisis of identity: nacro's bid to run a prison and what it means for the voluntary sector', *The Howard Journal*, 48(4): 401-410.
- Nellis, M. (2006) 'NOMS, contestability and the process of technocorrectional innovation' in Hough, M., Allen, R. and U. Padel, U. (Eds.) *Reshaping Probation and Prisons: The New Offender Management Framework*. Bristol: Policy Press. p49-68.



Nesbitt, W. H., Ross, M. W., Sunderland, R. H. and Shelp, E. (1996) 'Prediction of grief and HIV/AIDS-related burnout in volunteers', *AIDS Care*, 8(2): 137-143.

Newman, J. (2002) 'Changing governance, changing equality? New Labour, modernization and public services', *Public Money & Management*, January-March: 7-13.

Noaks, L. and Wincup, E. (2004) *Criminological Research: Understanding Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage.

NOMS (2006a) *A Five Year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending*. London: TSO.

NOMS. (2006b) *Volunteering: A Guide to Good Practice for Prisons*. Retrieved February 2007, from [http://noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/guidance/Volunteering\\_Guide\\_for\\_prisons?version=1](http://noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/guidance/Volunteering_Guide_for_prisons?version=1).

NOMS. (2006c) *Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships*. Retrieved February 2007, from [http://noms.justice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/strategy/impr\\_prison\\_probat\\_partnerships?view=Binary](http://noms.justice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/strategy/impr_prison_probat_partnerships?view=Binary).

NOMS. (2007a) *National Commissioning Plan 2007/2008: Commissioning Framework*. Retrieved June 2008, from [http://noms.justice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/strategy/Nat\\_Commissioning\\_Fwork\\_0708?view=Binary](http://noms.justice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/strategy/Nat_Commissioning_Fwork_0708?view=Binary).



NOMS. (2007b) *Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending* (Consultation document). Retrieved June 2008, from

[http://www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/consultations/Consultation\\_Volunteers\\_Can/](http://www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/consultations/Consultation_Volunteers_Can/).

NOMS. (2011) *Mentoring in NOMS*. Retrieved October 2011, from

<http://www.law.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/research/ccjs/mentoring/mentoring-in-noms.pdf>.

NOMS South West (2008) *A Scoping Exercise of Offender Mentoring Schemes in the South West*. N. O. M. S. West. London: Ministry of Justice.

Olesen, V. L. (2003) 'Feminisms and qualitative research at and into the millennium' in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. London: Sage. p332-397.

O'Shea, E. (2006) 'An economic and social evaluation of the senior help line in Ireland', *Ageing and Society*, 26: 267-284.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Leech, N. L. (2005) 'Taking the "Q" out of research: teaching research methodology courses without the divide between quantitative and qualitative paradigms', *Quality and Quantity*, 39: 267-296.

Palmer, S. (2002) 'Suicide Reduction and Prevention Strategies and Interventions'. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 30(4): 341-352.



- Palys, T. and Lowman, J. (2001) 'Social research with eyes wide shut: the limited confidentiality dilemma', *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, April: 255-267.
- Park, G. and S. Ward. (2009) *Through the Gates - Improving the Effectiveness of Prison Discharge: First Half-Year Evaluation, August 2008 to January 2009*. St Giles Trust.
- Retrieved 1st September 2010, from [www.stgilestrust.org.uk/download/81704/ttg%20report%20final.pdf](http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/download/81704/ttg%20report%20final.pdf).
- Parkin, S. and McKeganey, N. (2000) 'The rise and rise of peer education approaches', *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 7(3): 293-310.
- Patenaude, A. L. (2004) "'No promises, but I am willing to listen and tell what I hear": conducting research among prison inmates and staff', *The Prison Journal*, 84(4/Supplement): 69s-91s.
- Pearce, J. L. (1993) *Volunteers: The Organizational Behaviour of Unpaid Workers*. London: Routledge.
- Pfeiffer, P. N., Heisler, M., Piette, J. D., Rogers, M. and Valenstein, M. (2011) 'Efficacy of peer support interventions for depression: a meta-analysis', *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 33: 29-36.
- Philip, K. and Spratt, J. (2007) *A Synthesis of Published Research on Mentoring and Befriending (for the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation)*. Retrieved September 2010, from <http://www.mandbf.org.uk/resources/research/>.



- Phillips, C. and Earle, R. (2010) 'Reading difference differently? Identity, epistemology and prison ethnography', *British Journal of Criminology*, 50(2): 360-378.
- Pollack, S. (2004) 'Anti-oppressive social work practice with women in prison: discursive reconstruction and alternative practices', *British Journal of Social Work*, 34: 693-707.
- Porteous, D. (2007) 'The rise and fall of mentoring in youth justice', *Prison Service Journal*, 170: 20-24.
- Posen, I. (2001) 'Suicide - from awareness to prevention', *Prison Service Journal*, 138: 5-9.
- Power, K., McElroy, J. and Swanson, V. (1997) 'Coping abilities and prisoners' perceptions of suicidal risk management', *The Howard Journal*, 36(4): 378-392.
- Power, K., Swanson, V., Luke, R., Jackson, C. and Biggam, F. (2003) *Act and Care: Evaluation of the Revised SPS Suicide Risk Management Strategy*. Occasional Paper Series 01/2002. Stirling: Anxiety and Stress Research Centre, University of Stirling.
- Powell, F. and Guerin, D. (1997) *Civil Society and Social Policy*. Dublin: A&A Farman.
- Presdee, M. and Walters, R. (1998) 'The perils and politics of criminological research and the threat to academic freedom', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 10: 156-167.
- Prison Health Research Network (2007) *Researchers' Handbook: A Guide for Researchers in Prison Health* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn). Retrieved September 2007, from <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/jail/>.



## References

Prison Reform Trust (2007) *Bromley Briefings: Prison Factfile*. Retrieved June 2007, from [www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk).

Prison Reform Trust (2011) *Bromley Briefings: Prison Factfile*. Retrieved December 2011, from [www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk).

Pritchard, C. (1995) *Suicide - The Ultimate Rejection? A Psychosocial Study*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Pryor, S. (2001) *The Responsible Prisoner*. Retrieved December 2007, from <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprison/thematic-reports1/the-responsible-prisoner.pdf>.

Prison Service Instruction 32/1997 *The Role of The Samaritans*. London: HMPS.

Prison Service Order 2700. *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention* (2002) Updated: Suicide Prevention (2007) Retrieved October 2006, and October 2007, from: <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsos/>.

Prison Service Order 4190. (2002). "Strategy for Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector." Retrieved May 2005 from: <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsos/>.



- Prison Service Order 7030 *Annual Reporting of Prison Service Research*. (2004) Retrieved December 2006, from [http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO\\_7030\\_annual\\_reporting\\_of\\_prison\\_service\\_research.doc](http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO_7030_annual_reporting_of_prison_service_research.doc).
- Prison Service Order 7035 *Research Applications and Ethics Panel*. (2006) Retrieved December, 2006, from [http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO\\_7035\\_research\\_applications\\_and\\_ethics\\_panel.doc](http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO_7035_research_applications_and_ethics_panel.doc).
- Reinharz, S. (1997) 'Who am I? The need for a variety of selves in the field' in Hertz, E. (Ed.) *Reflexivity and Voice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. p3-20.
- Richards, L. (2005) *Handling Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.
- Richman, J. (2004). *Listeners: Inmate Care Workers in HMP and Suicide Policy*. Paper presented to the BSA Medical Sociology Group 36th Annual Conference: University of York.
- Roberts, L. and Indermaur, D. (2008) 'The ethics of research with prisoners', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 19(3): 309-326.
- Robinson, M. (1997) 'Privatising the voluntary sector: NGOs as public service contractors' in Hulme, D. and Edward, M. (Eds.) *NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?* Basingstoke: Palgrave, in association with Save the children. p59-78.
- Rochester, C., Paine, A. E. and Howlett, S. (2010) *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.



- Rook, K. S. (1992) 'Detrimental aspects of social relationships: taking stock of an emerging literature' in Veiel, H. O. F. and Baumann, U. (Eds.) *The Meaning and Measurement of Social Support*. London: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. p157-170.
- Rose, N. (1996) 'The death of the social? Re-figuring the territory of government', *Economy & Society*, 25(3): 327-356.
- Rosen, G. (1975) 'History' in Perlin, S. (Ed.) *A Handbook for the Study of Suicide*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Rosen, S. (1983) 'Perceived inadequacy and help-seeking' in Fisher, J. D., DePaulo, B. M. and Nadler, A. (Eds.) *New Directions in Helping*. Academic Press Inc. p73-107.
- Ross, M. W., Greenfield, S. A. and Bennett, L. (1999) 'Predictors of dropout and burnout in AIDS volunteers', *AIDS Care*, 11(6): 723-731.
- Rowe, A. (2011) 'Narratives of self and identity in women's prisons: stigma and the struggle for self-definition in penal regimes', *Punishment & Society*, 13(5): 571-591.
- Rowe, A. (2012) 'Women prisoners' in Crewe, B. and Bennett, J. (Eds) *The Prisoner*. Abingdon: Routledge. p103-116.
- Ruane, J. (2003) 'Doing research on sexual health within a secure environment' in Adshead, G. and Brown, C. (Eds.) *Ethical Issues in Forensic Mental Health Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd. p119-137.



- Rumgay, J. (2007) *Ladies of Lost Causes: Rehabilitation, Women Offenders and the Voluntary Sector*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Rumgay, J. and Cowan, S. (1998) 'Pitfalls and prospects in partnership: probation programmes for substance misusing offenders', *The Howard Journal*, 37(2): 124-136.
- Ryan, M. (1994) 'Private prisons in the UK: radical change and opposition' in Moyle, P. (Ed.) *Private Prisons and Police: Recent Australian Trends*. Leichardt: Pluto Press. p235-256.
- Ryan, M. and Ward, T. (1989) *Privatization and the Penal System: the American Experience and the Debate in Britain*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Sabo, D., Kupers, T. A. and London, W. (2001) *Prison Masculinities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Safer Custody Group (no date) *Prisoner Peer Support: Good Practice Guide for Peer Support Schemes*. London: HMPS, Home Office.
- Safer Custody Group (2003a) *The ACCT Plan (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) User Handbook*. London: HMPS, Home Office. Do I use 2003b?
- Saldaña, J. (2009) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Sale, J., Lohfeld, L. H. and Brazil, K. (2002) 'Revisiting the quantitative-qualitative debate: Implications for mixed-methods research', *Quality and Quantity*, 36: 43-53.



## References

Salovey, P., Mayer, J. D. and Rosenhan, D. L. (1991) 'Mood and helping: mood as a motivator of helping and helping as a regulator of mood', in Clark, M. S. (Ed.) *Prosocial Behavior*. London: Sage. p215-237.

Samaritans, The (1990) *Befriending in Prisons*. (Compiled by Kathy Bigger). Slough: The Samaritans.

Samaritans, The (1993) *Prison Befriending Resource Manual*. Slough: The Samaritans.

Samaritans, The (1998) *Guide to Befriending Prisoners*. Ewell, The Samaritans.

Samaritans. The (1999) *Young Men Speak Out*. Retrieved September 2010, from [http://www.samaritans.org/your\\_emotional\\_health/publications/young\\_men\\_speak\\_out.aspx](http://www.samaritans.org/your_emotional_health/publications/young_men_speak_out.aspx).

Samaritans (2000) *Resources in Prisons: Recommendations for Best Practice Following a Review of how the Financial, Human and Information Resources of The Samaritans are Deployed for the Purposes of Befriending Prisoners*. Ewell: The Samaritans.

Samaritans, The (2001a) *Risk 1 Project: Strategies for Higher Risk Prisoners*. Ewell: Risk 1 Project Team, The Samaritans.

Samaritans, The (2001b) *Risk 1 Project: A Strategy for Higher Risk Prisoners (Final report)*. Ewell: Risk 1 Project Team, The Samaritans.

Samaritans (2001c) *Developing Listener Schemes: Consistent Implementation of the Risk 1 Strategy*. Ewell: James Waghorn, The Samaritans.



## References

Samaritans (2004) *Risk 1 Project: A Strategy for Higher Risk Prisoners (Task Force Report)*.  
Ewell: Samaritans.

Samaritans (2006) *Guide to Prisons*. Ewell: Samaritans

Samaritans (2007) *Samaritans Emotional Support Services: Results of a Website Survey*.  
Ewell: Samaritans. [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).

Samaritans (2008) *Guide to Prisons*. Ewell: Samaritans

Samaritans (2011a) *Information Resource Pack 2011*. Ewell: Samaritans. Retrieved January  
2012, from  
[http://www.samaritans.org/about\\_samaritans/samaritans\\_publications/irp\\_download.aspx](http://www.samaritans.org/about_samaritans/samaritans_publications/irp_download.aspx).

Samaritans (2011b) *A History of the Listener Scheme and Samaritans' Prison Support*  
(compiled by Michelle Jaffe). Ewell: Samaritans.

Sands, G. and Rendle, C. (2001) 'A prison officer's perspective' in Bryans, S. and Jones, R.  
(Eds.) *Prisons and the Prisoner: An Introduction to the Work of Her Majesty's Prison Service*.  
London: The Stationary Office. p206-213.

Schwartz, C. E. and Sendor, R. M. (1999) 'Helping others helps oneself: response shift effects  
in peer support', *Social Science and Medicine*, 48: 1563-1575.



- Scott, D. (2007) 'The changing face of the English prison: a critical review of the aims of imprisonment' in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p49-72.
- Scott, D. (2011) "'That's not my name": prisoner deference and disciplinarian prison officers', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 84: 8-9.
- Scott, D. and Codd, H. (2010) *Controversial Issues in Prisons*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Shaw, I. F. (2003) 'Critical commentary: cutting edge issues on social work research', *British Journal of Social Work*, 33: 107-116.
- Shichor, D. (1998) 'Private prisons in perspective: some conceptual issues', *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37(1): 82-100.
- Shichor, D. (1999) 'Privatizing correctional institutions: an organizational perspective', *The Prison Journal*, 79(2): 226-249.
- Shiner, M. (1999) 'Defining peer education', *Journal of Adolescence*, 22: 555-566.
- Seyfang, G. (2003) 'Growing cohesive communities one favor at a time: social exclusion, active citizenship and time banks', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 23(3): 699-706.



- Short, V., Cooper, J., Shaw, J., Kenning, C., Abel, K. and Chew-Graham, C. (2009) 'Cusotdy vs care: attitudes of prison staff to self-harm in women prisoners - a qualitative study', *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 20(3): 408-426.
- Sieber, J. E. (1993) 'The ethics and politics of sensitive research' in Renzetti, C. M. and Lee, R. M. (Eds.) *Researching Sensitive Topics*. London: Sage. p14-26.
- Silvestri, A. (2009) *Partners or Prisoners? Voluntary Sector Independence on the World of Commissioning and Contestability*. Retrieved June 2009, from [http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus1646/Partners\\_or\\_prisoners\\_report.pdf](http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus1646/Partners_or_prisoners_report.pdf).
- Sim, J. (1994) 'Tougher than the rest? Men in prison.' in Newburn, T. and E. A. Stanko, E. A. (Eds.) *Just Boys Doing Business*. London: Routledge.
- Sim, J. (2003) 'Whose side are we on? Researching medical power in prisons' in Tombs, S. and Whyte, D. (Eds.) *Unmasking the Crime of the Powerful: Scrutinizing States and Corporations*. Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. p239-257.
- Sim, J. (2008) "'An inconvenient criminological truth": pain, punishment and prison officers' in Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. (Eds.) *Understanding Prison Staff*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p187-209.
- Sim, J. (2009) *Punishment and Prisons: Power and the Carceral State*. London: Sage.
- Simon, F., H. (1999) *Prisoners' Work and Vocational Training*. New York: Routledge.



- Simon, J. (2000) 'The 'Society of Captives' in the Era of Hyper-Incarceration', *Theoretical Criminology*, 4(3): 285-308.
- Smith, C. (2002) 'Punishment and pleasure: women, food and the imprisoned body', *The Sociological Review*, 50(2): 197-214.
- Smith, J. J. (1995) 'The voluntary tradition: philanthropy and self-help in Britain 1500-1945' in Smith, J. D., Rochester, C. and Hedley, R. (Eds.) *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector*. London: Routledge. p9-39.
- Smith, C. and Wincup, E. (2000) 'Breaking in: researching criminal justice institutions for women' in King, R. D. and Wincup, E. (Eds.) *Doing Research on Crime and Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p331-349.
- Snow, L. (2000) 'The role of formalised peer-group support in prisons' in Towl, G., Snow, L. and McHugh, M. (Eds.) *Suicide in Prisons*. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.
- Snow, L. and Biggar, K. (2006) 'The role of peer support in reducing self-harm in prisons' in Dear, G. E. (Ed.) *Preventing Suicide and Other Self-harm in Prison*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p153-166.
- Soloman, P. (2004) 'Peer support/peer provided services: underlying processes, benefits and critical ingredients', *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 27(4): 392-401.
- Solomon, E. and Edgar, K. (2004) *Having Their Say: The Work of Prisoner Councils*. London: Prison Reform Trust.



- Song, Y. S. and Ingram, K. M. (2002) 'Unsupportive social interactions, availability of social support, and coping: their relationship to mood disturbance among African Americans living with HIV', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 19(1): 67-85.
- Sparks, R. (1994) 'Can prisons be legitimate? Penal politics, privatization, and the timeliness of an old idea', *British Journal of Criminology*, 34(Special Issue): 14-28.
- Sparks, R. (2002) 'Out of the 'digger': the warrior's honour and the guilty observer', *Ethnography*, 3(4): 556-581.
- Sparks, R. (2007) 'The politics of imprisonment' in Jewkes, Y. (Ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p73-94.
- Sparks, R., Bottoms, A. E. and Hay, W. (1996) *Prisons and the Problem of Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stern, V. (1989) *Bricks of Shame: Britain's Prisons*. London: Penguin Books.
- Stern, V. (1994) 'The future of the voluntary sector and the pressure groups' in Player, E. and Jenkins, M. (Eds.) *Prisons After Woolf: Reform Through Riot*. London: Routledge. p243-254.
- Stern, V. (2002) 'Prisoners as citizens: a view from Europe' in Brown, D. and Wilkie, M. (Eds.) *Prisoners as Citizens: Human Rights in Australian Prisons*. Leichhardt: The Federation Press. p154-173.



- Stewart, E. (2004) 'Andy Ludlow awards 2004: Advising for outside inside', *London Housing, August*: 8-11.
- Stohr, M. K., Hemmens, C., Marsh, R. L., Barrier, G. and Palhegyi, D. (2000) 'Can't scale this? The ethical parameters of correctional work', *The Prison Journal*, 80(1): 56-79.
- Struckman-Johnson, C. and Struckman-Johnson, D. (2000) 'Sexual coercion rates in seven mid-western prison facilities for men', *The Prison Journal*, 80(4): 379-390.
- Sykes, G. M. (1958) *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tait, S. (2012) 'Custody, care and staff-prisoner relationships' in Crewe, B. and Bennett, J. (Eds.) *The Prisoner*. Abingdon: Routledge. p13-26.
- Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (1998) *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage.
- Taylor, C. (2008). "Volunteering for All? A Qualitative Study of Women Ex-Offenders' Experiences of Volunteering. The Griffins Society." Retrieved December 2010, from [http://www.thegriffinssociety.org/Research\\_Paper\\_2008\\_01.pdf](http://www.thegriffinssociety.org/Research_Paper_2008_01.pdf).
- Taylor, R. (2005) 'Re-thinking voluntary work' in Pettinger, L., Parry, J., Taylor, R. F. and Glucksmann, M. (Eds.) *A New Sociology of Work?* Oxford: Blackwell. p119-135.



- Taylor, M. and Pease, K. (1989) 'Private prisons and penal purpose' in Matthews, R. (Ed.) *Privatizing Criminal Justice*. London: Sage. p179-194.
- Teddle, C. and Tashakkori, A. (2003) 'Major issues and controversies in the use of mixed methods in the social and behavioral sciences' in Tashakkori, A. and Teddle, C. (Eds.) *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. London: Sage. p3-50.
- Tennant, R., Hiller, L., Fishwick, R., Platt, S., Joseph, S., Weich, S., Parkinson, J., Secker, J. and Stewart-Brown, S. (2007) 'The Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWEBS): development and UK validation', *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 5: 63-76.
- Third Sector Research Centre (2010) *The Role of the Third Sector in Work with Offenders: The Perceptions of Criminal Justice and Third Sector Stakeholders*. Retrieved May 2011, from <http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jpl0uVVN90w%3d&tabid=500>.
- Third Sector Research Centre. (2011) *Scoping the Involvement of Third Sector Organisations in the Seven Resettlement Pathways for Offenders (Working paper 57)*. Retrieved September 2011, from <http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JnJy2cVtYx0%3d&tabid=500>.
- Thoits, P. A. (1986) 'Social support as coping assistance', *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 54(4): 416-423.
- Thoits, P. A. and Hewitt, L. N. (2001) 'Volunteer work and well-being', *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 42(2): 115-131.



- Toch, H. (1992) *Living in Prison: The Ecology of Survival*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Tomlinson, F. (2005) 'Idealistic and pragmatic versions of the discourse of partnership', *Organization Studies*, 26(8): 1169-1188.
- Topp, D. O. (1979) 'Suicide in prison', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 134: 24-27.
- Triplett, R., Mullings, J. L. and Scarborough, K. E. (1996) 'Work-related stress and coping among correctional officers: implications from organizational literature', *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 24(4): 291-308.
- Truman, C. (2003) 'Ethics and the ruling relations of research production', *Sociological Research Online*, 8(1).
- Uggen, C., Manza, J. and Behrens, A. (2004) "'Less than the average citizen': stigma, role transition and the civic reintegration of convicted felons' in Maruna, S. and Immarigeon, R. (Eds.) *After Crime and Punishment - Pathways to Offender Reintegration*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing. p261-293.
- Varah, C. (1965) *The Samaritans*. London: Constable & Co.
- Veiel, H. O. F. and Baumann, U. (1992) *The Meaning and Measurement of Social Support*. London: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation.



- Vennard, J. and Hedderman, C. (2009) 'Helping offenders into employment: how far is voluntary sector expertise valued in a contracting-out environment?', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 9(2): 225-245.
- Vuolo, M. and Kruttschnitt, C. (2008) 'Prisoners' adjustment, correctional officers and contact: the foreground and background of punishment in late modernity', *Law & Society Review*, 42(2): 307-336.
- Waldram, J. B. (2009) Challenges of prison ethnography, *Anthropology News*, January 2009: 4-5.
- Walker, S. A. and Avis, M. (1999) 'Brief report: common reasons why peer education fails', *Journal of Adolescence*, 22: 573-577.
- Walker, S. and Worrall, A. (2000) 'Life as a woman: the gendered pains of indeterminate imprisonment', *Prison Service Journal*, 132: 27-37.
- Ward, D. A. and Kassebaum, G. G. (1965) *Women's Prison: Sex and Social Structure*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Weiss, R. P. (1989) 'Private prisons and the state' in Matthews, R. (Ed.) *Privatizing Criminal Justice*. London: Sage. p26-51.
- Weitzman, E. A. (2003) 'Software and qualitative research', in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage. p310-339.



- Wheeless, L. R. and Grotz, J. (1977) 'The measurement of trust and its relationship to self-disclosure', *Human Communication Research*, 3(3): 250-257.
- White, W. L. (2000) 'The history of recovered people as wounded healers: II The era of professionalization and specialization', *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 18(2): 1-25.
- White, W. (2004) *The History and Future of Peer-Based Addiction Recovery Support Services*. Prepared for the SAMHSA Consumer and Family Direction Initiative 2004 Summit, March 22-23. Washington, DC.
- Williams, M., Nooney, K. and Ray, I. (1987) 'Social work needs of prisoners: a survey' in McGurk, B. J., Thornton, D. M. and Williams, M. (Eds.) *Applying Psychology to Imprisonment: Theory and Practice*. London: HMSO. p378-392.
- Willis, G. B. (1999) *Cognitive Interviewing: A 'How To' Guide*. Retrieved February 2008, from <http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/areas/cognitive/interview.pdf>.
- Willis, G. B. (2005) *Cognitive Interviewing: A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design*. London, Sage.
- Wills, T. A. (1991) 'Social support and interpersonal relationships' in Clark, M. S. (Ed.) *Prosocial Behavior*. London: Sage. p265-289.
- Wilson, C. J., Deane, F. P., Ciarrochi, J. and Rickwood, D. (2005) 'Measuring help-seeking intentions: properties of the general help-seeking questionnaire', *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 39(1): 15-28.



- Wilson, D. (2003) “‘Keeping quiet” or “going nuts”: some emerging strategies used by young black people in custody at a time of childhood being re-constructed’, *The Howard Journal*, 42(5): 411-425.
- Wilson, J. (2000) ‘Volunteering’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 215-240.
- Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1998) ‘The contribution of social resources to volunteering’, *Social Science Quarterly*, 79(4): 799-814.
- Wilson, J. and Musick, M. A. (1999) ‘Attachment to volunteering’, *Sociological Forum*, 14(2): 243-272.
- Wolch, J. R. (1990) *The Shadow State: Government and Voluntary Sector in Transition*. New York: The Foundation Center.
- Wolf, D. (1996) ‘Situating feminist dilemmas in fieldwork’ in Wolf, D. L. (Ed.) *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. Colorado: Westview Press. p1-55.
- Women in Prison (2006) *Response to ‘Reducing re-offending through skills and employment’*. London: Women in Prison.
- Wool, R. J. and Dooley, E. (1987) ‘A Study of Attempted Suicides in Prisons’, *Medical Science Law*, 27(4): 297-301.
- Wynaden, D. and Orb, A. (2005) ‘Impact of patient confidentiality on carers of people who have a mental disorder’, *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 14: 166-171.



Wyner, R. (2003) 'Breaking down barriers', *Prison Report*, 61: 24-25.

Yeager, M. G. (2008) 'Getting the usual treatment: research censorship and the dangerous offender', *Contemporary Justice Review*, 11(4): 413-425.

Zamble, E. and Porporino, F. J. (1988) *Coping, Behavior, and Adaptation in Prison Inmates*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Zimmeck, M. (2010) 'Government and volunteering: towards a history of policy and practice' in Rochester, C., Paine, A. E. and Howlett, S. (Eds.) *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*. Basingstoke,: Palgrave Macmillan. p84-102.

**Newspaper articles:**

Safer Custody News, July/August 2008 (Issue 5), 'Joint conference - Listener viewpoint'.

The Guardian, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2004, 'Blunkett tells joy at Shipman's death, by Martin Bright.

Times Higher Education Supplement: 11, 2009, 'Prison research project is throttled by red tape' by J. Gill.



**Webpages:**

<http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/research/>. (website no longer available)

Retrieved October 2006.

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/research-and-analysis/prisons/index.htm>.

Retrieved March 2011.

[http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO\\_4000\\_incentives\\_and\\_earned\\_privileges.pdf](http://pso.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/PSO_4000_incentives_and_earned_privileges.pdf).

Retrieved July 2008.

[http://www.samaritans.org/about\\_samaritans/governance\\_and\\_history/our\\_mission.aspx](http://www.samaritans.org/about_samaritans/governance_and_history/our_mission.aspx).

Retrieved December 2011.



## **Appendix – Chapter 5**

### **(A5)**

**A5.1** Link between the research questions and the quantitative and qualitative data

**A5.2** Questionnaires for prisoners

**A5.3** Semi-structured interview schedules for interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff

**A5.4** Letter from the NRC 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008<sup>1</sup>

**A5.5** Letter from the NRC 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009

**A5.6** Response to the NRC 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009

**A5.7** Responses made to the points raised SCOP 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009

**A5.8** Information sheets and consent forms

---

<sup>1</sup> N.B. All original names have been removed.



## A5.1 Link between the research questions and the quantitative and qualitative data

Table A5.1 – The linkages between the research questions and the data generated by quantitative and qualitative methods

Research question	Data
<p>How do prisoners use the Listener scheme in their patterns of coping and help-seeking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does peer support compare with other sources of help and support?</li> <li>• In which ways are prisoners' usage of the Listener scheme embedded in the general features of, and acceptance of the scheme within, the wider prison 'community'?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prisoner survey data:</b> prisoners' help-seeking preferences (types of problem and sources of support); levels of take-up and non-take-up of the Listener scheme by prisoners; patterns of usage of Listener support; relationships with staff and prisoners; characteristics of the prison 'communities'. This data was analysed according to demographic variables.</p> <p><b>Interview data:</b> The above quantitative data is cross referenced with the data elicited through the interviews with prisoners, prison staff and Listeners.</p>
<p>How does the Listener scheme operate within prisons, and how is it perceived by the various groups of the prison 'community' (prison staff, prisoners and Listeners)?</p>	<p><b>Prisoner survey data:</b> Attitudes towards Listeners; willingness to become a Listener. This data was analysed according to prison demographics.</p> <p><b>Interview data:</b> The above quantitative data is cross-referenced with an analysis of the interview data obtained from prisoners, Listeners and prison staff. This interview data from prisoners and staff is also explored in greater depth to understand how the scheme is facilitated by staff.</p>
<p>What do Listeners identify as the effects and outcomes of their peer support work in prison?</p>	<p><b>Interview data:</b> Qualitative accounts from Listeners are analysed and are also linked with accounts provided by prison staff and prisoners.</p>



## A5.2 Questionnaires for prisoners



### **HELP AND SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS**

#### **YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE LISTENERS BUT NOT TALKED TO THEM**

*Please help by answering the questions. It is important that prisoners get help when they need it. Your experiences and thoughts are very important so make your voice heard!*



*Please read every question carefully. Please follow the directions for each question. If you change your mind, just cross it out and put a tick in the correct box.*

**FIRST, SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU:**

**1. What is your age in years?**

I am ..... years old.

**2. How would you describe yourself? Please tick:**

- ☐ White (British)
- ☐ White (European)
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Other *please write here:* .....

**3. What is your native language? Please tick:**

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other - Which language? .....

**4. Were you born in Britain? Please tick:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No – Where were you born? .....



**5. Is this your first time in prison? Please tick:**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**6. How long is the sentence you are serving now?**

☐ I have not been sentenced yet (*go to question 8*)

☐ My sentence is ..... years and ..... months (*go to question 7*)

**7. How much time do you have left of this sentence?**

I have ..... years and .....months left

**8. How long have you been *in this prison*?**

I have been in this prison ..... years  
and ..... months.

**9. You have heard of the Listeners, have you also heard of any of the following peer support schemes? Please tick all those you have heard of:**

☐ Insiders

☐ Buddies

☐ Carers

☐ Other .....

☐ None of the above



**10. Have you ever talked to any of the following kinds of peer supporters about a problem in another prison? Please tick all those you have talked to:**

- ☐ Insiders
- ☐ Buddies
- ☐ Carers
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ None of the above

**ABOUT LISTENERS:**

**11. What is your idea of what Listeners do? Tick boxes for all the things you think Listeners do – YOU CAN TICK MORE THAN ONE BOX:**

- ☐ Listeners give information to prisoners about prison life
- ☐ Listeners help prison staff
- ☐ Listeners can be called out 24 hours a day
- ☐ Listeners help prisoners to solve personal problems
- ☐ Listeners give advice to prisoners



**12. How did you come to know about Listeners?** *Tick boxes for all the ways you found out about Listeners:*

- ☐ A member of staff told me about Listeners
- ☐ Another prisoner told me about Listeners
- ☐ A Listener explained it to me
- ☐ I saw a poster about Listeners
- ☐ I looked out for Listeners
- ☐ I know about them from another prison
- ☐ Other

**13. There are many different thoughts about Listeners in prison. If someone told you the following about Listeners, would you agree or not?** Please note that it is not necessary for you to know a Listener personally. *Please tick the box which shows how much you agree or disagree with each thought:*

 <div> <p><i>I think Listeners ...</i></p> </div>	<div> <p><i>Do I agree or not?</i></p>  </div>				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>..... are easy to talk to</i>					
<i>..... cannot be trusted</i>					
<i>..... have a good reputation in here</i>					
<i>..... push themselves on you</i>					
<i>..... are friendly towards prisoners</i>					
<i>..... grass on prisoners</i>					



**14. Why have you not talked to a Listener about a problem while you have been in prison? Please tick all those reasons that are true for you:**

- ☐ I do not feel like talking to Listeners
- ☐ I do not trust Listeners
- ☐ I worry what other prisoners will think
- ☐ I had no problem I would have talked to Listeners about
- ☐ I never talk to anyone about my problems (**go to question 14**)

**15. Is there anyone else you would talk to about your problems? Please tick all to who you would talk to:**

- ☐ A prison officer
- ☐ Someone from healthcare
- ☐ A psychologist
- ☐ A counsellor
- ☐ A chaplain
- ☐ Other prisoners
- ☐ Friends and family on the outside
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ None of the above

**16. Would you like to become a Listener yourself? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a Listener
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a Listener



**17. Would you like to become active in any other peer support scheme in prison?** *Please tick all those schemes you would like to become active in:*

- ☐ Insiders scheme
- ☐ Buddy scheme
- ☐ Carer scheme
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ I definitely do not want to become active in a peer support scheme

***On their release, sometimes prisoners become 'peer mentors' and give other released prisoners help and advice on getting work and accommodation for example.***

**18. When you have been released, would you like to become a peer mentor?**

*Please tick one:*

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a peer mentor when I have been released
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a peer mentor when I have been released

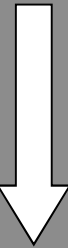


**YOUR LIFE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PRISON:**

**19. How is your health in general? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Very bad

**20. How have you been feeling over the last two weeks? Please tick a box for each statement:**

 <div>Start here</div>	<i>None of the time</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>All of the time</i>
<i>I've been feeling optimistic about the future</i>					
<i>I've been feeling useful</i>					
<i>I've been feeling relaxed</i>					
<i>I've been feeling interested in new things</i>					
<i>I've been dealing with problems well</i>					
<i>I've been thinking clearly</i>					
<i>I've been feeling confident</i>					



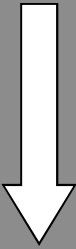
**21. What is your current relationship or marital status? Please tick:**

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married

**22. How many children do you have?**

- ☐ I have ..... children
- ☐ I do not have any children


**23. What contact do you have with people on the outside? For each person, tick all types of contact you have with them:**

 Start here	We are in contact by:			We are not in contact	Does not apply to me
	visits	phone	letter		
<b>Present partner</b>					
<b>Mother and/or father</b>					
<b>Brother(s) and/or sister(s)</b>					
<b>Son(s) and/or daughter(s)</b>					
<b>Friends</b>					
<b>Others (e.g. ex partner)</b>					

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED ALL TYPES OF CONTACT YOU HAVE WITH PEOPLE ON THE OUTSIDE



**24. Imagine that you have the kind of problems listed below. Who would you go to for help? For each problem, please tick all you would go to for help:**

 <b>Start here</b>	<b>Listeners</b>	<b>Other prisoners</b>	<b>Prison officers or prison staff</b>	<b>Partner, friends or family</b>	<b>Wouldn't talk to anybody</b>
<b>Problems with my life outside prison (e.g. partner, family, friends)</b>					
<b>Problems with prison staff or other prisoners</b>					
<b>Drug or alcohol problems</b>					
<b>What I have done to other people</b>					
<b>What I can do to change my life</b>					
<b>Feeling low, upset or depressed</b>					



25. Has any of the following happened to you since you have been in this prison? Please tick for each statement:

<i>I have been helped by another prisoner with daily prison life</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been excluded by a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been given advice from another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been threatened by another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have felt angry or upset with another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been invited to join a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

26. Generally speaking, how do prison officers and prisoners get on with each other in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>Prison officers listen to prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers can be trusted</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers make an effort to help prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers are fair</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers push prisoners around</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers and prisoners get on well with each other</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX OR CIRCLE FOR EACH STATEMENT



**27. How do you personally get on with *prison officers* in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:**

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b><i>I trust prison officers in here</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been helpful to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been unfair to me</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers make an effort to talk to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with prison officers on my wing</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**28. Generally speaking, how do *prisoners* get on with each other in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:**

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b><i>Prisoners get on well with each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners fight with each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners hang around in groups</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners help each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners grass on each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



29. How do **you personally** get on with other ***prisoners*** in this prison? For each statement, tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely, or never:

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b><i>I mix with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I trust other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I fight with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I make friends with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. People do things differently in here. Are any of the following something you would do or have done? Please tick for each statement:

<b><i>Give advice to new prisoners about prison life</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Ask prison staff for what you want</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Sign up for education or training</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Try to find work in prison</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Organise a group, team or meeting for prisoners</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT



**31. There are many different views about Listeners among prisoners.**

**According to your experience, how common are these? Please tick a box for each of the views:**

	<i>Very common</i>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Not very common</i>	<i>Not at all common</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Listeners are easy to talk to</i>					
<i>Listeners cannot be trusted</i>					
<i>Listeners have a good reputation in here</i>					
<i>Listeners push themselves on you</i>					
<i>Listeners are friendly towards prisoners</i>					
<i>Listeners grass on prisoners</i>					



**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS  
QUESTIONNAIRE!**

**DID YOU ANSWER EVERY QUESTION?**  
**PLEASE CHECK NOW!!!**

***Please place the questionnaire in the envelope  
provided and seal it.***

***Then hand it to Michelle Jaffe***





## **HELP AND SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS**

**YOU HAVE TALKED TO A LISTENER ABOUT A PROBLEM IN THIS PRISON**

*Please help by answering the questions. It is important that prisoners get help when they need it. Your experiences and thoughts are very important so make your voice heard!*



*Please read every question carefully. Please follow the directions for each question. If you change your mind, just cross it out and put a tick in the correct box.*

**FIRST, SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU:**

**1. What is your age in years?**

I am ..... years old.

**2. How would you describe yourself? Please tick:**

- ☐ White (British)
- ☐ White (European)
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Other *please write here:* .....

**3. What is your native language? Please tick:**

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other - Which language? .....

**4. Were you born in Britain? Please tick:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No – Where were you born? .....



**5. Is this your first time in prison? Please tick:**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**6. How long is the sentence you are serving now?**

☐ I have not been sentenced yet (*go to question 8*)

☐ My sentence is ..... years and ..... months (*go to question 7*)

**7. How much time do you have left of this sentence?**

I have ..... years and .....months left

**8. How long have you been *in this prison*?**

I have been in this prison ..... years  
and ..... months.

**9. You have heard and spoken to the Listeners, have you also heard of any of the following peer support schemes? Please tick all those you have heard of:**

☐ Insiders

☐ Buddies

☐ Carers

☐ Other .....

☐ None of the above



**10. Have you ever talked to any of the following kinds of peer supporters about a problem in another prison? Please tick all those you have talked to:**

- ☐ Insiders
- ☐ Buddies
- ☐ Carers
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ None of the above

***ABOUT LISTENERS:***

**11. What is your idea of what Listeners do? Tick boxes for all the things you think Listeners do – YOU CAN TICK MORE THAN ONE BOX:**



- ☐ Listeners give information to prisoners about prison life
- ☐ Listeners help prison staff
- ☐ Listeners can be called out 24 hours a day
- ☐ Listeners help prisoners to solve personal problems
- ☐ Listeners give advice to prisoners



**12. How did you come to know about Listeners?** *Tick boxes for all the ways you found out about Listeners:*

- ☐ A member of staff told me about Listeners
- ☐ Another prisoner told me about Listeners
- ☐ A Listener explained it to me
- ☐ I saw a poster about Listeners
- ☐ I looked out for Listeners
- ☐ I know about them from another prison
- ☐ Other

**13. There are many different thoughts about Listeners in prison. If someone told you the following about Listeners, would you agree or not?** Please note that it is not necessary for you to know a Listener personally. *Please tick the box which shows how much you agree or disagree with each thought:*

 <div> <p><i>I think Listeners ...</i></p> </div>	<div> <p><i>Do I agree or not?</i></p>  </div>				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>..... are easy to talk to</i>					
<i>..... cannot be trusted</i>					
<i>..... have a good reputation in here</i>					
<i>..... push themselves on you</i>					
<i>..... are friendly towards prisoners</i>					
<i>..... grass on prisoners</i>					



**SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT WHEN YOU HAVE TALKED TO A LISTENER ABOUT  
A PROBLEM IN THIS PRISON:**

**14. When have you talked to a Listener in this prison? Please tick all that are true for you:**

- ☐ During my first few days in prison
- ☐ During my trial
- ☐ After I was sentenced
- ☐ Near to my release
- ☐ During the day
- ☐ During the evening
- ☐ During the night

**15. How many times have you talked to a Listener in this prison? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Once
- ☐ Twice
- ☐ Three times
- ☐ Four to ten times
- ☐ More than ten times



**16. Would you normally look for the same Listener to talk to, or a different Listener? Please tick:**

- ☐ Yes I normally look for the same Listener to talk to
- ☐ No it doesn't matter to me

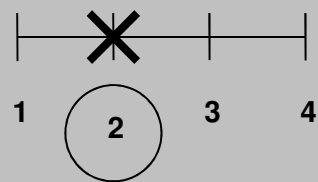
**17. What problems have you contacted a Listener about in this prison? Please tick all that apply to you:**

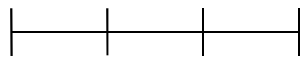
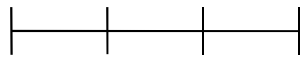
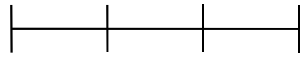
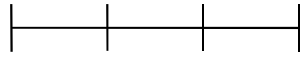
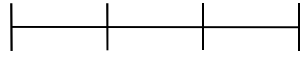
- ☐ Problems with my life outside prison (e.g. partner, family, friends)
- ☐ Problems with prison staff or other prisoners
- ☐ Drug or alcohol problems
- ☐ What I have done to other people
- ☐ What I can do to change my life
- ☐ Feeling low, upset or depressed
- ☐ Other .....



**18. Generally speaking, how did you feel after talking to a Listener?** *For each statement please put an X along the scale or circle the number to show how you felt:*

4 = you felt very much like this

<i>Example:</i>	<p>Not at all            Very much so</p> <p>1      2      3      4</p>
-----------------	---

<b><i>I felt hopeful about the future</i></b>	<p>Not at all            Very much so</p> <p>1      2      3      4</p>
<b><i>I felt anxious</i></b>	<p>Not at all            Very much so</p> <p>1      2      3      4</p>
<b><i>I felt that I could sort the problem out</i></b>	<p>Not at all            Very much so</p> <p>1      2      3      4</p>
<b><i>I felt angry</i></b>	<p>Not at all            Very much so</p> <p>1      2      3      4</p>
<b><i>I felt relieved</i></b>	<p>Not at all            Very much so</p> <p>1      2      3      4</p>



**19. Did you talk to anyone else about these issues or problems? Please tick all those you spoke to:**

- ☐ A prison officer
- ☐ Someone from healthcare
- ☐ A psychologist
- ☐ A counsellor
- ☐ A Chaplain
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ None of the above

**20. Thinking of your own experience, would you recommend the Listeners to another prisoner? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Depends on the Listener available
- ☐ Depends on his/her problem
- ☐ Definitely not
- ☐ I do not know

**21. Would you like to become a Listener yourself? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a Listener
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a Listener



**22. Would you like to become active in any other peer support scheme in prison?** *Please tick all those schemes you would like to become active in:*

- ☐ Insiders scheme
- ☐ Buddy scheme
- ☐ Carer scheme
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ I definitely do not want to become active in a peer support scheme

***On their release, sometimes prisoners become 'peer mentors' and give other released prisoners help and advice on getting work and accommodation for example.***

**23. When you have been released, would you like to become a peer mentor?**

*Please tick one:*

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a peer mentor when I have been released
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a peer mentor when I have been released

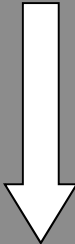


**YOUR LIFE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PRISON:**

**24. How is your health in general? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Very bad

**25. How have you been feeling over the last two weeks? Please tick a box for each statement:**

 <div>Start here</div>	<i>None of the time</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>All of the time</i>
<i>I've been feeling optimistic about the future</i>					
<i>I've been feeling useful</i>					
<i>I've been feeling relaxed</i>					
<i>I've been feeling interested in new things</i>					
<i>I've been dealing with problems well</i>					
<i>I've been thinking clearly</i>					
<i>I've been feeling confident</i>					



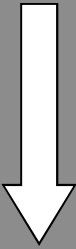
**26. What is your current relationship or marital status? Please tick:**

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married

**27. How many children do you have?**

- ☐ I have ..... children
- ☐ I do not have any children


**28. What contact do you have with people on the outside? For each person, tick all types of contact you have with them:**

 <b>Start here</b>	<b>We are in contact by:</b>			<b>We are not in contact</b>	<b>Does not apply to me</b>
	<i>visits</i>	<i>phone</i>	<i>letter</i>		
<b>Present partner</b>					
<b>Mother and/or father</b>					
<b>Brother(s) and/or sister(s)</b>					
<b>Son(s) and/or daughter(s)</b>					
<b>Friends</b>					
<b>Others (e.g. ex partner)</b>					

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED ALL TYPES OF CONTACT YOU HAVE WITH PEOPLE ON THE OUTSIDE



**29. Imagine that you have the kind of problems listed below. Who would you go to for help? For each problem, please tick all you would go to for help:**

 <b>Start here</b>	<i>Listeners</i>	<i>Other prisoners</i>	<i>Prison officers or prison staff</i>	<i>Partner, friends or family</i>	<i>Wouldn't talk to anybody</i>
<b>Problems with my life outside prison (e.g. partner, family, friends)</b>					
<b>Problems with prison staff or other prisoners</b>					
<b>Drug or alcohol problems</b>					
<b>What I have done to other people</b>					
<b>What I can do to change my life</b>					
<b>Feeling low, upset or depressed</b>					



30. Has any of the following happened to you since you have been in this prison? Please tick for each statement:

<i>I have been helped by another prisoner with daily prison life</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been excluded by a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been given advice from another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been threatened by another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have felt angry or upset with another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been invited to join a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

31. Generally speaking, how do prison officers and prisoners get on with each other in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>Prison officers listen to prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers can be trusted</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers make an effort to help prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers are fair</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers push prisoners around</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers and prisoners get on well with each other</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX OR CIRCLE FOR EACH STATEMENT



**32. How do you personally get on with *prison officers* in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:**

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b><i>I trust prison officers in here</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been helpful to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been unfair to me</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers make an effort to talk to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with prison officers on my wing</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**33. Generally speaking, how do *prisoners* get on with each other in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:**

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b><i>Prisoners get on well with each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners fight with each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners hang around in groups</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners help each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners grass on each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



34. How do **you personally** get on with other ***prisoners*** in this prison? For each statement, tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely, or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b><i>I mix with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I trust other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I fight with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I make friends with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. People do things differently in here. Are any of the following something you would do or have done? Please tick for each statement:

<b><i>Give advice to new prisoners about prison life</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Ask prison staff for what you want</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Sign up for education or training</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Try to find work in prison</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Organise a group, team or meeting for prisoners</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT



**36. There are many different views about Listeners among prisoners.**

**According to your experience, how common are these? Please tick a box for each of the views:**

	<i>Very common</i>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Not very common</i>	<i>Not at all common</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Listeners are easy to talk to</i>					
<i>Listeners cannot be trusted</i>					
<i>Listeners have a good reputation in here</i>					
<i>Listeners push themselves on you</i>					
<i>Listeners are friendly towards prisoners</i>					
<i>Listeners grass on prisoners</i>					



**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS  
QUESTIONNAIRE!**

**DID YOU ANSWER EVERY QUESTION?**  
**PLEASE CHECK NOW!!!**



**Would you be willing to take part in an interview to talk in more depth about your experience of talking to Listeners about problems? Please tick:**

☐ Yes (please write your name and wing location)

Name: .....

Wing location: .....

☐ No

***Please place the questionnaire in the envelope provided and seal it.***

***Then hand it to Michelle Jaffe***



**HELP AND SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS**

**YOU HAVE TALKED TO A LISTENER IN ANOTHER PRISON**

*Please help by answering the questions. It is important that prisoners get help when they need it. Your experiences and thoughts are very important so make your voice heard!*



*Please read every question carefully. Please follow the directions for each question. If you change your mind, just cross it out and put a tick in the correct box.*

**FIRST, SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU:**

**1. What is your age in years?**

I am ..... years old.

**2. How would you describe yourself? Please tick:**

- ☐ White (British)
- ☐ White (European)
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Other *please write here:* .....

**3. What is your native language? Please tick:**

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other - Which language? .....

**4. Were you born in Britain? Please tick:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No – Where were you born? .....



**5. Is this your first time in prison? Please tick:**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**6. How long is the sentence you are serving now?**

☐ I have not been sentenced yet (*go to question 8*)

☐ My sentence is ..... years and ..... months (*go to question 7*)

**7. How much time do you have left of this sentence?**

I have ..... years and .....months left

**8. How long have you been *in this prison*?**

I have been in this prison ..... years  
and ..... months.

**9. You have heard and spoken to the Listeners, have you also heard of any of the following peer support schemes? Please tick all those you have heard of:**

☐ Insiders

☐ Buddies

☐ Carers

☐ Other .....

☐ None of the above



**10. Have you ever talked to any of the following kinds of peer supporters about a problem in another prison? Please tick all those you have talked to:**

- ☐ Insiders
- ☐ Buddies
- ☐ Carers
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ None of the above

**ABOUT LISTENERS:**

**11. What is your idea of what Listeners do? Tick boxes for all the things you think Listeners do – YOU CAN TICK MORE THAN ONE BOX:**



- ☐ Listeners give information to prisoners about prison life
- ☐ Listeners help prison staff
- ☐ Listeners can be called out 24 hours a day
- ☐ Listeners help prisoners to solve personal problems
- ☐ Listeners give advice to prisoners



**12. How did you come to know about Listeners?** *Tick boxes for all the ways you found out about Listeners:*

- ☐ A member of staff told me about Listeners
- ☐ Another prisoner told me about Listeners
- ☐ A Listener explained it to me
- ☐ I saw a poster about Listeners
- ☐ I looked out for Listeners
- ☐ I know about them from another prison
- ☐ Other

**13. There are many different thoughts about Listeners in prison. If someone told you the following about Listeners, would you agree or not?** Please note it is not necessary for you to know a Listener personally. *Please tick the box which shows how much you agree or disagree with each thought:*

 <div> <p><i>I think Listeners ...</i></p> </div>	 <div> <p><i>Do I agree or not?</i></p> </div>				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<i>..... are easy to talk to</i>					
<i>..... cannot be trusted</i>					
<i>..... have a good reputation in here</i>					
<i>..... push themselves on you</i>					
<i>..... are friendly towards prisoners</i>					
<i>..... grass on prisoners</i>					



***SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT WHEN YOU HAVE TALKED TO A LISTENER ABOUT  
A PROBLEM IN ANOTHER PRISON:***

**14. When did you talk to a Listener?** *Please tick all that are true for you:*

- ☐ During my first few days in prison
- ☐ During my trial
- ☐ After I was sentenced
- ☐ Near to my release
- ☐ During the day
- ☐ During the evening
- ☐ During the night

**15. How many times did you talk to a Listener?** *Please tick one:*

- ☐ Once
- ☐ Twice
- ☐ Three times
- ☐ Four to ten times
- ☐ More than ten times



**16. Would you normally look for the same Listener to talk to, or a different Listener?** *Please tick:*

- ☐ Yes I normally look for the same Listener to talk to
- ☐ No it doesn't matter to me

**17. What problems have you contacted a Listener about?** *Please tick all that apply to you:*

- ☐ Problems with my life outside prison (e.g. partner, family, friends)
- ☐ Problems with prison staff or other prisoners
- ☐ Drug or alcohol problems
- ☐ What I have done to other people
- ☐ What I can do to change my life
- ☐ Feeling low, upset or depressed
- ☐ Other .....



**18. Generally speaking, how did you feel after talking to a Listener?** *For each statement please put an X along the scale or circle the number to show how you felt:*

4 = you felt very much like this

<i>Example:</i>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Not at all</span> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10%; top: -5px;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30%; top: -5px;">2</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50%; top: -5px;">3</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 70%; top: -5px;">4</div> </div> <div style="margin: 0 10px;"> <div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">X</div> </div> </div> </div> <span>Very much so</span> </div>
-----------------	--

<b><i>I felt hopeful about the future</i></b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Not at all</span> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10%; top: -5px;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30%; top: -5px;">2</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50%; top: -5px;">3</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 70%; top: -5px;">4</div> </div> </div> <span>Very much so</span> </div>
<b><i>I felt anxious</i></b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Not at all</span> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10%; top: -5px;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30%; top: -5px;">2</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50%; top: -5px;">3</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 70%; top: -5px;">4</div> </div> </div> <span>Very much so</span> </div>
<b><i>I felt that I could sort the problem out</i></b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Not at all</span> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10%; top: -5px;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30%; top: -5px;">2</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50%; top: -5px;">3</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 70%; top: -5px;">4</div> </div> </div> <span>Very much so</span> </div>
<b><i>I felt angry</i></b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Not at all</span> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10%; top: -5px;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30%; top: -5px;">2</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50%; top: -5px;">3</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 70%; top: -5px;">4</div> </div> </div> <span>Very much so</span> </div>
<b><i>I felt relieved</i></b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Not at all</span> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10%; top: -5px;">1</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 30%; top: -5px;">2</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 50%; top: -5px;">3</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 70%; top: -5px;">4</div> </div> </div> <span>Very much so</span> </div>



**19. Did you talk to anyone else about these issues or problems? Please tick all those you spoke to:**

- ☐ A prison officer
- ☐ Someone from healthcare
- ☐ A psychologist
- ☐ A counsellor
- ☐ A Chaplain
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ None of the above

**20. Thinking of your own experience, would you recommend the Listeners to another prisoner? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Depends on the Listener available
- ☐ Depends on his/her problem
- ☐ Definitely not
- ☐ I do not know

**21. Would you like to become a Listener yourself? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a Listener
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a Listener



**22. Would you like to become active in any other peer support scheme in prison?** *Please tick all those schemes you would like to become active in:*

- ☐ Insiders scheme
- ☐ Buddy scheme
- ☐ Carer scheme
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ I definitely do not want to become active in a peer support scheme

***On their release, sometimes prisoners become 'peer mentors' and give other released prisoners help and advice on getting work and accommodation for example.***

**23. When you have been released, would you like to become a peer mentor?**

*Please tick one:*

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a peer mentor when I have been released
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a peer mentor when I have been released

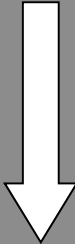


**YOUR LIFE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PRISON:**

**24. How is your health in general? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Very bad

**25. How have you been feeling over the last two weeks? Please tick a box for each statement:**

 <div>Start here</div>	<i>None of the time</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>All of the time</i>
<i>I've been feeling optimistic about the future</i>					
<i>I've been feeling useful</i>					
<i>I've been feeling relaxed</i>					
<i>I've been feeling interested in new things</i>					
<i>I've been dealing with problems well</i>					
<i>I've been thinking clearly</i>					
<i>I've been feeling confident</i>					



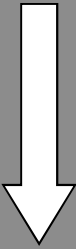
**26. What is your current relationship or marital status? Please tick:**

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married

**27. How many children do you have?**

- ☐ I have ..... children
- ☐ I do not have any children


**28. What contact do you have with people on the outside? For each person, tick all types of contact you have with them:**

 Start here	We are in contact by:			We are not in contact	Does not apply to me
	visits	phone	letter		
<b>Present partner</b>					
<b>Mother and/or father</b>					
<b>Brother(s) and/or sister(s)</b>					
<b>Son(s) and/or daughter(s)</b>					
<b>Friends</b>					
<b>Others (e.g. ex partner)</b>					

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED ALL TYPES OF CONTACT YOU HAVE WITH PEOPLE ON THE OUTSIDE



**29. Imagine that you have the kind of problems listed below. Who would you go to for help? For each problem, please tick all you would go to for help:**

 <b>Start here</b>	<i>Listeners</i>	<i>Other prisoners</i>	<i>Prison officers or prison staff</i>	<i>Partner, friends or family</i>	<i>Wouldn't talk to anybody</i>
<b>Problems with my life outside prison (e.g. partner, family, friends)</b>					
<b>Problems with prison staff or other prisoners</b>					
<b>Drug or alcohol problems</b>					
<b>What I have done to other people</b>					
<b>What I can do to change my life</b>					
<b>Feeling low, upset or depressed</b>					



30. Has any of the following happened to you since you have been in this prison? Please tick for each statement:

<i>I have been helped by another prisoner with daily prison life</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been excluded by a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been given advice from another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been threatened by another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have felt angry or upset with another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been invited to join a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

31. Generally speaking, how do prison officers and prisoners get on with each other in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>Prison officers listen to prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers can be trusted</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers make an effort to help prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers are fair</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers push prisoners around</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers and prisoners get on well with each other</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX OR CIRCLE FOR EACH STATEMENT



**32. How do you personally get on with prison officers in this prison?** For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b><i>I trust prison officers in here</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been helpful to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been unfair to me</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers make an effort to talk to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with prison officers on my wing</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**33. Generally speaking, how do prisoners get on with each other in this prison?** For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b><i>Prisoners get on well with each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners fight with each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners hang around in groups</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners help each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners grass on each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**34. How do you personally get on with other *prisoners* in this prison? For each statement, tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely, or never:**

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b><i>I mix with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I trust other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I fight with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I make friends with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**35. People do things differently in here. Are any of the following something you would do or have done? Please tick for each statement:**

<b><i>Give advice to new prisoners about prison life</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b><i>Ask prison staff for what you want</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b><i>Sign up for education or training</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b><i>Try to find work in prison</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b><i>Organise a group, team or meeting for prisoners</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>

**PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT**



**36. There are many different views about Listeners among prisoners.**

**According to your experience, how common are these? Please tick a box for each of the views:**

	<i>Very common</i>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Not very common</i>	<i>Not at all common</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Listeners are easy to talk to</i>					
<i>Listeners cannot be trusted</i>					
<i>Listeners have a good reputation in here</i>					
<i>Listeners push themselves on you</i>					
<i>Listeners are friendly towards prisoners</i>					
<i>Listeners grass on prisoners</i>					



**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS  
QUESTIONNAIRE!**

**DID YOU ANSWER EVERY QUESTION?**  
**PLEASE CHECK NOW!!!**



**Would you be willing to take part in an interview to talk in more depth about your experience of talking to Listeners about problems? Please tick:**

☐ Yes (please write your name and wing location)

Name: .....

Wing location: .....

☐ No

***Please place the questionnaire in the envelope provided and seal it.***

***Then hand it to Michelle Jaffe***



## **HELP AND SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS**

### **YOU HAVE NOT HEARD OF THE LISTENERS**

*Please help by answering the questions. It is important that prisoners get help when they need it. Your experiences and thoughts are very important so make your voice heard!*



*Please read every question carefully. Please follow the directions for each question. If you change your mind, just cross it out and put a tick in the correct box.*

**FIRST, SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU:**

**1. What is your age in years?**

I am ..... years old.

**2. How would you describe yourself? Please tick:**

- ☐ White (British)
- ☐ White (European)
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Other *please write here:* .....

**3. What is your native language? Please tick:**

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other - Which language? .....

**4. Were you born in Britain? Please tick:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No – Where were you born? .....



**5. Is this your first time in prison? Please tick:**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**6. How long is the sentence you are serving now?**

☐ I have not been sentenced yet (*go to question 8*)

☐ My sentence is ..... years and ..... months (*go to question 7*)

**7. How much time do you have left of this sentence?**

I have ..... years and .....months left

**8. How long have you been *in this prison*?**

I have been in this prison ..... years  
and ..... months.

**9. You have not heard of the Listeners, have you heard of any of the following other peer support schemes? Please tick all those you have heard of:**

☐ Insiders

☐ Buddies

☐ Carers

☐ Other .....

☐ None of the above



**10. Have you ever talked to any of the following kinds of peer supporters about a problem in another prison? Please tick all those you have talked to:**

- ☐ Insiders
- ☐ Buddies
- ☐ Carers
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ None of the above

***Listeners are prisoners who have been trained to listen to prisoners who wish to talk about their problems in confidence. They can be called out by any prisoner in need at any time of the day or night.***

**11. Now that you have heard about who the Listeners are, would you talk to a Listener if you had a problem? Please tick:**

- ☐ Yes, I would definitely give it a try
- ☐ I would think about it
- ☐ It depends
- ☐ I would rather not do it
- ☐ No, I would definitely not do it

**12. Would you like to become a Listener yourself? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a Listener
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a Listener



**13. Would you like to become active in any other peer support scheme in prison? Please tick all those schemes you would like to become active in:**

- ☐ Insiders scheme
- ☐ Buddy scheme
- ☐ Carer scheme
- ☐ Other .....
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ I definitely do not want to become active in a peer support scheme

***On their release, sometimes prisoners become 'peer mentors' and give other released prisoners help and advice on getting work and accommodation for example.***

**14. When you have been released, would you like to become a peer mentor?**

*Please tick one:*

- ☐ Yes, I would like to become a peer mentor when I have been released
- ☐ I am not sure right now
- ☐ No, I definitely do not want to become a peer mentor when I have been released




**YOUR LIFE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PRISON:**

**15. How is your health in general? Please tick one:**

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Very bad

**16. How have you been feeling over the last two weeks? Please tick a box for each statement:**

 <div>Start here</div>	<i>None of the time</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>All of the time</i>
<i>I've been feeling optimistic about the future</i>					
<i>I've been feeling useful</i>					
<i>I've been feeling relaxed</i>					
<i>I've been feeling interested in new things</i>					
<i>I've been dealing with problems well</i>					
<i>I've been thinking clearly</i>					
<i>I've been feeling confident</i>					



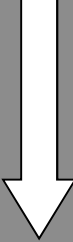
**17. What is your current relationship or marital status? Please tick:**

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married

**18. How many children do you have?**

- ☐ I have ..... children
- ☐ I do not have any children


**19. What contact do you have with people on the outside? For each person, tick all types of contact you have with them:**

 Start here	We are in contact by:			We are not in contact	Does not apply to me
	visits	phone	letter		
<b>Present partner</b>					
<b>Mother and/or father</b>					
<b>Brother(s) and/or sister(s)</b>					
<b>Son(s) and/or daughter(s)</b>					
<b>Friends</b>					
<b>Others (e.g. ex partner)</b>					

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED ALL TYPES OF CONTACT YOU HAVE WITH PEOPLE ON THE OUTSIDE



**20. Imagine that you have the kind of problems listed below. Who would you go to for help? For each problem, please tick all you would go to for help:**

 <b>Start here</b>	<i>Listeners</i>	<i>Other prisoners</i>	<i>Prison officers or prison staff</i>	<i>Partner, friends or family</i>	<i>Wouldn't talk to anybody</i>
<b>Problems with my life outside prison (e.g. partner, family, friends)</b>					
<b>Problems with prison staff or other prisoners</b>					
<b>Drug or alcohol problems</b>					
<b>What I have done to other people</b>					
<b>What I can do to change my life</b>					
<b>Feeling low, upset or depressed</b>					



21. Has any of the following happened to you since you have been in this prison? Please tick for each statement:

<i>I have been helped by another prisoner with daily prison life</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been excluded by a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been given advice from another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been threatened by another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have felt angry or upset with another prisoner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>I have been invited to join a group, team or club of prisoners</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

22. Generally speaking, how do prison officers and prisoners get on with each other in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>Prison officers listen to prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers can be trusted</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers make an effort to help prisoners</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers are fair</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers push prisoners around</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Prison officers and prisoners get on well with each other</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX OR CIRCLE FOR EACH STATEMENT



**23. How do you personally get on with *prison officers* in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:**

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b><i>I trust prison officers in here</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been helpful to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers have been unfair to me</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prison officers make an effort to talk to me</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with prison officers on my wing</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**24. Generally speaking, how do *prisoners* get on with each other in this prison? For each statement tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely or never:**

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b><i>Prisoners get on well with each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners fight with each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners hang around in groups</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners help each other</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>Prisoners grass on each other</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



25. How do **you personally** get on with other ***prisoners*** in this prison? For each statement, tick if this happens often, sometimes, rarely, or never:

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b><i>I mix with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I trust other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I fight with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b><i>I get on well with other prisoners</i></b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b><i>I make friends with other prisoners</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. People do things differently in here. Are any of the following something you would do or have done? Please tick for each statement:

<b><i>Give advice to new prisoners about prison life</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Ask prison staff for what you want</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Sign up for education or training</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Try to find work in prison</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b><i>Organise a group, team or meeting for prisoners</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TICKED A BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT



**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS  
QUESTIONNAIRE!**

**DID YOU ANSWER EVERY QUESTION?**  
**PLEASE CHECK NOW!!!**



**Would you be willing to take part in an interview to talk in more depth about your experience of help and support in prison? Please tick:**

☐ Yes (please write your name and wing location)

Name: .....

Wing location: .....

☐ No

***Please place the questionnaire in the envelope provided and seal it.***

***Then hand it to Michelle Jaffe***



### **A5.3 Semi-structured interview schedules for interviews with prisoners, Listeners and prison staff**

<b>Interview questions (prisoners who have talked to Listeners)</b>
---

#### **Background to contact with a Listener**

- Can you start by describing how you came to see a Listener, how were you feeling at the time?
- What contact did you have with Listeners before you asked to talk to a Listener?
- How long did you think about talking to a Listener before approaching / asking to talk to a Listener?
- Why did you choose to talk to a Listener/another prisoner about the problem?

#### **Accessing the service and talking to a Listener**

- Where did you see the Listener? Did you feel comfortable talking there?
- What happened when you talked to the Listener? Did you find it easy to talk to him/her?
- Did you trust the Listener because they were a Listener or did it take a while to trust them?
- Did you consider talking to anyone else about the problem? Did you talk to anyone else about the problem? E.g. staff/prisoners (Explore if this was before or after talking to a Listener)

#### **What happened afterwards:**

- How did your time talking to the Listener end? How did you feel afterwards?
- What happened afterwards?
- Did you request to see the Listener again at any point?
- Did seeing the Listener change your view about the Listeners in any way?

#### **Views about Listeners and other sources of support in prison**

- What do prisoners think about Listeners in here?
- How do Listeners help prisoners in this prison?
- Do Listeners approach prisoners they think need support?
- Do prison staff recommend Listeners to prisoners?
- Do prisoners get the help they need in prison? Why/why not?
- Have you had any help and support from prison staff or officers in here? If so, in what way have they helped?
- What would you say to another prisoner considering talking to a Listener about a problem?



<b>Interview questions (Listeners)</b>
--

**Background information:**

- How long have you been a Listener?
- Have you been a Listener in any other prison?
- Can you start by describing to me how you found out about Listeners?
- What made you feel you wanted to support other prisoners as a Listener?

**How the Listener scheme is used by prisoners:**

- How often do you get called out in this prison?
- Are there any problems you have in getting to see the people who call you out?
- In general, how would you describe the kind of problems you get called out for? (Make the Listener aware that they do not have to answer the question if they feel it compromises Listener confidentiality)

**Managing roles as prisoners and Listeners:**

- What help can you give to prisoners?
- Are there any areas where you can't help? Why?
- Do you approach prisoners you feel may need your support? How often does this happen?
- What do you think most prisoners think about Listeners?
- Are there any advantages to being a prisoner when doing Listener work?
- Have you been approached by members of staff who want to talk about a problem?

**Training and support from Samaritans:**

- Did the training you got from Samaritans prepare you for the role?
- Are there any particular challenges to doing Listener work in prison?
- How might Samaritans better support Listeners in these areas?
- Are there any areas where you feel you are fully supported by Samaritans?
- What is your relationship like with the Samaritans that visit for training and support meetings?
- Are the support meetings positive experiences where you get things done?
- What could be improved about the Listener scheme in here?
- What would you say to a prisoner considering becoming a Listener?

**Personal changes:**

- Do you feel the training changed you in any way?
- Has your life in prison changed since you became a Listener? If so, in what ways?
- What other roles or jobs do you have in here?
- How do you see your future?
- When you have been released would you like to take up a similar role in the future such as working as a peer mentor or advisor? How do you think you could help others in their release?



<b>Interviews questions (prison staff)</b>
--

**Background and experience with the Listener scheme:**

- Could you start by describing to me how long you have worked for the Prison Service?
- What is your role in this prison and what does that involve?
- How long have you had that role?
- What kind of involvement with / experience have you had with Samaritans and the Listener scheme? E.g. referrals, enabling access etc
- What contact have you had with other peer support/mentoring schemes?
- How would you describe the Listeners?
- What did you think about the Listener scheme when you first heard about it?

**Relationships between Samaritans, Listeners and Prison Staff:**

- What do prison staff think about the Listener scheme in here?
- What kind of relationship do Listeners have with prison staff in this prison?
- What kind of relationship do Listeners have with prisoners in this prison?
- What about the relationship between Samaritans and prison staff in here?
- What do you think of the selection and training of Listeners?

**How the Listener scheme fits into the prison community:**

- Do you feel the Listener scheme has made any difference to yours or others' jobs? If so, in what way?
- Do Listeners help prisoners? If so in what ways?
- Do you feel the scheme runs smoothly within the prison regime? Or are there problems?
- Have there been any problems in the past which have now been resolved? (e.g. confidentiality, staff issues, low numbers, lack of use) How have these been resolved?
- Do you think the Listener scheme compliments other services in this prison?
- Do you think that becoming a Listener changes the prisoners who become Listeners in any way?
- What do you think would help the Listener scheme to run better in this prison?
- Do you have any concerns or reservations about Listeners or the scheme?
- What is your view of peer support/mentoring schemes in general? What are the benefits, problems or risks with these kinds of schemes?

**Adoption of the Listener scheme:**

- Can you describe to me how the Listener scheme was introduced into this prison?
- How was the scheme received when it was introduced?
- What sort of problems arose during the scheme's introduction?
- What advice would you give to prison staff in prisons thinking about adopting the Listener scheme?



## A5.4 Letter from the NRC 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008



Name  
Deputy Head  
Business Change Support Team  
BCST Building  
Full Sutton  
YORK YO41 1PS

Michelle Jaffe  
Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice  
Claus Moser Research Centre 2.20  
Keele University  
Staffordshire  
ST5 5BG

18th December 08

**Title: Peer Support in Prison Communities: The Listener Scheme in England and Wales.**

Reference: 44/08

Dear Ms Jaffe

Thank you for your application to undertake research in HM Prison Service which has now been considered. The National Research Committee (NRC) recognises the importance of research in this area for both operational and academic reasons. The committee is therefore keen to support research into schemes such as the Listeners, however the committee does have some concerns about the methodology of the proposed study. In light of these concerns the NRC has not approved the current proposal.

The NRC concerns related particularly to issues of scope and sampling, and consequently the style of research. I have attached a summary of the issues which I hope is helpful. The NRC would be happy to consider a further proposal which addresses these matters. I am aware that you have already spoken to the Safer Custody Group, and know that they would be happy to discuss an amended proposal with you.



Yours sincerely

Deputy head  
Business Change Support Team  
Chair of the NRC

Cc: NRC  
SCOP

### **Issues identified**

The purpose of surveying 60 respondents in each prison is not clear from the proposal. Is the hypothesis that there will be some difference between types of establishment in the way the Listener scheme operates or in its impact? If so, the sample sizes proposed and the sampling technique would not be adequate for this purpose. Similarly, they would be inadequate for any other comparison between prisons and between groups. Partly, this is because the sample sizes are too small but also because they are not random samples, so standard statistical tests could not be applied to them anyway.

The proposal suggests using five prisons which all differ in their nature and hence cannot be meaningfully compared. Within each prison, it is planned to interview three staff - one prison officer, one safer custody officer, and one Governor grade. The proposal needs to clarify that the views thus obtained may represent the way the scheme operates within that prison, but cannot be taken to apply to other prisons of the same type (e.g. other female prisons).

It was not clear what type of qualitative analysis was planned on the interview data. The fact that the interviewees for the semi-structured interviews are all different rules out some qualitative analyses - e.g. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis - which requires the interviewees to be as similar as possible. As the participants cannot really be aggregated this also rules out content analysis.

The last research question indicates that the study will report on the effects and outcomes of the Listener Scheme. It is not clear what is being looked for in terms of measures of effects or impact or which data would be used to answer this question.

The research proposal does not refer to the methodological issues and sensitivities which are created by the nature of the subject matter or describe how these will be addressed. For example the proposed sampling includes a subgroup of prisoners who have spoken to a listener about a problem. The inclusion of such prisoners presents particular issues, for example relating to confidentiality. Also, if a prisoner has seen a listener in the recent past the issues that were causing distress may still be occurring. How these matters would be dealt with is not explained in the proposal.



### **Suggestions**

The scope of the project needs to be rethought. As noted above, there are considerable sampling issues connected with the questionnaire survey of prisoners. The most practical option would be to remove the quantitative element of the study and recast this part of the research as qualitative in nature. This would enable a feel to be gained for the way the scheme operates in each prison from talking to small numbers of prisoners in depth, who had either used or heard about the scheme. It is not clear what the purpose would be of asking one group of prisoners about the scheme in other prisons they had been in, if the main aim is to gain an appreciation of how the scheme operates in their current prison. Interviews with prisoners who had not heard of the scheme could be included to gauge the nature of the demand for the scheme and preferences for how it should be delivered.

The numbers for the semi-structured interviews would be fine if the participants were more similar. One solution might be to narrow down the scope of the study to one type of establishment (perhaps that in which the problem of self harm is the highest). Data could then be collected in five prisons of that type. Although the study would not then generalise to other types of prisons, it would be much more authoritative about the type of prison studied.

An analysis plan needs to be provided which shows what data will be used to answer each of the research questions and how that data will be analysed (specifying what statistical or qualitative techniques will be used each time).



## A5.5 Letter from the NRC 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009



Chair of the NRC  
Business Change Support Team  
BCST Building  
Full Sutton

Michelle Jaffe  
PhD Research Student  
Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice  
Claus Moser Research Centre 2.20  
Keele University  
Staffordshire  
ST5 5BG

5<sup>th</sup> August 09

Title: Peer support in Prison Communities: The Listener Scheme in England and Wales

Reference: 44/08 V2

Dear Miss Jaffe,

Further to our letter of 8<sup>th</sup> July 09 regarding your application to undertake research in HM Prison Service.

The National Research Committee (NRC) has considered your application with advice from the relevant Headquarters Policy Group and has taken into account that you have satisfactorily addressed many of the previous concerns. To enable the committee to make a final decision they require some further information and clarification on the following;

The NRC would like a further justification of your choice of establishments:



- Would the possible inclusion of an establishment which does not operate the Listener scheme for comparison benefit the research outcomes?
- Can you please give clear reasons for choosing the three establishments?
- The reserve list includes an open prison which will have a low demand for the Listener scheme.

The NRC considers that with some amendments there could be a clearer outcome which would be more robust in informing the development of safer custody policies:

- The possible inclusion of at least one other peer support scheme into the research proposal for comparison i.e. Insiders. Could the questionnaire have additional questions incorporated?
- The committee have a slight concern regarding the sample size.
- The sampling of staff is not fully explained.
- An explanation as to if prisoners are interested in becoming peer mentors on release, who will be handling the request or if the information will be used for recruitment purposes by the Samaritans.
- The committee notes that you have recognised the need to sift out the ‘at risk’ prisoner subject to ACCT, but would like to see reference to the post closure period.

Would you please kindly forward this information to the NRC as soon as possible to enable the committee to make a final decision.

Yours sincerely

Chair of the NRC  
Business Change Support Team

Cc: NRC



## A5.6 Response to the NRC 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009



Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice

Chair  
National Research Committee  
Deputy Head, Business Change Support Team  
BCST Building  
Full Sutton  
York  
YO41 1PS

Michelle Jaffe  
PhD Research Student  
RI for Law Politics and Justice  
Claus Moser Research Centre 2.20  
Keele University  
Staffordshire  
ST5 5BG

Telephone: 07834 981 436  
Email: [m.m.jaffe@ilpj.keele.ac.uk](mailto:m.m.jaffe@ilpj.keele.ac.uk)

7<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Dear [Chair of the NRC],

**RE: Reapplication ‘Peer Support in Prison Communities: The Listener Scheme in England and Wales’ (Ref: 44/08 V2)**

Thank you for your letter of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009 regarding my reapplication to undertake research in HM Prison Service. I was encouraged to hear that the National Research Committee felt that I had ‘satisfactorily addressed many of the previous concerns’. I am writing in order to respond to the questions and requests for further information as outlined in your letter. Each point where further information was requested is addressed below:



**With reference to the request for further justification of the choice of establishments:**

***Would the possible inclusion of an establishment which does not operate the Listener scheme for comparison benefit the research outcomes?***

The research team at Keele University have considered the suggestion to include an establishment which does not operate the scheme and have decided that on balance it would not be beneficial to the research aims and objectives to do so. The research has been designed to focus on the operation of the Listener peer support scheme as an example of peer support, therefore the strategic selection of the establishments has been designed to target establishments where Listener peer support scheme is currently operating. We believe that the proposed approach outlined in the application to the committee will maintain the core objective of the research for my PhD thesis which is to conduct in-depth research on the operation of peer support schemes in prison communities. However, a beneficial comparison can be amply addressed by including another peer support scheme in the research, namely the Insiders, as suggested by the committee; therefore an additional establishment can be selected to consider the operation of Insiders as well as Listeners (details can be found below).

***Can you please give clear reasons for choosing the three establishments?***

The previous application addressed the Committee's concerns in a detailed and comprehensive fashion. We also requested some further clarification from the Committee as to the precise nature of this query in their feedback. As we have not received any additional guidance on this comment, we have reasonably surmised that the committee requires the following supplementary information from us. The strategic selection criteria have been designed to reflect the different prisoner groups within the prisoner population (see pages 16-17) as it is recognised that different prisoner groups may experience unique problems, have different needs, and exhibit different coping strategies (page 4). The selection of a male establishment, a female establishment and a young offender's institution, ensure that gender and age are represented and further the random sample for the survey of prisoners aims to reflect the diversity in terms of ethnicity. The overall aim is to 'provide a greater understanding of the specific conditions of peer support schemes with different prisoner groups' (page 16). The selection strategy has been designed in response to the prison literature which has highlighted the importance of considering issues relevant and specific to both women and men and furthermore issues relevant to different age groups (see Liebling's 2004 study of prisons and their moral performance where age was one of the key selection criteria). The selection criteria aims to reflect the diversity of prisoner groups in the prison system, and will yield robust data which can be used to highlight issues of relevance to these different prisoner groups.

All of the selected establishments operate Listener schemes; they ensure the representation of women, men and young offenders, in the research (and further to this as noted above, ethnicity); they are not associated with low levels of use of the scheme (verified by data on the numbers of Listener contacts and clarified by the removal of the open prison from the reserve list – please see below); and further to this I have made contacts at these establishments who can facilitate access. The reserve establishments have been selected on the basis that they have similar characteristics to the selected establishments.



***The reserve list includes an open prison which will have a low demand for the Listener scheme***

This observation made by the National Research Committee has been noted and discussed; it has been agreed that the open prison will be omitted from the reserve list and replaced by another male establishment to ensure that establishments associated with low demand for the Listener scheme are omitted from the strategic selection. Please see attachment 1 for the amended prison selection list.

**With reference to the amendments recommended to inform the development of safer custody policies:**

***The possible inclusion of at least one other peer support scheme into the research proposal for comparison i.e. Insiders. Could the questionnaire have additional questions incorporated?***

The research team at Keele University agree with the Committee's suggestion to include another scheme such as 'Insiders' in the research. Some useful insights can be gained from examining different peer support/mentoring schemes. At the same time, we are cognisant that the inclusion of the Insiders scheme has additional implications for gaining access to a prison running such a scheme and for the practicalities of conducting the research within realistic timeframe for completing the fieldwork. Consequently, we propose to select one further additional establishment in which the Insiders scheme will be researched. Moreover, we respectfully submit to the committee that the research be reasonably and realistically focused on one establishment for the following reasons:

- As noted above, the inclusion of Insiders has implications for gaining access to an establishment running the scheme. It is our view that the assistance of the Safer Custody and Offender Policy Group in this regard is essential. To this end, I have written to SCOP (14<sup>th</sup> August 2009) asking for help and support in identifying which establishments currently operate Insiders, suggestions for any establishments which would be particularly worthwhile researching to yield sufficient data and outcomes, and contact details of the co-ordinators of Insiders in those establishments. Given the previous cooperative atmosphere I have experienced with the Safer Custody and Offender Policy Group, I am confident of a positive and supportive response.
- The inclusion of research on Insiders is an additional element to the original research project, and, while it can be productively incorporated, should not become a dominant feature of the research.
- Conducting research on Insiders in one additional establishment will enable the process to be completed in a timely and methodical fashion.
- The research team at Keele agree that the inclusion of Insiders as a scoping exercise will yield very useful preliminary insights and data as a basis for future comparative research between different peer support/mentoring schemes. However such comparative research will be most beneficial once robust knowledge about peer support in prisons has been generated, the latter of which is the primary aim of this PhD research.

Therefore whilst the inclusion of the Insiders element in the research will yield valuable data, the research design nevertheless remains robust should access not be granted for an additional establishment to research Insiders.



In response to the Committee's suggestion for additional questions to be incorporated into the questionnaire, we have taken the following action: In each of the four different questionnaires (1 – for prisoners who have not heard of the Listener scheme, 2 – for prisoners who have heard of but not used the Listener scheme, 3 – for prisoners who have used the Listener scheme in this prison, 4 – for prisoners who have used the scheme in another prison), three additional questions were included:

1. The first set of questions makes enquiries into the knowledge and usage of other peer support schemes such as Insiders or Buddies for example;
2. The last question concerns their willingness to become another sort of peer supporter such as an Insider.

(Please see attachment 2 for the amended questionnaires). In these questions, different schemes will be presented to respondents which will allow them to express their preference for other peer support schemes such as Insiders, this information can be used to gauge the representation of different schemes. If access is granted to an establishment operating Insiders, all questionnaires will be adapted to focus on Insiders. This will yield information on knowledge and usage of the Insiders scheme. Accordingly access to another establishment is desirable in order to achieve comparable data, we suggest access be sought to a male establishment for this purpose.

***The committee have a slight concern regarding the sample size***

As described in the application, and above, the key aim of the strategic selection of the establishments is to achieve a sample which reflects the diversity of the different prisoner groups across the England and Wales prison system. The research team at Keele agree that a total of 300 questionnaires (70-80) in each establishment is sufficient for such analyses. Liebling (2004) obtained sample size of approximately 100 in each establishment which is a sufficient sample size to enable comparisons between establishments. In each prison visited, a maximum of 100 completed questionnaires will be obtained where possible given the restrictions of time and the ability of the establishment to facilitate the distribution and collection of the questionnaires.

***The sampling of staff is not fully explained***

During the initial visit to each establishment, staff who are involved in facilitating the scheme or who were involved when the scheme was adopted may be approached for an interview. For example, the following different types of staff involvement with Listeners and the scheme encompasses as follows:

- Officers facilitating the movement of Listeners to their callers during the day and night;
- Safer Custody Managers overseeing the operation of the scheme;
- Members of prison staff who recall or were involved when the scheme was introduced into the establishment;
- Induction wing or healthcare staff who have regular contact with visiting or resident Listeners;
- Wing staff on enhanced wings where Listeners tend to be resident;
- Officers, Chaplains, healthcare staff, or counsellor's for example who have made referrals for prisoners to see Listeners.

Therefore once staff with involvement such as that listed above have been identified, three members of staff will be selected and approached to take part in an interview. The aim of the expert interviews with prison staff is to generate a wide range of perspectives and experiences



with the scheme and as prison staff are addressed as experts in the research, they are selected according to the expertise they have about the scheme. The strategy for the selection of staff for interviews has been devised to yield valuable and robust data whilst also taking into account the practical difficulties in arranging interviews during a busy routine and changing shift patterns or roles. It can also be noted that the same method of selection of prison staff can be applied in the establishment visited to research Insiders.

***An explanation as to whether prisoners are interested in becoming peer mentors on release, who will be handling the request or if the information will be used for recruitment purposes by the Samaritans***

The question on whether prisoners are interested in becoming Listeners or peer mentors has been incorporated into the questionnaire to generate data on proportions of prisoners who do, and do not want to, participate in a peer support activity in prison or when they have been released. It is impossible to pass on the names of such prisoners to Samaritans or other organisations, and further to this is not the aim of the research to use any data for recruitment purposes. All questionnaires and interviews will be confidential and fully anonymised immediately upon their return to the researcher (page 24); this procedure makes it impossible to forward any names of prisoners because there is no name attached to a questionnaire. Therefore never can any information be forwarded to any institution, organisation or person.

***The committee notes that you have recognised the need to sift out the ‘at risk’ prisoner subject to ACCT, but would like to see reference to the post closure period.***

The assumption has been made that the Committee are referring to the treatment and inclusion of prisoners in the research who have previously been under ACCT assessment. As outlined in the application (pages 23-25) the following measures have been put in place to ensure the protection of the well-being of all respondents is prioritised at all times:

- Emphasis will be placed on the voluntary nature of participation in the research, the right to withdrawn at any point and to choose not to answer a question (page 23);
- Prisoners deemed at risk, or deemed unable to provide informed consent, by prison staff will not be approached to take part in an interview (page 23 and 25). This will ensure that those who are currently on an ACCT will be excluded. Further to this, if prison staff feel that taking part in an interviews may raise difficult issues for a prisoner who has previously been on ACCT, then those prisoners would not be invited for an interview.
- The interviews avoid in-depth probing of personal experiences and focus more on the prisoner’s perspective on issues such as access to the scheme and views towards Listeners (page 24), and further to this, the large majority of the data generated from prisoners is via the questionnaire which is less intrusive.
- Should a prisoner appear to become uncomfortable or distressed, the interview will be stopped immediately (page 24). My experience at the first establishment visited however, has provided evidence that prisoners enjoyed taking part in the research.
- Where a prisoner is considered at risk to themselves or others, the relevant member of staff will be notified (page 25) and this is explainers prior to their taking part in the research during the procedure for obtaining full informed consent.
- A de-brief strategy will be put in place in each establishment to ensure prisoners have access to a range post-interview support mechanisms at the establishment – all interviewees will be offered this support.



The research team at Keele University look forward to receiving a positive response from the NRC in relation to the further information provided above. Please do not hesitate to contact me or the supervisory team at Keele University should you wish to discuss anything further. I would be extremely grateful if you could confirm receipt of this letter by return email and further to this, notification of a date when I can expect to receive a decision by.

Yours Sincerely

Michelle Jaffe

PhD Research Student, Keele University

Attachments: 1 – Prison selection list, 2 - Questionnaires



## **A5.7 Responses to the points raised by SCOP 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

SCOP emailed myself, Michelle Jaffe [MJ] on 2.37pm, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, asking that I call with respect to my application to the NRC, which was meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>. SCOP highlighted the following areas as those which would be raised with the National Research Committee as requiring further clarification/assurance. SCOP suggested that MJ provide a response to these points which she would be raising with the NRC to enable the final decision to be made.

The following memorandum offers a response to SCOP's points.

1. On the issue of prison selection: SCOP felt that the absence of a local prison was strange and suggested that it would be beneficial to include one in the study. I verbally explained that the establishment where the research had been piloted and conducted was a local prison and hoped that this resolved the concern. Further to this point, I wish to add here that the initial reasons for excluding a local prison were because of three problems. Firstly, the high turnover/transfer rate means that it is difficult to ensure continuity in the research process, where prisoners may be moved to other establishments. Secondly, the high proportion of remand prisoners in local prisons creates similar problems, as well as presenting other challenges with regards to their vulnerability. Thirdly, there are specific and acute implications for staff resourcing and supports which affect local prisons.

In answer to my verbal explanation, SCOP stated that it would depend on whether it was data which was going to be used for the final thesis or not, and also noted that a couple of additional questions had been added to the questionnaire since then and that this might pose a problem.

The piloting of the questionnaires in the local prison occurred when the research instruments were substantially developed. During the cognitive interviewing, when I sought prisoners' responses to the questionnaires, there was an extremely high success rate with respondents saying that the questionnaire was easy to complete and relevant to issues in prison for them.

With respect to the contribution which the data gathered in the local prison will make to the overall thesis. The data gathered in the pilot proved to be very robust. Subsequently, the full research was conducted in that establishment. Once again, the questionnaires proved to be extremely robust, with over 90 per cent completion rate among prisoners who agreed to complete the questionnaire. For prisoners that were unable to complete the questionnaire, I conducted an interview version of same questionnaire.

Regarding the addition of three questions. This had been done at the request of the NRC, which wanted me to include an element that addressed take-up among other peer support schemes. The additional questions will be used in conducting future research in the prisons, and will generate data which will inform policy about prisoners' awareness of/preferences for different peer support schemes.



2. Inclusion of staff in the research: SCOP suggested that they were convinced that the inclusion of staff in the research was a worthwhile exercise, and that other than the Safer Custody Manager/Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator that there were few staff who could be classed as ‘experts’. Furthermore, SCOP felt that the element was methodologically weak and not defensible. If it were to be pursued and not omitted from the research, MJ would need to provide a robust methodology including the sampling and research process and a description of how the findings will be used.

In answering this concern, I refer the committee back to my letter of September 7th, under section: ‘the sampling of staff’, p4. To briefly summarise the argument here, I have provided the committee with a list of staff who can be regarded as ‘experts’ on the basis of contact with, and knowledge of, the operation of peer support schemes in their prisons. To refer to my original application, I have used the definition of ‘expert interviews’ to refer to a body of generalisable expertise and shareable social knowledge. This, according to the recognised definition of expertise, is a body of knowledge that is not unique but is shared between individuals with access to similar experience and training.

Regarding the issue of selection. The application has proposed a balance of methods to include both ‘sampling’ which is relevant to quantitative, and selection, which is relevant to the qualitative element of the research. Hence, we have proposed that the quantitative sampling through gathering data via questionnaires is complemented with the selection of interviewees.

The use and value of these data will be to identify problems and how they will be resolved (for example, operational, or Listeners). The data will show how staff facilitate the scheme in different prison settings. It is relevant to addressing such issues as to how schemes are adopted.

3. Prisoners who have been on ACCT: SCOP stated that it would be necessary to exclude prisoners who have been on an ACCT within the previous 7 days as this was considered a high risk period. This is fully acceptable and will be adopted, as indicated in my letter of September 7<sup>th</sup>.
4. Funding and project completion: SCOP asked about the remaining duration of the funding for this project, stressing that this was important in order to see the project come to fruition.

In response to this concern, I am registered for a PhD under the auspices of the Research Institute of Law, Politics and Justice, Keele University. The institute has been paying my fees. I have registered on a full-time basis for this project, and have received confirmation in writing that I will continue to be supervised as previously.

5. Selection of prisons with ‘Insiders’ schemes: SCOP also suggested that Preston would be an establishment worthy of researching, and that MJ could also consider approaching Bedford and Littlehey, all of which operate ‘Insiders’ schemes.



This is very valuable support from the SCOP. As indicated in my letter of September 7<sup>th</sup>, I will pursue this avenue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Jaffe  
PhD Research Student  
Keele University

Dr Mary Corcoran  
Supervisor  
Centre for Criminological research  
Keele University



## A5.8 Information sheets and consent forms

### INFORMATION SHEET

Hello my name is Michelle Jaffe and I am doing research at Keele University.



#### **What is this research about?**

This research is about how prisoners seek help and support, and who prisoners turn to when they have a problem in this prison. The results of the research will be shared with a view to providing better services to prisoners in need.

#### **What will the questionnaire ask you?**

This questionnaire will ask you about your experiences of seeking and receiving help and support in prison. Your experiences and thoughts about this are very important so make your voice heard! This questionnaire is a good way to do exactly that.

#### **This is important for you to know:**

**1. Will my data be kept safe and confidential?** Yes, all of the questionnaires will be collected in sealed envelopes so that nobody in this prison can see them. They will be brought to Keele University where they will be stored safely and securely. Each questionnaire will be given a number, and your name will show nowhere on the questionnaire. Nobody, not even the researcher can tell who completed it.

#### **2. How do I fill in this questionnaire?**

Please read every question carefully. Please follow the directions for each question. If you change your mind, just cross it out and put a tick in the correct box. Please return your completed questionnaire to me.

You may be asked if you would like to take part in an interview about your experiences, if you are willing to do this, please fill in your details on the sheet enclosed and I will contact you about this later.



Please contact me if you need any help in completing this questionnaire or if you have any questions. You can also contact ..... based at this prison.

*Thank you very much for your help!*

*Michelle Jaffe*

*Keele University*





***Please sign this and return in the envelope with your questionnaire:***

I understand all of the terms and conditions of the research and have agreed to take part in the research by completing the questionnaire.

Signature: .....

Date: .....



<b>INFORMATION SHEET</b>
--------------------------



**Thank you!**

Thank you for completing the questionnaire and agreeing to be interviewed about your experience of talking to a Listener.

**What is this interview about?**

This research is about how prisoners might seek out help and support in prison, particularly experiences of using the Listener scheme. In this interview I would like to ask you about how you came to talk to a Listener, how you found that experience, and how you felt afterwards. I hope that you enjoy being interviewed, however if anything we talk about brings back any feelings you think you need to talk to someone about (such as a prison officer, or a Chaplain) please let me know.

**Will my data be kept safe and confidential?**

The interview will be recorded and kept strictly confidential; it will not be shown or played to anyone else. What you say will be written down. These data will be stored safely at Keele University and given a code so that no one can identify you. Some of what you have said might be used in the research report. What you have said can never be linked to you. There is only one exception to it: If you tell me you intend to harm yourself or others, I have to tell a prison officer about this. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to answer a question at any time or to withdraw from the interview – the information you had given would be destroyed and not used.

**Do you have any questions?**

Please feel free to ask me any questions right now you have about the research. If you have any questions later on, please get in touch with .....  
based at this prison.

*Thank you for your time,*

*Michelle Jaffe*

*Keele University*





I agree to take part in this interview about my experiences of speaking to a Listener which is being conducted by Michelle Jaffe from Keele University.

The research has been explained to me and I fully understand what I am being asked to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and am fully aware that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time. I am fully aware that if I have any problems I may contact Michelle Jaffe or .....

I understand that taking part in this research involves the following things:

- Any information given by myself may be recorded for purposes of the research only;
- Any information I provide is confidential and will be stored safely and securely;
- The interview will be recorded;
- Only anonymous quotes that cannot be linked back to me will be used;
- No information that could lead to identification of any individual will be quoted in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

***Interviewee:***

Name (please print):

.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

***Interviewer:***

Name (please print):

.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....





**Thank you!**

Thank you for taking part in an interview to talk about your experiences of talking to a Listener with me.

**Do you need to talk to someone?**

I hope that you have enjoyed being interviewed and talking about your experiences with me. However, if talking to me about your experience has brought back any upsetting issues for you, please let me know if you would like me to put you in touch with someone at this prison you want to talk about it with. Examples might be:

- A prison officer
- A prison psychologist
- A Listener
- A prison Chaplain

Please let me know if you need to talk to someone and I will let them know.

**Do you have any more questions?**

Please feel free to ask me any more questions now or if you have any questions later on, please let me know. You can also get in touch with ..... based at this prison.

Once again, many thanks for help with this research

*Michelle Jaffe*

*Keele University*



<b>INFORMATION SHEET</b>
--------------------------



**Hello**, my name is Michelle Jaffe and I am doing research at Keele University in Staffordshire.

**What is this research about?**

This research is about how prisoners seek help and support, and who prisoners turn to when they have a problem in this prison. Your experiences and thoughts about this are very important so make your voice heard!

**What is this interview about?**

I would like to interview you about your experiences of being a Listener, of helping other prisoners, and how becoming a Listener has impacted on your life in prison so far. This research has the full support of Samaritans, but it is an independent project.

**Will my data be kept safe and confidential?**

The interview will be recorded and kept strictly confidential; it will not be shown or played to anyone else. What you say will be written down. These data will be stored safely at Keele University and given a code so that no one can identify you. Some of what you have said might be used in the research report. What you have said can never be linked to you. There is only one exception to it: If you tell me you intend to harm yourself or others, I have to tell a prison officer about this. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to answer a question at any time or to withdraw from the interview – the information you had given would be destroyed and not used.

**Do you have any questions?**

Please feel free to ask me any questions right now you have about the research. If you have any questions later on, you can also get in touch with .....  
based at this prison.

*Thank you for your time*

*Michelle Jaffe, Keele University*





I agree to take part in this interview about my experiences of being a Listener which is being conducted by Michelle Jaffe from Keele University.

The research has been explained to me and I fully understand what I am being asked to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and am fully aware that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time. I am fully aware that if I have any problems I may contact Michelle Jaffe or .....

I understand that taking part in this research involves the following things:

- Any information given by myself may be recorded for purposes of the research only;
- Any information I provide is confidential and will be stored safely and securely;
- The interview will be recorded;
- Only anonymous quotes that cannot be linked back to me will be used;
- No information that could lead to identification of any individual will be quoted in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

***Interviewee:***

Name (please print):

.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

***Interviewer:***

Name (please print):

.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....



<b>INFORMATION SHEET</b>
--------------------------



My name is Michelle Jaffe and I am doing research at Keele University in Staffordshire.

**What is this research about?**

This research is about how prisoners seek help and support, who prisoners turn to when they have a problem, and in particular the Listener scheme. It is important to listen to the voices of prison staff and their experiences with and opinion about the scheme. This research is fully supported by Samaritans but is an independent piece of research.

**Confidentiality**

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to answer a question at any time or to withdraw from the research. The interviews will be recorded and kept strictly confidential. All interview transcripts will be anonymised by codes, pseudonymised, and the list of codes and names/pseudonyms will be stored separately from the interview data. Any quote I wish to use in a publication will be submitted for your approval before publication. Any quotes that may be used in publications will only mention the type of establishment, and position or rank of the person who said it. After the final publication all identifiable data will be deleted.

**Do you have any questions?**

Please feel free to ask me any questions you have about the research and taking part in it. If you would like to contact me at a later date, please see my contact details below.

Thank you for your time

*Michelle Jaffe*

*Research Institute for Law, Politics and Justice,  
Keele University  
Staffordshire  
ST5 5BG.  
Telephone: 01782 733 934  
Email: m.m.jaffe@ilpj.keele.ac.uk*





I agree to take part in this interview about my experiences with the Listener scheme as a member of prison staff which is being conducted by Michelle Jaffe from Keele University.

The research has been fully explained to me and I fully understand what I am being asked to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and am fully aware that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time. I am fully aware that if I have any questions I can contact Michelle Jaffe directly.

I understand that taking part in this research involves the following things:

- Any information given by myself may be recorded for purposes of the research only;
- The interview will be tape recorded;
- Any information I provide is confidential and will be stored securely and safely at Keele University;
- That I will be contacted for my consent for quotes to be used in any publications;
- I am entitled to view the final piece of work on request;

**Interviewee:**

Name (please print):

.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

**Contact Details:**

Email: .....

Telephone: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

**Interviewer:**

Name (please print):

.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....



## **Appendix – Chapter 6**

### **(A6)**

**A6.1** Contact intensity with the outside scale

**A6.2** Contact with the outside and individual/career variables

**A6.3** Levels of self-reported help-seeking intentions scale

**A6.4** Types of problems, help-seeking intentions and individual/career variables

**A6.5** Intentions to seek help from people on the outside scale

**A6.6** Intentions to seek help from prison staff scale

**A6.7** Intentions to seek help from prisoners scale

**A6.8** Confidence and mastery

**A6.9** Prisoner proactivity scale

**A6.10** Personal relationships with officers

**A6.11** Personal relationships with prisoners

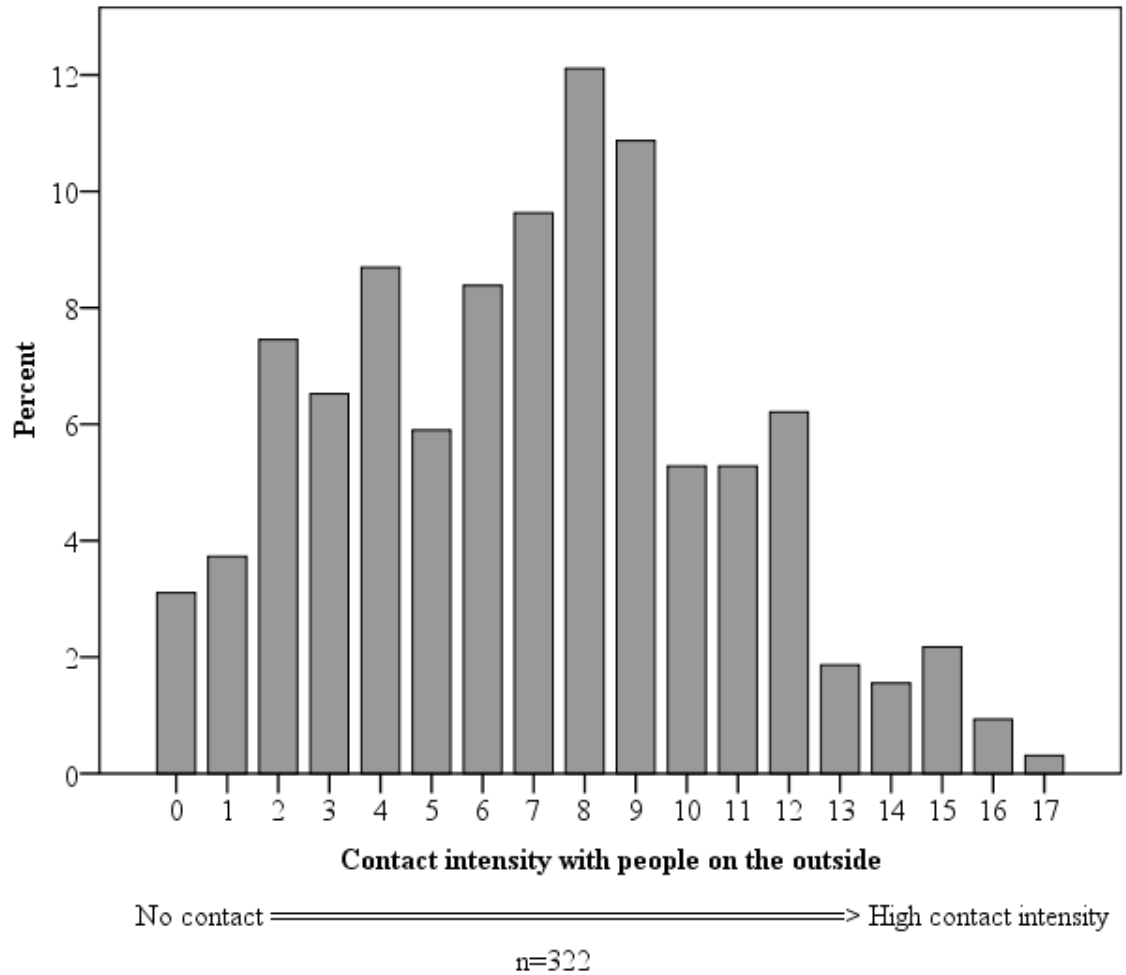
**A6.12** Perceptions of prisoner-officer social relations

**A6.13** Perceptions of prisoner social relations



## A6.1 Contact intensity with the outside scale

*Figure A6.1 – Distribution of the contact intensity with the outside scale*



*Table A6.1 – Descriptive statistics for the contact intensity with the outside scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	6.99
Median	7.00
Mode	8



## A6.2 Contact with the outside and demographic variables

The tables below compare social demographic differences between groups for whether they had contact with each group on the outside by one of more form (i.e. visits, phone, letter), or not at all. For purposes of these comparisons, prisoners for whom the group on the outside does not apply were excluded from the analyses.

*Table A6.2 – Contact with the outside and age*

	<b>18-30 years</b>	<b>31+ years</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Partner</b>	95.5% (109)	83.9% (52)	$\chi^2 = 8.621$ df = 1	<b>.003</b>	175
<b>Parents</b>	91.6% (185)	77.9% (60)	$\chi^2 = 9.274$ df = 1	<b>.002</b>	279
<b>Siblings</b>	87.2% (170)	70.5% (55)	$\chi^2 = 10.680$ df = 1	<b>.001</b>	273
<b>Children</b>	70.0% (56)	67.6% (50)	$\chi^2 = .106$ df = 1	.745	154
<b>Friends</b>	93.3% (174)	77.0% (67)	$\chi^2 = 1.582$ df = 1	.208	296

N.B. Table shows percentages of prisoners in contact with each group on the outside by one of more form.

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.3 – Contact with the outside and gender*

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Partner</b>	94.9% (37)	91.4% (127)	$\chi^2 = .516$ df = 1	.472	178
<b>Parents</b>	85.5% (53)	88.5% (193)	$\chi^2 = .420$ df = 1	.517	280
<b>Siblings</b>	76.3% (45)	84.3% (75)	$\chi^2 = 2.052$ df = 1	.152	275
<b>Children</b>	68.1% (32)	69.4% (75)	$\chi^2 = .025$ df = 1	.866	155
<b>Friends</b>	85.7% (60)	80.3% (184)	$\chi^2 = 1.028$ df = 1	.311	299

N.B. Table shows percentages of prisoners in contact with each group on the outside by one of more form.

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened

*Table A6.4 Contact with the outside and first language*

	<b>English</b>	<b>Not English</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Partner</b>	93.7% (149)	76.5% (13)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{6.234}$ df = 1	<b>.013</b>	176
<b>Parents</b>	89.5% (229)	68.2% (15)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{8.539}$ df = 1	<b>.003</b>	278
<b>Siblings</b>	83.5% (207)	72.0% (18)	$\chi^2 = 2.061$ df = 1	.151	273
<b>Children</b>	69.7% (99)	58.3% (7)	$\chi^2 = .669$ df = 1	.414	154
<b>Friends</b>	83.0% (224)	66.7% (18)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{4.320}$ df = 1	<b>.038</b>	297

N.B. Table shows percentages of prisoners in contact with each group on the outside by one of more form.

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.5 Contact with the outside and ethnicity*

	<b>White British</b>	<b>White European</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Partner</b>	92.8% (99)	81.8% (9)	81.8% (9)	93.5% (29)	100.0% (6)	83.3% (5)	$\chi^2 = 4.345$ df = 5	.501	176
<b>Parents</b>	90.2% (157)	76.9% (10)	81.8% (36)	92.6% (25)	83.3% (10)	87.5% (7)	$\chi^2 = 4.751$ df = 5	.447	279
<b>Siblings</b>	80.1% (133)	78.6% (11)	91.1% (41)	89.3% (25)	75.0% (9)	87.5% (7)	$\chi^2 = 4.655$ df = 5	.459	273
<b>Children</b>	68.6% (70)	42.9% (3)	66.7% (14)	78.6% (11)	80.0% (4)	100.0% (4)	$\chi^2 = 4.996$ df = 5	.416	153
<b>Friends</b>	82.7% (153)	66.7% (10)	81.3% (39)	78.6% (22)	84.6% (11)	87.5% (7)	$\chi^2 = 2.800$ df = 5	.731	297

N.B. Table shows percentages of prisoners in contact with each group on the outside by one of more form.  
 $p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.6 Contact with the outside and country of birth*

	<b>Born in Britain</b>	<b>Not Born in Britain</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Partner</b>	93.4% (141)	84.6% (22)	$\chi^2 = 2.338$ df = 1	.126	177
<b>Parents</b>	90.2% (220)	71.4% (25)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{10.040}$ df = 1	<b>.002</b>	279
<b>Siblings</b>	82.9% (194)	80.0% (32)	$\chi^2 = .200$ df = 1	.655	274
<b>Children</b>	69.8% (97)	60.0% (9)	$\chi^2 = .604$ df = 1	.437	154
<b>Friends</b>	82.4% (211)	76.2% (32)	$\chi^2 = .931$ df = 1	.335	298

N.B. Table shows percentages of prisoners in contact with each group on the outside by one of more form.

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

*Table A6.7 – Contact with the outside and prior imprisonment*

	<b>Not first time</b>	<b>First time</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Partner</b>	91.0% (91)	93.6% (73)	$\chi^2 = .406$ df = 1	.524	178
<b>Parents</b>	86.7% (137)	89.3% (109)	$\chi^2 = .448$ df = 1	.503	280
<b>Siblings</b>	81.6% (129)	83.8% (98)	$\chi^2 = .209$ df = 1	.648	275
<b>Children</b>	64.0% (57)	75.8% (50)	$\chi^2 = 2.432$ df = 1	.119	155
<b>Friends</b>	78.6% (132)	85.5% (112)	$\chi^2 = 2.351$ df = 1	.125	299

N.B. Table shows percentages of prisoners in contact with each group on the outside by one of more form.

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.8 – Contact with the outside and sentencing status*

	<b>Not sentenced</b>	<b>Sentenced</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Partner</b>	93.3% (56)	91.4% (106)	$\chi^2 = .206$ df = 1	.650	176
<b>Parents</b>	81.8% (63)	90.5% (182)	$\chi^2 = 4.055$ df = 1	<b>.044</b>	278
<b>Siblings</b>	79.7% (59)	83.4% (166)	$\chi^2 = .506$ df = 1	.477	273
<b>Children</b>	73.5% (36)	67.3% (70)	$\chi^2 = .594$ df = 1	.441	153
<b>Friends</b>	71.3% (62)	86.2% (181)	$\chi^2 = 9.213$ df = 1	<b>.002</b>	297

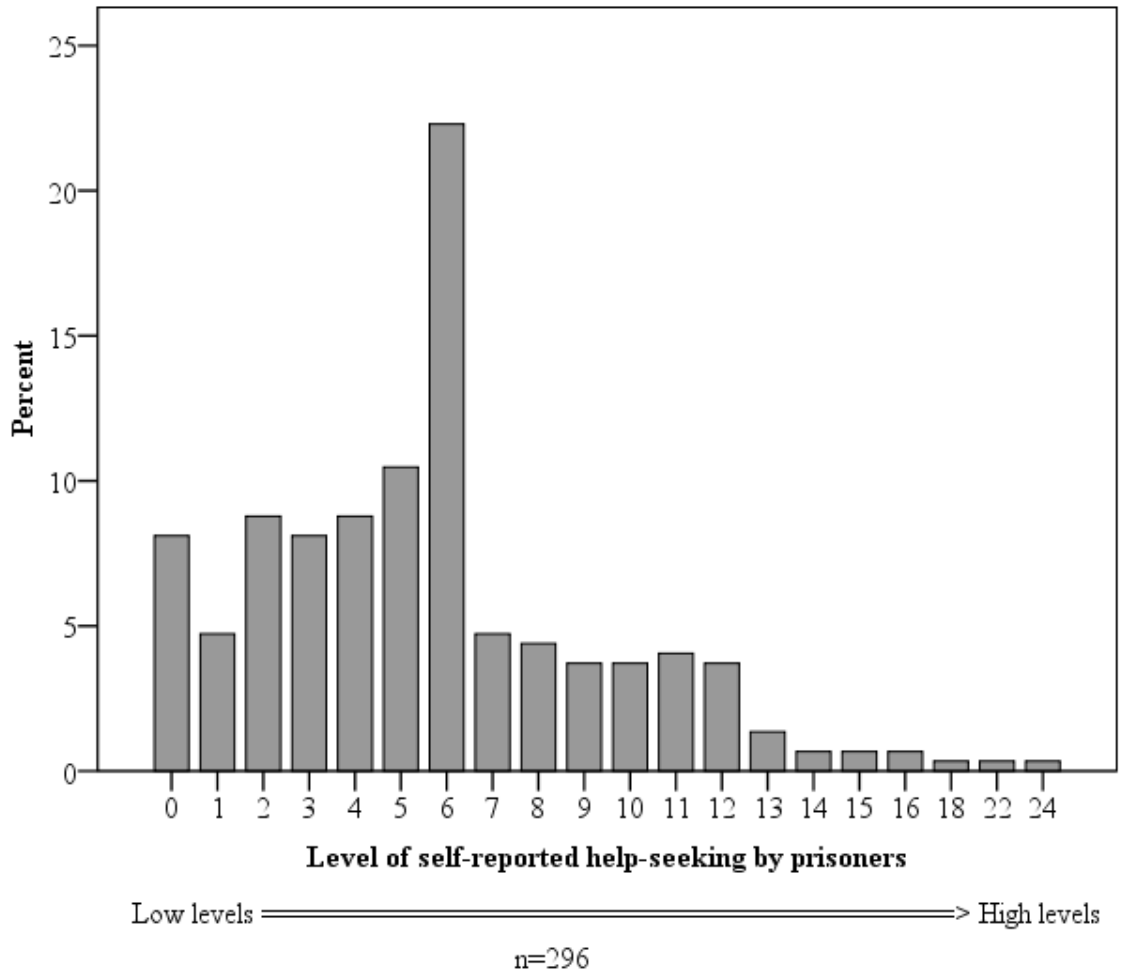
N.B. Table shows percentages of prisoners in contact with each group on the outside by one of more form.

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



### A6.3 Levels of self-reported help-seeking intentions scale

*Figure A6.2 – Distribution of the level of self-reported help-seeking intentions scale*



*Table A6.9 – Descriptive statistics for the level of self-reported help-seeking intentions scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	5.66
Median	6
Mode	6



## A6.4 Types of problems, help-seeking intentions and individual/career variables

*Table A6.10 – Help-seeking intentions and age group*

Problem	Source of support	18-30 years	31+ years	Statistics	n
Outside problems	None	28.5% (63)	30.2% (29)	$\chi^2 = .532$ df = 3 $p = .912$	317
	Inside only	19.5% (43)	18.8% (18)		
	Outside only	36.4% (81)	38.5% (37)		
	Inside and Outside	15.4% (34)	12.5% (12)		
Inside problems	None	29.9% (66)	29.8% (28)	$\chi^2 = 1.595$ df = 3 $p = .660$	315
	Inside only	52.5% (116)	54.4% (53)		
	Outside only	9.5% (21)	5.3% (5)		
	Inside and Outside	8.1% (18)	8.5% (8)		
Substance misuse problems	None	28.0% (60)	32.9% (27)	$\chi^2 = 2.513$ df = 3 $p = .473$	296
	Inside only	36.0% (77)	40.2% (33)		
	Outside only	20.6% (44)	17.1% (14)		
	Inside and Outside	15.4% (33)	9.8% (8)		
Offence problems	None	43.3% (94)	42.2% (38)	$\chi^2 = 1.069$ df = 3 $p = .785$	307
	Inside only	24.0% (52)	25.6% (23)		
	Outside only	20.3% (44)	23.3% (21)		
	Inside and Outside	12.4% (27)	8.9% (8)		
Changing life problems	None	17.4% (38)	29.3% (27)	$\chi^2 = 7.595$ df = 3 $p = .055$	311
	Inside only	20.5% (45)	23.9% (22)		
	Outside only	38.4% (84)	30.4% (28)		
	Inside and Outside	23.7% (52)	16.3% (15)		
Emotional or mental health problems	None	30.7% (67)	24.2% (22)	$\chi^2 = 3.273$ df = 3 $p = .351$	309
	Inside only	26.6% (58)	36.3% (33)		
	Outside only	25.2% (55)	22.0% (20)		
	Inside and Outside	17.4% (38)	17.6% (16)		

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.11 – Help-seeking intentions and gender*

Problem	Source of support	Men	Women	Statistics	n
Outside problems	None	31.5% (78)	22.2% (16)	$\chi^2 = 4.439$ df = 3 p = .218	320
	Inside only	17.7% (44)	23.6% (17)		
	Outside only	37.9% (94)	34.7% (25)		
	Inside and Outside	12.9% (32)	19.4% (14)		
Inside problems	None	33.5% (83)	17.1% (12)	$\chi^2 = 7.339$ df = 3 p = .062	318
	Inside only	51.2% (127)	61.4% (43)		
	Outside only	8.1% (20)	10.0% (7)		
	Inside and Outside	7.3% (18)	11.4% (8)		
Substance misuse problems	None	28.5% (67)	32.8% (21)	$\chi^2 = 4.308$ df = 3 p = .230	299
	Inside only	36.6% (86)	39.1% (25)		
	Outside only	22.1% (52)	10.9% (7)		
	Inside and Outside	12.8% (30)	17.2% (11)		
Offence problems	None	46.3% (112)	30.9% (21)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{8.521}$ df = 3 p = <b>.036</b>	310
	Inside only	21.1% (51)	35.3% (24)		
	Outside only	22.3% (54)	19.1% (13)		
	Inside and Outside	10.3% (25)	14.7% (10)		
Changing life problems	None	20.0% (49)	24.6% (17)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{9.291}$ df = 3 p = <b>.026</b>	314
	Inside only	18.8% (46)	30.4% (21)		
	Outside only	40.4% (99)	21.7% (15)		
	Inside and Outside	20.8% (51)	23.2% (16)		
Emotional or mental health problems	None	30.6% (74)	22.9% (16)	$\chi^2 = 5.419$ df = 3 p = .144	312
	Inside only	27.3% (66)	35.7% (25)		
	Outside only	26.4% (64)	18.6% (13)		
	Inside and Outside	15.7% (38)	22.9% (16)		

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.12 – Help-seeking intentions and first language*

Problem	Source of support	English first language	English not first language	Statistics	n
Outside problems	None	27.4% (80)	50.0% (13)	$\chi^2 = 7.169$ df = 3 p = .067	318
	Inside only	19.2% (56)	19.2% (5)		
	Outside only	38.0% (111)	26.9% (7)		
	Inside and Outside	15.4% (45)	3.8% (1)		
Inside problems	None	29.0% (84)	34.6% (9)	$\chi^2 = 5.718$ df = 3 p = .126	316
	Inside only	52.8% (153)	65.4% (17)		
	Outside only	9.3% (27)	0.0% (0)		
	Inside and Outside	9.0% (26)	0.0% (0)		
Substance misuse problems	None	26.5% (72)	56.0% (14)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{11.970}$ df = 3 p = <b>.007</b>	297
	Inside only	38.6% (105)	24.0% (6)		
	Outside only	19.9% (54)	20.0% (5)		
	Inside and Outside	15.1% (41)	0.0% (0)		
Offence problems	None	41.0% (116)	60.0% (15)	$\chi^2 = 5.459$ df = 3 p = .141	308
	Inside only	24.4% (69)	24.0% (6)		
	Outside only	22.3% (63)	16.0% (4)		
	Inside and Outside	12.4% (35)	0.0% (0)		
Changing life problems	None	18.9% (54)	38.5% (16)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{8.526}$ df = 3 p = <b>.036</b>	312
	Inside only	22.4% (64)	11.5% (3)		
	Outside only	36.0% (103)	42.3% (11)		
	Inside and Outside	22.7% (65)	7.7% (2)		
Emotional or mental health problems	None	28.5% (81)	26.9% (7)	$\chi^2 = 1.734$ df = 3 p = .629	310
	Inside only	29.6% (84)	26.7% (7)		
	Outside only	23.9% (68)	34.6% (9)		
	Inside and Outside	18.0% (51)	11.5% (3)		

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant result are emboldened.



*Table A6.13 – Help-seeking intentions and country of birth*

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Source of support</b>	<b>Born in Britain</b>	<b>Not Born in Britain</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>n</b>
Outside problems	None	27.0% (75)	46.3% (19)	$\chi^2 = 8.353$ df = 3 <b><math>p = .039</math></b>	319
	Inside only	20.5% (57)	9.8% (4)		
	Outside only	37.1% (103)	36.6% (15)		
	Inside and Outside	15.5% (43)	7.3% (3)		
Inside problems	None	30.4% (84)	24.4% (10)	$\chi^2 = 3.840$ df = 3 $p = .279$	317
	Inside only	51.8% (143)	35.9% (27)		
	Outside only	9.4% (26)	2.4% (1)		
	Inside and Outside	8.3% (23)	7.3% (3)		
Substance misuse problems	None	27.7% (72)	39.5% (15)	$\chi^2 = 2.435$ df = 3 $p = .487$	298
	Inside only	38.5% (100)	28.9% (11)		
	Outside only	20.0% (52)	18.4% (7)		
	Inside and Outside	13.8% (36)	13.2% (5)		
Offence problems	None	41.0% (111)	55.3% (21)	$\chi^2 = 3.400$ df = 3 $p = .334$	309
	Inside only	24.7% (67)	21.1% (8)		
	Outside only	22.1% (66)	18.4% (7)		
	Inside and Outside	12.2% (33)	5.3% (2)		
Changing life problems	None	18.7% (51)	35.0% (14)	$\chi^2 = 6.718$ df = 3 $p = .081$	313
	Inside only	22.7% (62)	12.5% (5)		
	Outside only	37.4% (102)	30.0% (12)		
	Inside and Outside	21.2% (58)	22.5% (9)		
Emotional or mental health problems	None	28.4% (77)	30.0% (12)	$\chi^2 = 1.257$ df = 3 $p = .739$	311
	Inside only	30.3% (82)	22.5% (9)		
	Outside only	24.0% (65)	30.0% (12)		
	Inside and Outside	17.3% (47)	17.5% (7)		

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.14 – Help-seeking intentions and prior imprisonment*

Problem	Source of support	First time	Not first time	Statistics	n
Outside problems	None	26.3% (36)	31.7% (58)	$\chi^2 = 2.192$ df = 3 $p = .533$	320
	Inside only	21.9% (30)	16.9% (31)		
	Outside only	38.7% (53)	36.1% (66)		
	Inside and Outside	13.1% (18)	15.3% (28)		
Inside problems	None	21.9% (30)	35.9% (65)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{11.515}$ df = 3 $p = \mathbf{.009}$	318
	Inside only	64.2% (88)	45.3% (82)		
	Outside only	7.3% (10)	9.4% (17)		
	Inside and Outside	6.6% (9)	9.4% (17)		
Substance misuse problems	None	30.2% (38)	28.9% (50)	$\chi^2 = 1.359$ df = 3 $p = .715$	299
	Inside only	35.7% (45)	38.2% (66)		
	Outside only	22.2% (28)	17.9% (31)		
	Inside and Outside	11.9% (15)	15.0% (26)		
Offence problems	None	43.9% (58)	42.1% (75)	$\chi^2 = 1.686$ df = 3 $p = .640$	310
	Inside only	22.0% (29)	25.8% (46)		
	Outside only	24.2% (32)	19.7% (35)		
	Inside and Outside	9.8% (13)	12.4% (22)		
Changing life problems	None	19.9% (27)	21.9% (39)	$\chi^2 = 1.903$ df = 3 $p = .593$	314
	Inside only	20.6% (28)	21.9% (39)		
	Outside only	40.4% (55)	33.1% (59)		
	Inside and Outside	19.1% (26)	23.0% (41)		
Emotional or mental health problems	None	25.9% (35)	31.1% (55)	$\chi^2 = 2.852$ df = 3 $p = .415$	312
	Inside only	29.6% (40)	28.8% (51)		
	Outside only	28.9% (39)	21.5% (38)		
	Inside and Outside	15.6% (21)	18.6% (33)		

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A6.15 – Help-seeking intentions and sentencing status*

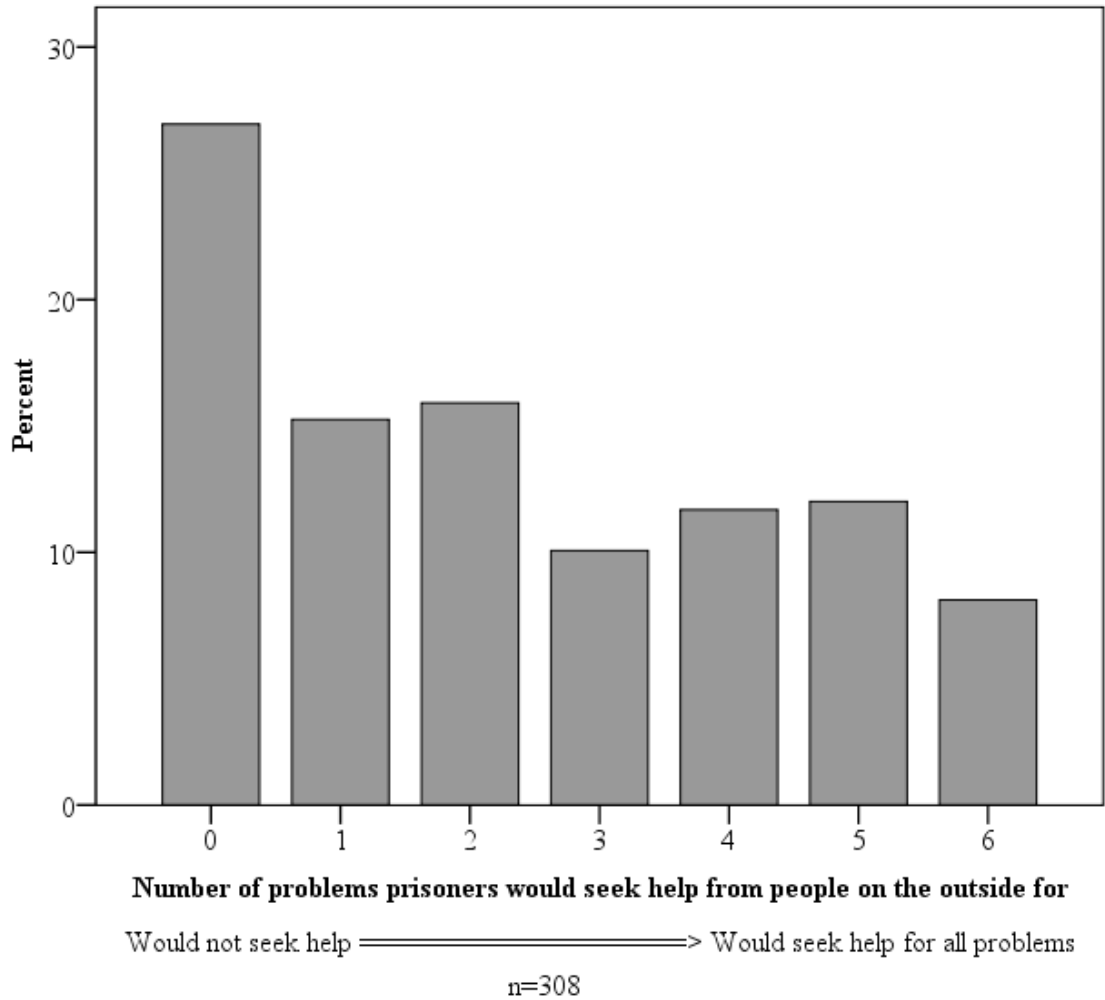
Problem	Source of support	Not sentenced	Sentenced	Statistics	n
Outside problems	None	40.7% (37)	24.8% (56)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{9.088}$ df = 3 $p = \mathbf{.028}$	317
	Inside only	19.8% (18)	19.0% (43)		
	Outside only	28.6% (18)	40.7% (92)		
	Inside and Outside	11.0% (10)	15.5% (35)		
Inside problems	None	29.7% (27)	29.9% (67)	$\chi^2 = 2.582$ df = 3 $p = .461$	315
	Inside only	50.5% (46)	54.5% (122)		
	Outside only	7.7% (7)	8.9% (20)		
	Inside and Outside	12.1% (11)	6.7% (15)		
Substance misuse problems	None	33.7% (29)	27.6% (58)	$\chi^2 = 1.198$ df = 3 $p = .753$	296
	Inside only	33.7% (29)	38.1% (80)		
	Outside only	18.6% (16)	20.5% (43)		
	Inside and Outside	14.0% (12)	13.8% (29)		
Offence problems	None	39.8% (35)	44.3% (97)	$\chi^2 = 1.407$ df = 3 $p = .704$	307
	Inside only	22.7% (20)	24.2% (53)		
	Outside only	26.1% (23)	20.1% (44)		
	Inside and Outside	11.4% (10)	11.4% (25)		
Changing life problems	None	25.6% (23)	19.0% (42)	$\chi^2 = 5.315$ df = 3 $p = .150$	311
	Inside only	26.7% (24)	19.0% (42)		
	Outside only	30.0% (27)	38.9% (86)		
	Inside and Outside	17.8% (16)	23.1% (51)		
Emotional or mental health problems	None	23.3% (21)	31.1% (68)	$\chi^2 = 3.437$ df = 3 $p = .329$	309
	Inside only	35.6% (32)	26.5% (58)		
	Outside only	25.6% (23)	24.2% (53)		
	Inside and Outside	15.6% (14)	18.3% (40)		

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



## A6.5 Intentions to seek from people on the outside scale

*Figure A6.3 Distribution of the intentions to seek help from people on the outside scale*



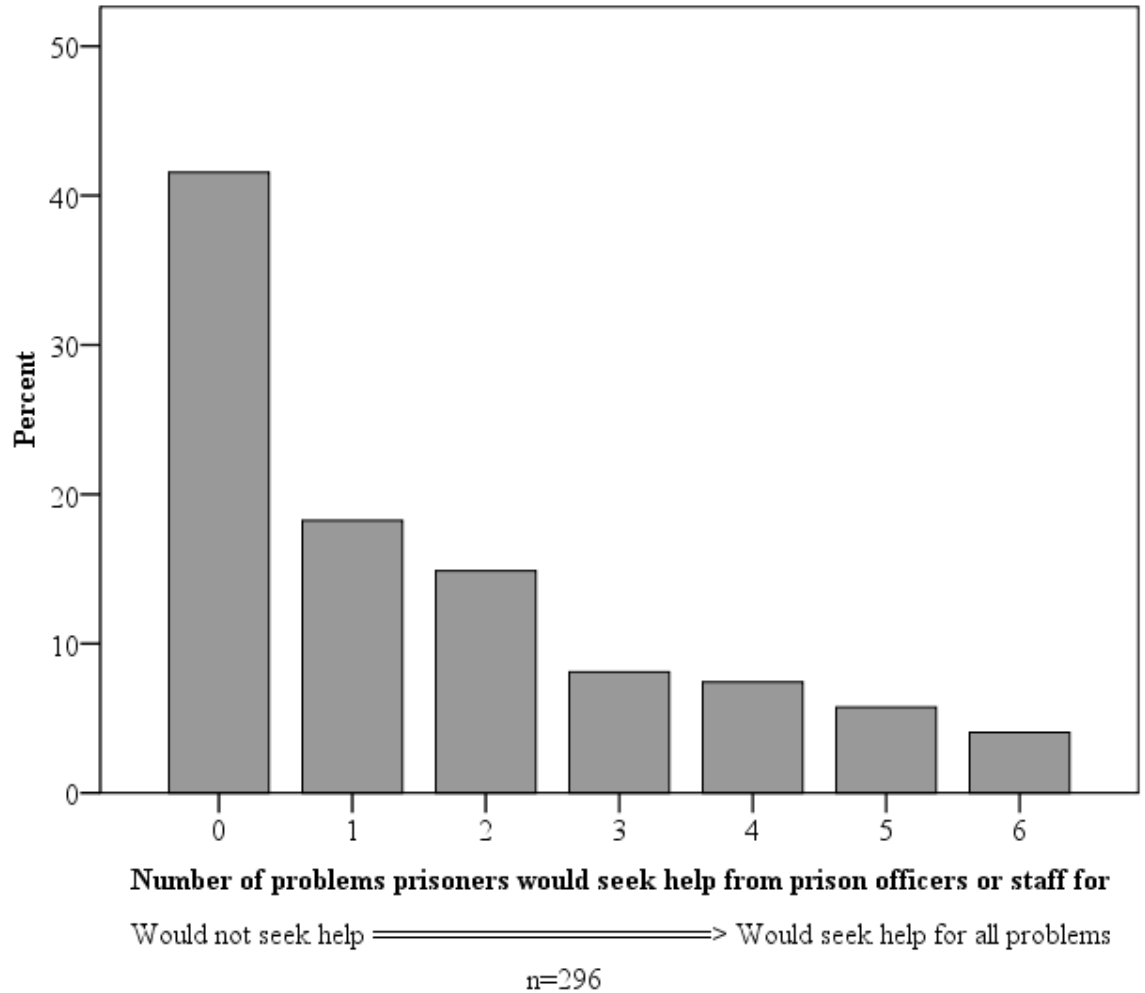
*Table A6.16 – Descriptive statistics for the intentions to seek help from people on the outside scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	2.33
Median	2.00
Mode	0



## A6.6 Intentions to seek help from prison staff scale

*Figure A6.4 Distribution of the intentions to seek help from prison staff scale*



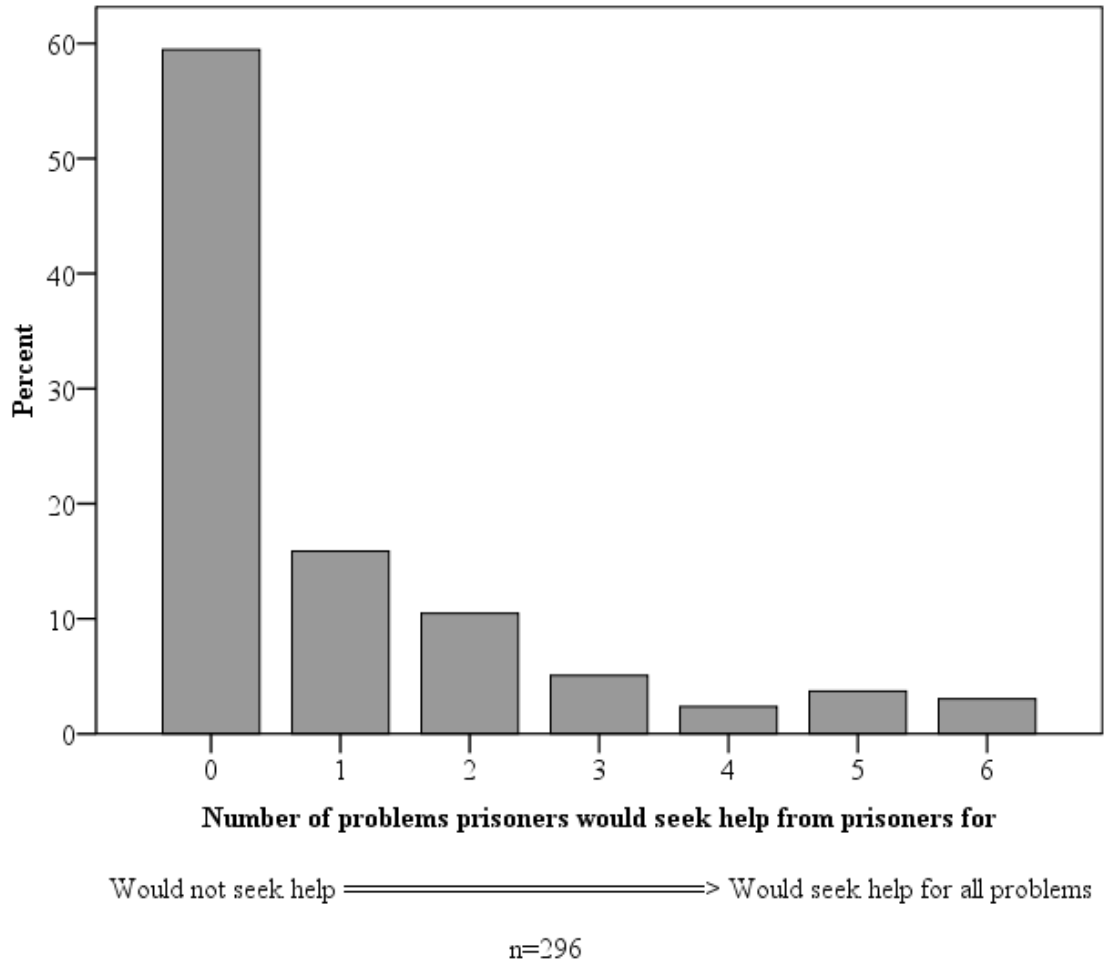
*Table A6.17 – Descriptive statistics for the intentions to seek help from prison officers or staff scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	1.55
Median	1.00
Mode	0



## A6.7 Intentions to seek help from prisoners scale

*Figure A6.5 Distribution of the intentions to seek help from prisoners scale*



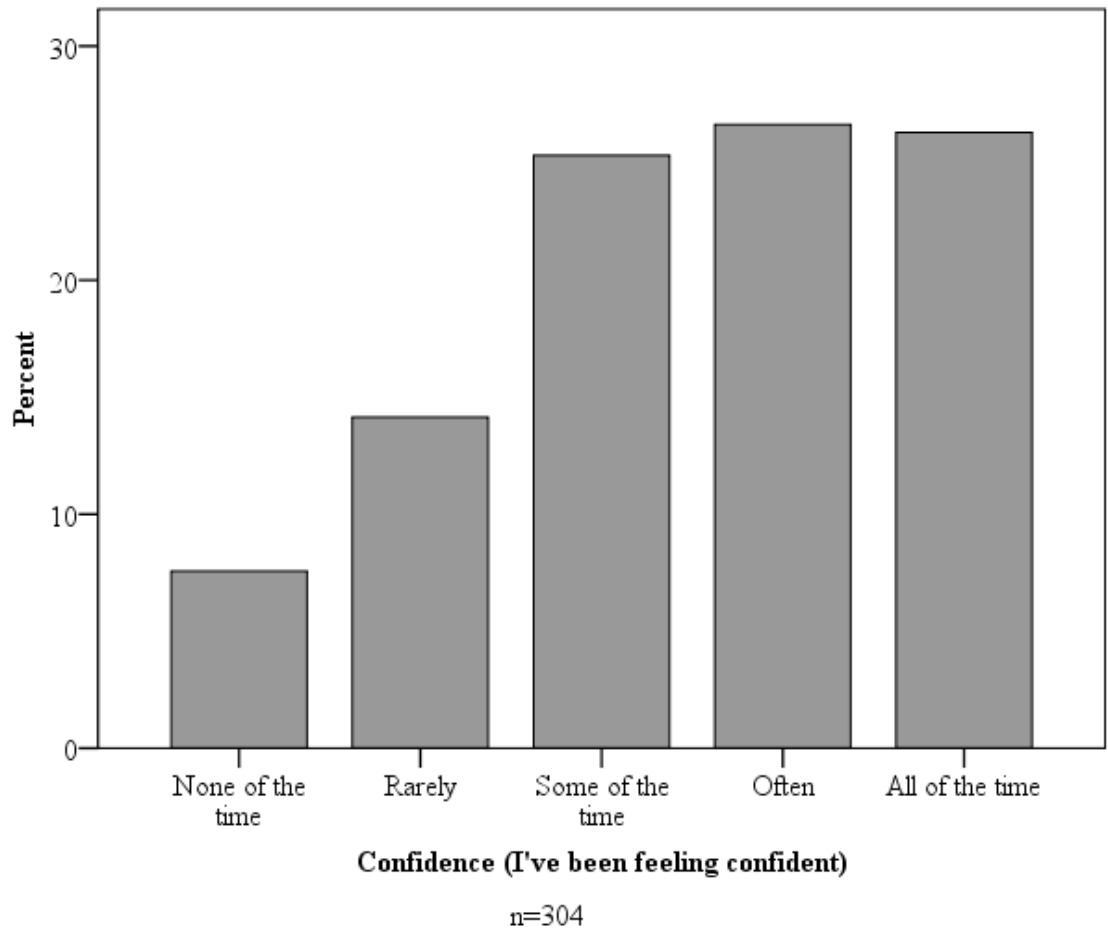
*Table A6.18 – Descriptive statistics for the intentions to seek help from prisoners scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	.98
Median	.00
Mode	0

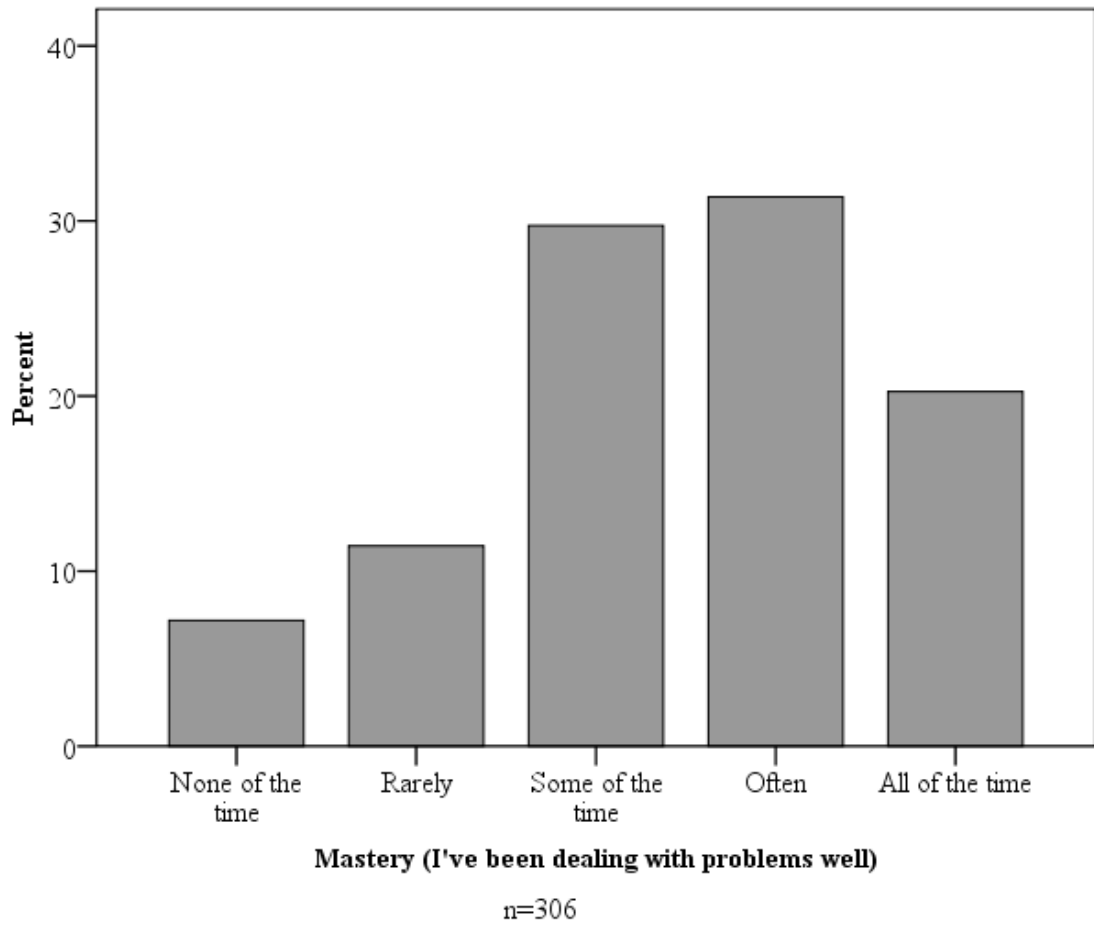


## A6.8 Confidence and mastery

*Figure A6.6 Distribution of the confidence item*





*Figure A6.7 Distribution of the mastery item**Table A6.19 – Correlates of help-seeking: confidence and mastery*

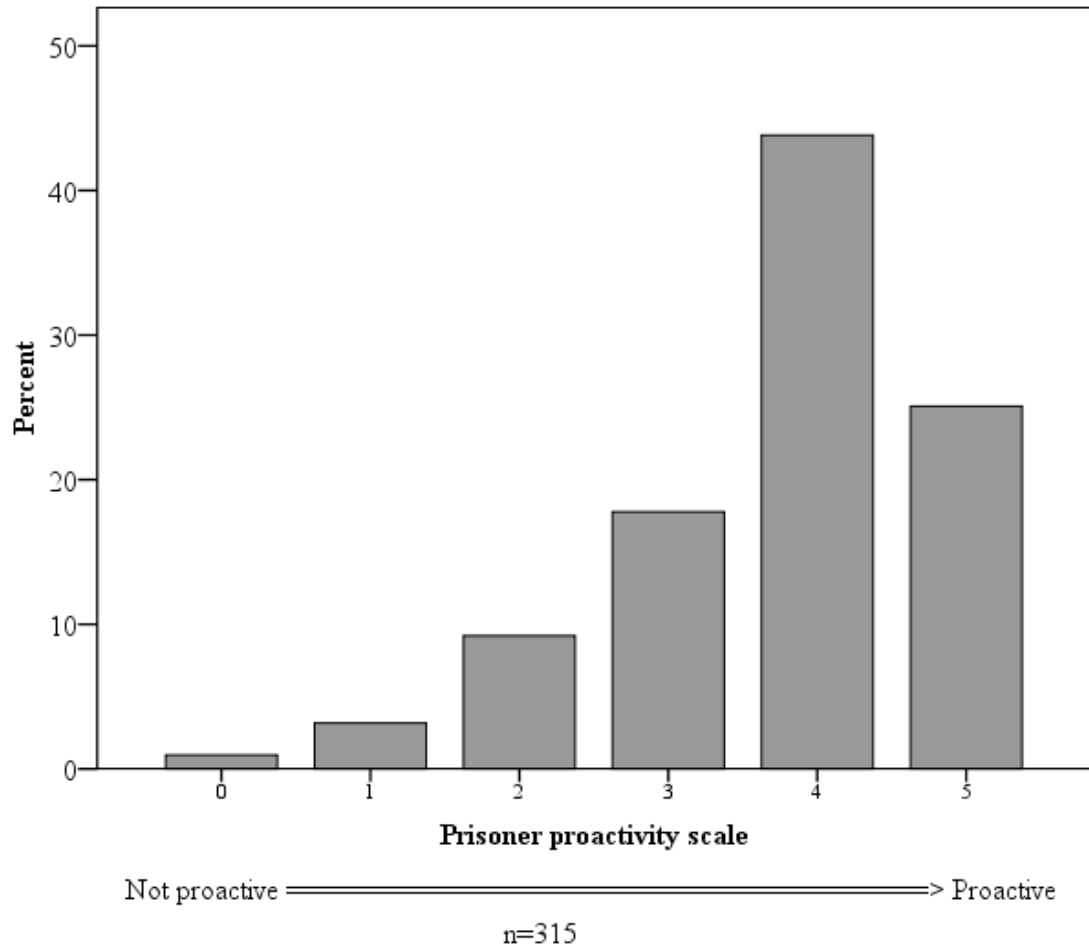
	Seeking help from outside	Seeking help from officers or staff	Seeking help from prisoners	Overall help- seeking
Confidence	<b>.211</b> <i>p</i> = .000 n = 293	.093 <i>p</i> = .122 n = 281	.019 <i>p</i> = .751 n = 281	<b>.166</b> <i>p</i> = .005 n = 281
Mastery	<b>.163</b> <i>p</i> = .005 n = 295	.113 <i>p</i> = .057 n = 283	-.010 <i>p</i> = .869 n = 283	<b>.119</b> <i>p</i> = .045 n = 283

N.B. Table displays Spearman's rho correlation coefficients  
*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



## A6.9 Prisoner proactivity scale

*Figure A6.8 – Distribution of the prisoner proactivity scale*



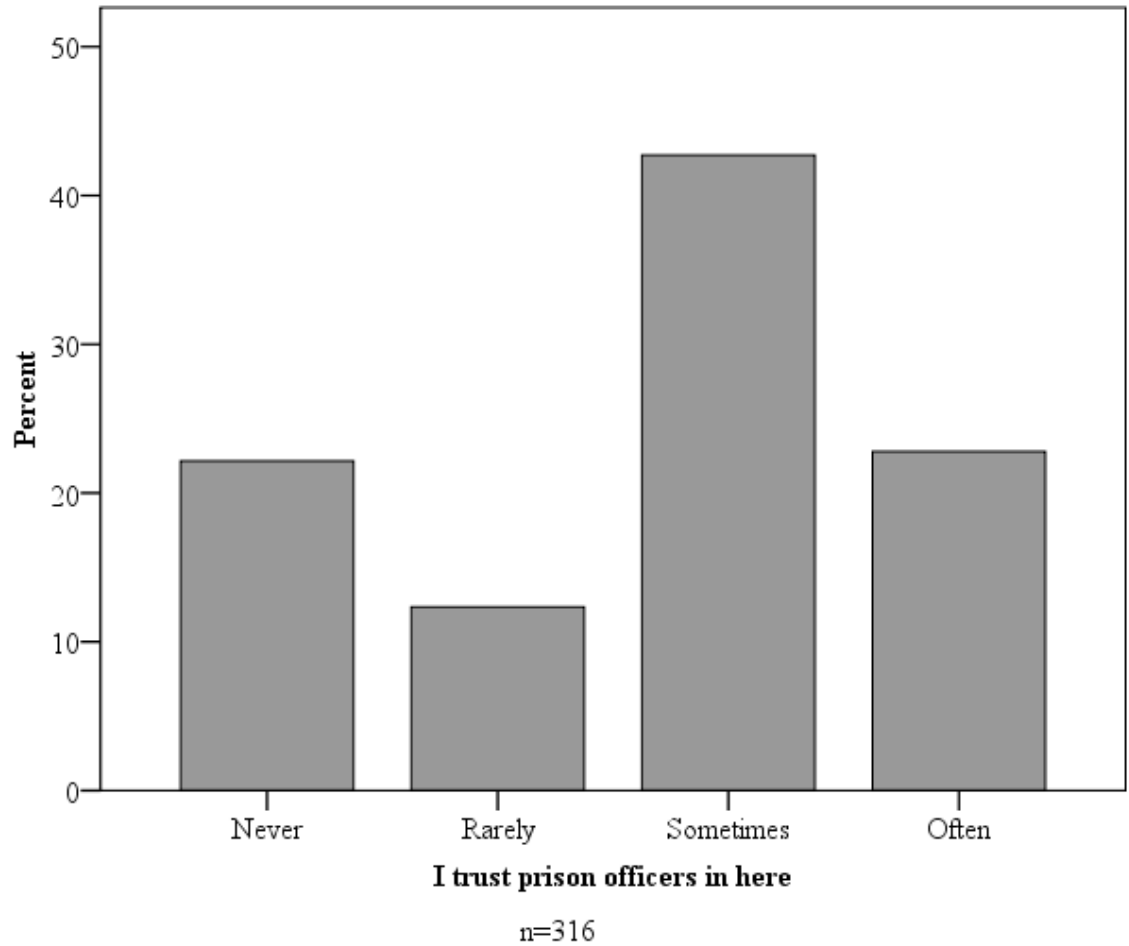
*Table A6.20 – Descriptive statistics for the prisoner proactivity scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	3.76
Median	4
Mode	4



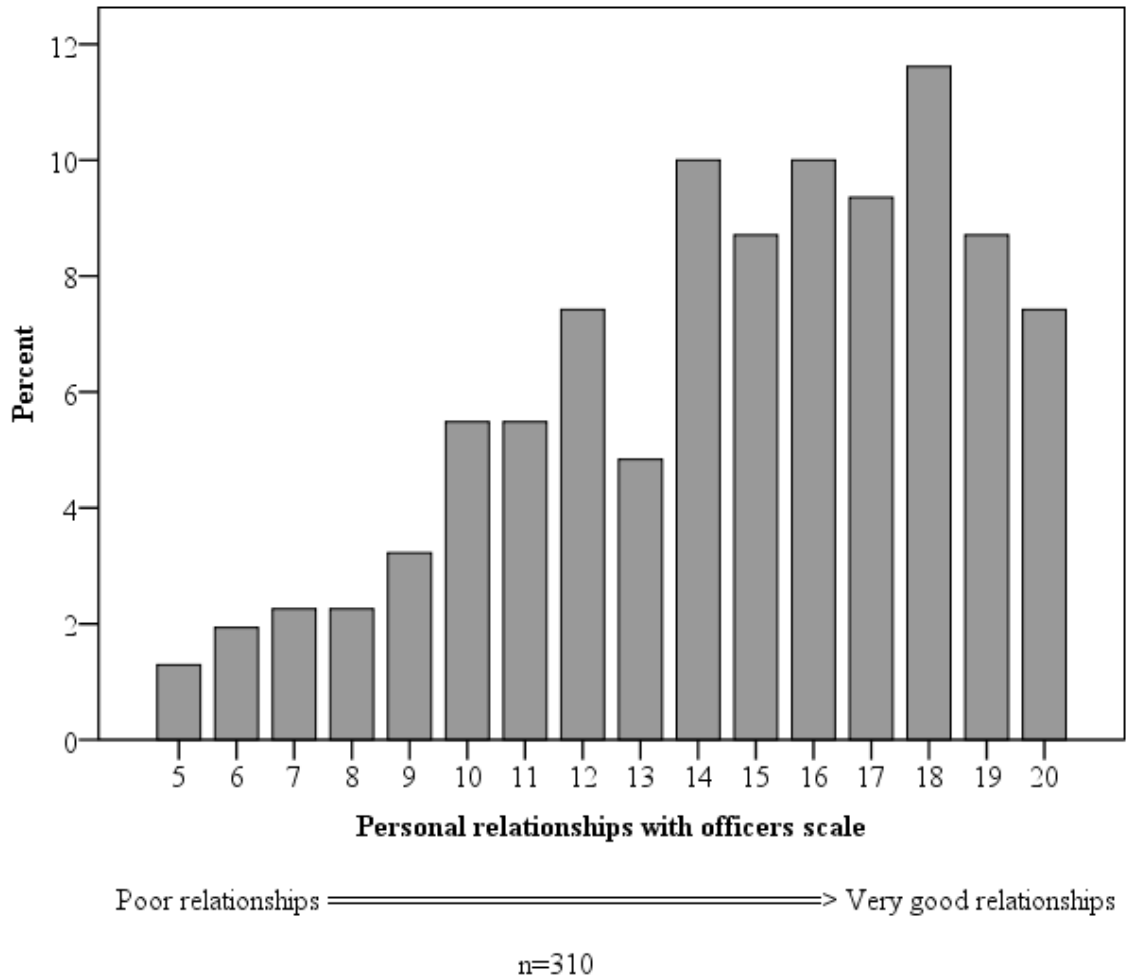
## A6.10 Personal relationships with officers

*Figure A6.9 – Trust in prison officers*





*Figure A6.10– Distribution of the personal relationships with officers scale*



*Table A6.21 – Descriptive statistics for the personal relationships with officers scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	14.61
Median	15
Mode	18
Cronbach's alpha	.805



*Table A6.22 – Correlates of help-seeking: personal relationships with officers*

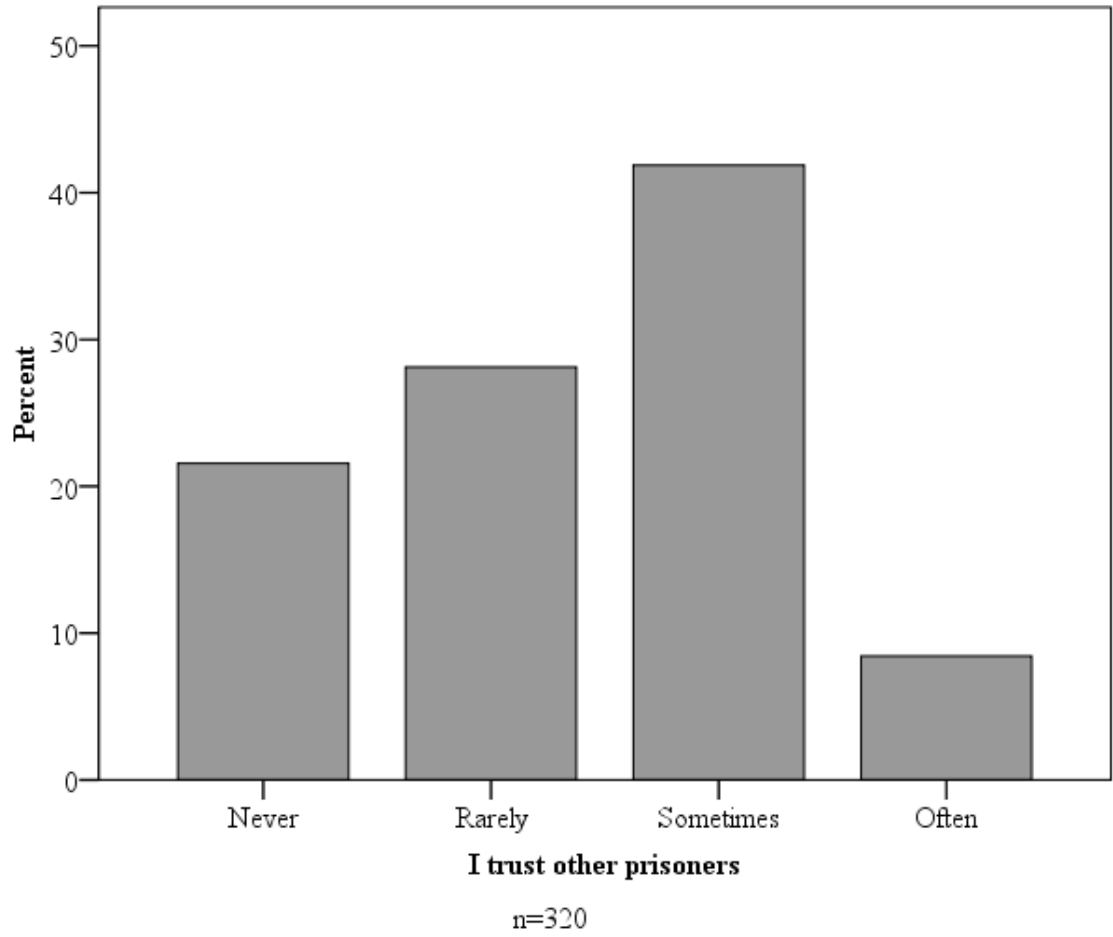
	Seeking help from outside	Seeking help from officers or staff	Seeking help from prisoners	Overall help- seeking
Personal relationships with officers scale	.008 <i>p</i> = .887 n = 295	<b>.458</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 285	.069 <i>p</i> = .245 n = 285	<b>.314</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 285
Trust in officers	-.041 <i>p</i> = .478 n = 298	<b>.481</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 287	.058 <i>p</i> = .323 n = 287	<b>.313</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 287
Helpfulness	.014 <i>p</i> = .804 n = 299	<b>.399</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 288	.074 <i>p</i> = .211 n = 288	<b>.312</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 288
Unfairness	-.082 <i>p</i> = .156 n = 297	<b>.209</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 287	-.048 <i>p</i> = .418 n = 287	.059 <i>p</i> = .316 n = 287
Make an effort	.069 <i>p</i> = .233 n = 298	<b>.373</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 288	<b>.146</b> <b><i>p</i> = .013</b> n = 288	<b>.324</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 288
Get on well	.077 <i>p</i> = .184 n = 298	<b>.415</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 287	.063 <i>p</i> = .288 n = 287	<b>.275</b> <b><i>p</i> = .000</b> n = 287

N.B. Table displays Spearman's rho correlation coefficients  
*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



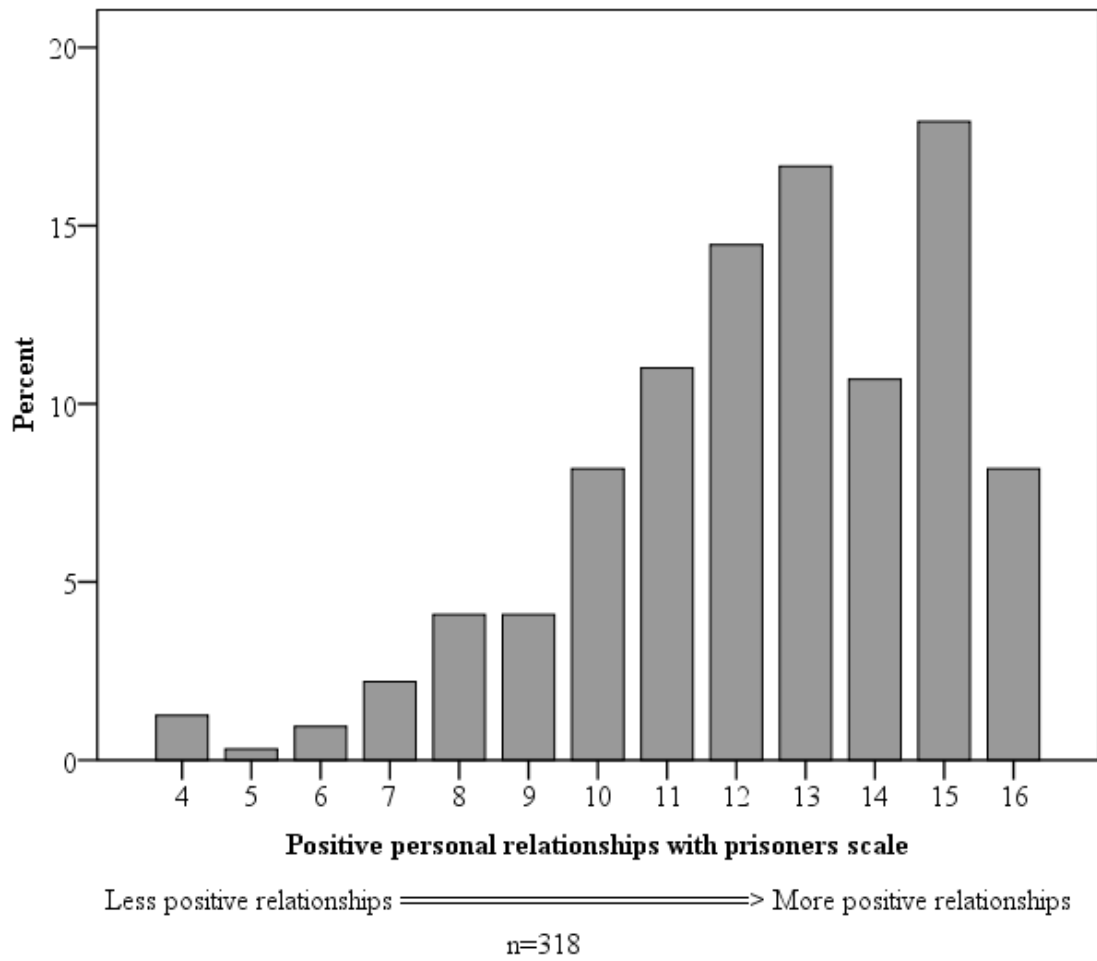
## A6.11 Personal relationships with prisoners

*Figure A6.11– Trust in other prisoners*





*Figure A6.12 – Distribution of the positive personal relationships with prisoners scale*



*Table A6.23 – Descriptive statistics for the positive personal relationships with prisoners scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	12.40
Median	13
Mode	15
Cronbach's alpha	.811



*Table A6.24 – Correlates of help-seeking: personal relationships with other prisoners*

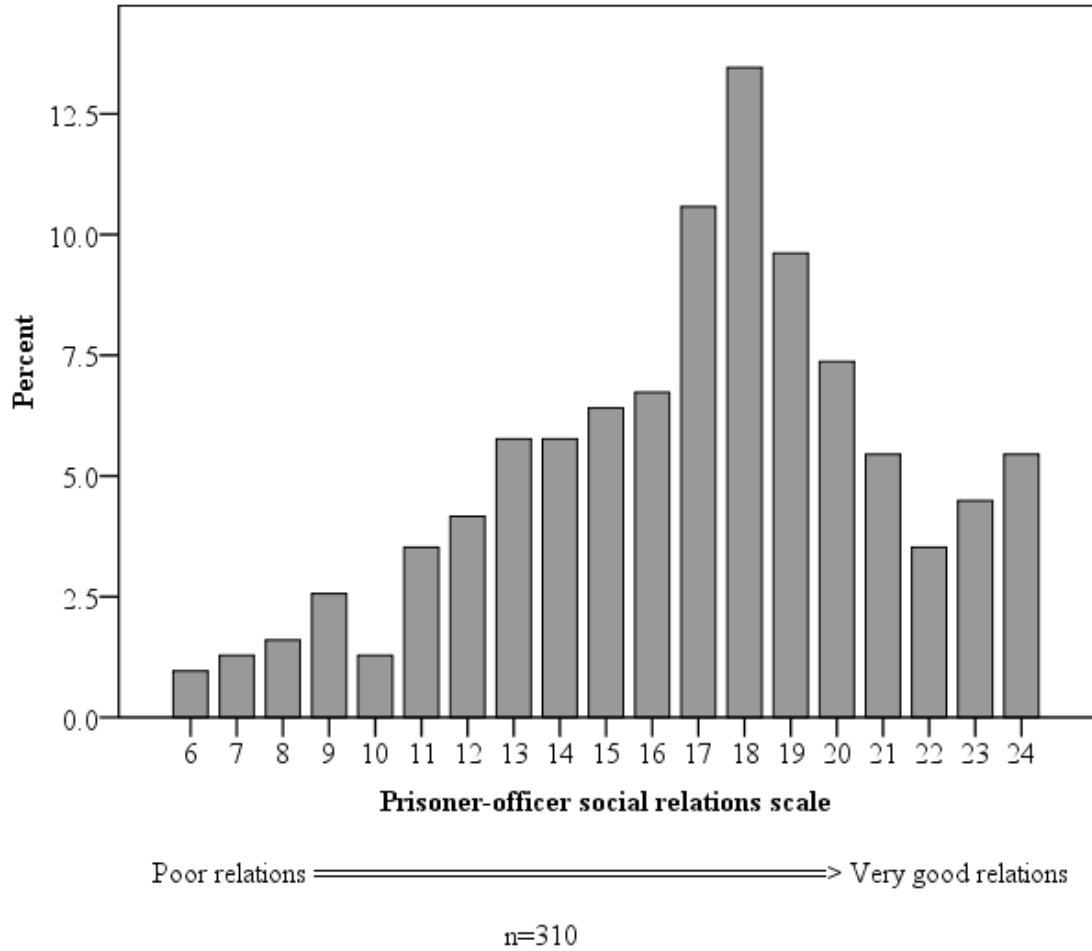
	Seeking help from outside	Seeking help from officers or staff	Seeking help from prisoners	Overall help- seeking
Positive personal relationships with other prisoners	<b>.162</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.005</b> n = 301	<b>.213</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 290	<b>.227</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 290	<b>.355</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 290
Mixing with prisoners	<b>.147</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.010</b> n = 302	<b>.150</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.010</b> n = 291	<b>.180</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.002</b> n = 291	<b>.264</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 291
Trust	<b>.115</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.045</b> n = 303	<b>.162</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.006</b> n = 291	<b>.243</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 291	<b>.298</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 291
Fight	.010 <i>p</i> = .864 n = 303	<b>.193</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.001</b> n = 291	-.053 <i>p</i> = .368 n = 291	<b>.144</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.014</b> n = 291
Get on well	<b>.185</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.001</b> n = 303	<b>.192</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.001</b> n = 291	<b>.200</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.001</b> n = 291	<b>.330</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 291
Make friends	.113 <i>p</i> = .051 n = 302	<b>.211</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 290	.112 <i>p</i> = .056 n = 290	<b>.290</b> <i>p</i> = <b>.000</b> n = 290

N.B. Table displays Spearman's rho correlation coefficients  
*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



## A6.12 Perceptions of prisoner-officer social relations

*Figure A6.13 – Distribution of the prisoner-officer social relations scale*



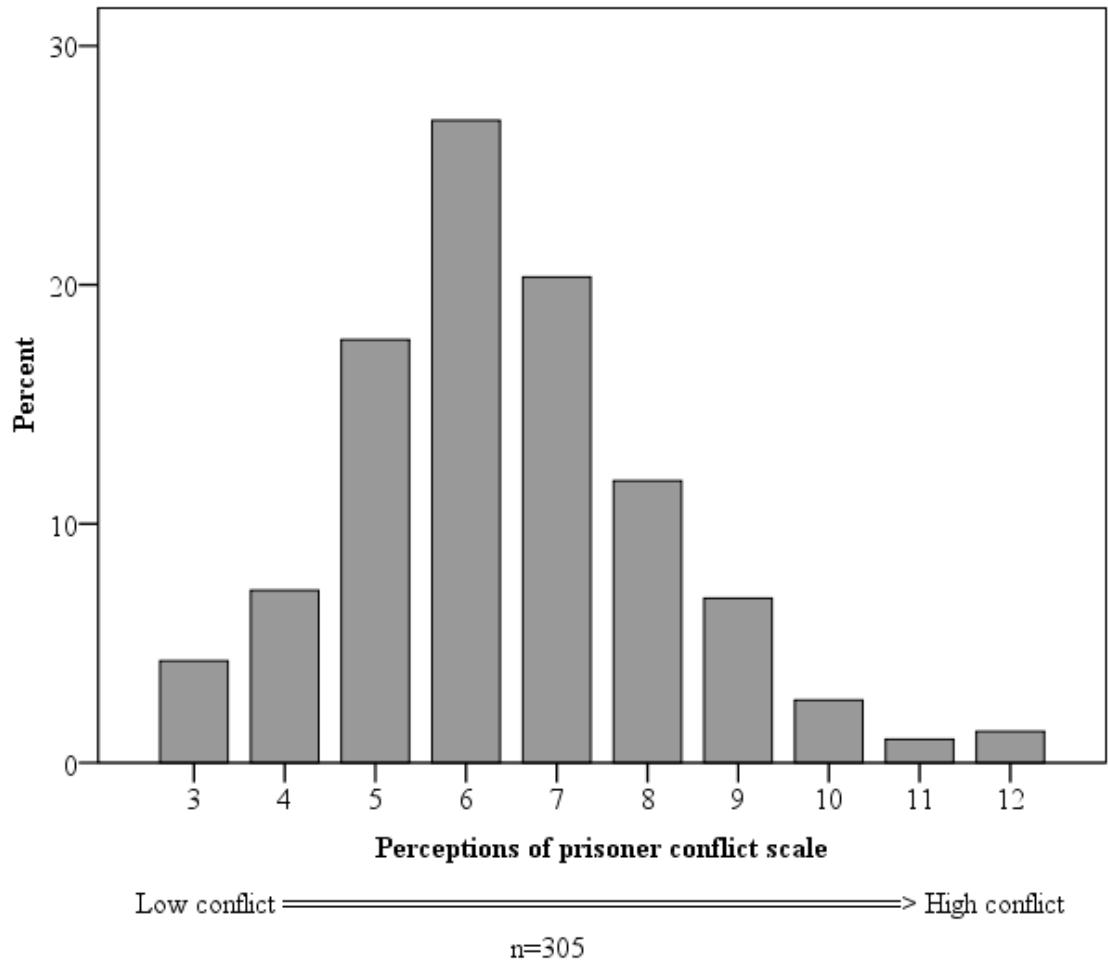
*Table A6.25 – Descriptive statistics for the prisoner-officer social relations scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	16.90
Median	17
Mode	18
Cronbach's alpha	.885



### A6.13 Perceptions of prisoner social relations

*Figure A6.14 – Distribution of the perceptions of prisoner conflict scale*

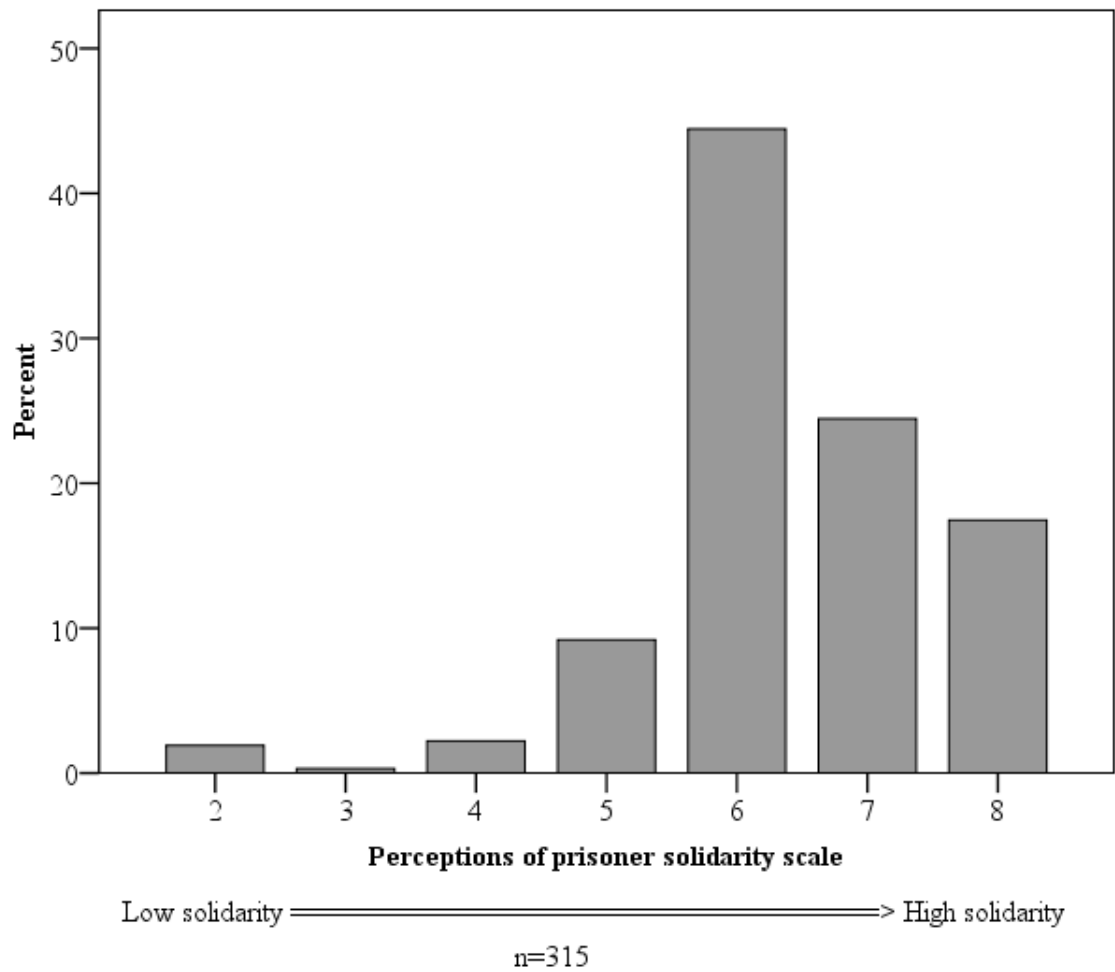


*Table A6.26 – Descriptive statistics for the perceptions of prisoner conflict scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	6.429
Median	6
Mode	6
Cronbach's alpha	.528



*Figure A6.15 – Distribution of the perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale*



*Table A6.27 – Descriptive statistics for the perceptions of prisoner solidarity scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	6.371
Median	6
Mode	6
Cronbach's alpha	.686



## **Appendix – Chapter 7**

### **(A7)**

**A7.1** Sources of knowledge about Listeners and individual/career variables

**A7.2** Prisoners' ideas about the role of Listeners and individual/career variables

**A7.3** Analysis of views towards Listeners in each prison

**A7.4** Positive and negative perceptions of Listeners scales

**A7.5** Intentions to seek help from Listeners for different problems and individual/career variables

**A7.6** Intentions to seek help from Listeners scale

**A7.7** Relationships with wing officers



### A7.1 Sources of knowledge about Listeners and individual/career variables

*Table A7.1 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and age*

Source	18-30 years	31+ years	Statistics	<i>p</i>
Staff	48.2% (106)	45.4% (44)	$\chi^2 = .215$ df = 1	.643
Another prisoner	32.7% (72)	21.6% (21)	$\chi^2 = 3.985$ df = 1	<b>.046</b>
Listener	25.0% (55)	12.4% (12)	$\chi^2 = 6.441$ df = 1	<b>.011</b>
Advertisement	48.2% (106)	63.9% (62)	$\chi^2 = 6.692$ df = 1	<b>.010</b>
Another prison	37.7% (83)	27.8% (27)	$\chi^2 = 2.907$ df = 1	.088
Other	7.7% (17)	13.4% (13)	$\chi^2 = 2.530$ df = 1	.112

n=317

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

*Table A7.2 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and gender*

Source	Women	Men	Statistics	<i>p</i>
Staff	50.7% (36)	45.8% (114)	$\chi^2 = .537$ df = 1	.464
Another prisoner	40.8% (29)	26.0% (65)	$\chi^2 = 5.786$ df = 1	<b>.016</b>
Listener	19.7% (14)	2107% (54)	$\chi^2 = .128$ df = 1	.721
Advertisement	60.6% (43)	51.0% (127)	$\chi^2 = 2.027$ df = 1	.154
Another prison	31.0% (22)	35.3% (88)	$\chi^2 = .465$ df = 1	.495
Other	5.6% (4)	10.8% (27)	$\chi^2 = 1.714$ df = 1	.190

n=320

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.3 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and sentencing status*

Source	Not sentenced	Sentenced	Statistics	<i>p</i>
Staff	43.2% (38)	47.6% (109)	$\chi^2 = .499$ df = 1	.480
Another prisoner	27.3% (24)	30.1% (69)	$\chi^2 = .251$ df = 1	.617
Listener	17.0% (15)	23.1% (53)	$\chi^2 = 1.403$ df = 1	.236
Advertisement	53.4% (47)	52.4% (120)	$\chi^2 = .026$ df = 1	.872
Another prison	21.6% (19)	39.3% (90)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{8.838}$ df = 1	<b>.003</b>
Other	9.1% (8)	10.0% (23)	$\chi^2 = .065$ df = 1	.798

n=317

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



Table A7.4 Sources of knowledge about Listeners and ethnicity

	<b>White British</b>	<b>White European</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Mixed race</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Staff</b>	50.2% (19)	46.2% (6)	43.4% (23)	46.4% (13)	20.0% (3)	50.0% (4)	$\chi^2 = 5.548$ df = 5	.353
<b>Another prisoner</b>	31.3% (63)	7.7% (1)	24.5% (13)	28.6% (8)	33.3% (5)	50.0% (4)	$\chi^2 = 5.658$ df = 5	.341
<b>Listener</b>	20.9% (42)	15.4% (2)	24.5% (13)	21.4% (6)	20.0% (3)	12.5% (1)	$\chi^2 = 1.003$ df = 5	.962
<b>Advertisement</b>	52.2% (105)	38.5% (5)	60.4% (32)	42.9% (12)	66.7% (10)	50.0% (4)	$\chi^2 = 4.612$ df = 5	.465
<b>Another prison</b>	36.3% (73)	23.1% (3)	34.0% (18)	28.6% (8)	40.0% (6)	25.0% (2)	$\chi^2 = 2.004$ df = 5	.849
<b>Other</b>	7.0% (14)	30.8% (4)	17.0% (9)	10.7% (9)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	$\chi^2 = 12.506$ df = 5	<b>.028</b>

n=318

p &gt; .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.5 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and first language*

Source	English first language	English not first language	Statistics	<i>p</i>
Staff	48.8% (144)	25.0% (6)	$\chi^2 = 5.052$ df = 1	<b>.025</b>
Another prisoner	30.8% (91)	12.5% (3)	$\chi^2 = 3.595$ df = 1	.058
Listener	21.0% (62)	20.8% (5)	$\chi^2 = .000$ df = 1	.983
Advertisement	53.2% (157)	50.0% (12)	$\chi^2 = .092$ df = 1	.761
Another prison	35.9% (106)	16.7% (4)	$\chi^2 = 3.646$ df = 1	.056
Other	8.1% (24)	29.2% (7)	$\chi^2 = 11.189$ df = 1	<b>.001</b>

n=319

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.*Table A7.6 – Sources of knowledge about Listeners and country of birth*

Source	Born in Britain	Not born in Britain	Statistics	<i>p</i>
Staff	48.2% (135)	38.5% (15)	$\chi^2 = 1.307$ df = 1	.253
Another prisoner	30.4% (85)	23.1% (9)	$\chi^2 = .873$ df = 1	.455
Listener	21.8% (61)	15.4% (6)	$\chi^2 = .845$ df = 1	.358
Advertisement	51.8% (145)	61.5% (24)	$\chi^2 = 1.307$ df = 1	.253
Another prison	36.4% (102)	20.5% (8)	$\chi^2 = 3.838$ df = 1	<b>.050</b>
Other	7.9% (22)	23.1% (9)	$\chi^2 = 9.038$ df = 1	<b>.003</b>

n=319

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



## A7.2 Prisoners' ideas on the role of Listeners and individual/career variables

*Table A7.7 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and age*

Role	18-30 years	31+ years	Statistics	<i>p</i>
Information	45.2% (99)	37.8% (37)	$\chi^2 = 1.534$ df = 1	.215
Help staff	14.2% (31)	16.3% (16)	$\chi^2 = .253$ df = 1	.615
Problem-solving	53.4% (117)	43.9% (43)	$\chi^2 = 2.469$ df = 1	.116
Advice	65.8% (144)	52.0% (51)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{5.377}$ df = 1	<b>.020</b>

n=317

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

*Table A7.8 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and gender*

Role	Females	Males	Statistics	<i>p</i>
Information	30.6% (22)	46.4% (115)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{5.701}$ df = 1	<b>.017</b>
Help staff	5.6% (4)	17.3% (43)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{6.183}$ df = 1	<b>.013</b>
Problem-solving	38.9% (28)	54.0% (134)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{5.119}$ df = 1	<b>.024</b>
Advice	56.9% (41)	62.1% (154)	$\chi^2 = .622$ df = 1	.430

n=320

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.9 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and prior imprisonment*

<b>Role</b>	<b>Been in prison before</b>	<b>Not been in prison before</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Information	41.0% (77)	45.5% (60)	$\chi^2 = .641$ df = 1	.424
Help staff	16.5% (31)	12.1% (16)	$\chi^2 = 1.181$ df = 1	.277
Problem-solving	54.3% (102)	45.5% (60)	$\chi^2 = 2.403$ df = 1	.121
Advice	63.8% (120)	56.8% (75)	$\chi^2 = 1.602$ df = 1	.206

n=320

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.*Table A7.10 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and sentencing status*

<b>Role</b>	<b>Not sentenced</b>	<b>Sentenced</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Information	43.2% (38)	43.2% (99)	$\chi^2 = .000$ df = 1	.994
Help staff	17.0% (15)	14.0% (32)	$\chi^2 = .475$ df = 1	.491
Problem-solving	48.9% (43)	51.5% (118)	$\chi^2 = .181$ df = 1	.671
Advice	60.2% (53)	61.6% (141)	$\chi^2 = .048$ df = 1	.826

n=317

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.11 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and ethnicity*

	<b>White British</b>	<b>White European</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Mixed race</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
<b>Information</b>	46.0% (93)	66.7% (8)	37.7% (20)	35.7% (10)	40.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	$\chi^2 = 10.794$ df = 5	.056
<b>Help staff</b>	14.9% (30)	16.7% (2)	15.1% (8)	14.3% (4)	13.3% (2)	12.5% (1)	$\chi^2 = .107$ df = 5	1.000
<b>Problem solving</b>	53.5% (108)	41.7% (5)	45.3% (24)	50.0% (14)	40.0% (6)	37.5% (3)	$\chi^2 = 2.863$ df = 5	.721
<b>Advice</b>	63.9% (129)	66.7% (8)	58.5% (31)	53.6% (15)	53.3% (8)	50.0% (4)	$\chi^2 = 2.418$ df = 5	.789

n=318

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.12 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and first language*

<b>Role</b>	<b>English first language</b>	<b>English not first language</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Information	43.2% (128)	39.1% (9)	$\chi^2 = .147$ df = 1	.701
Help staff	15.2% (45)	8.7% (2)	$\chi^2 = .719$ df = 1	.396
Problem-solving	51.7% (153)	34.8% (8)	$\chi^2 = 2.440$ df = 1	.118
Advice	61.8% (183)	52.2% (12)	$\chi^2 = .836$ df = 1	.360

n=319

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

*Table A7.13 – Ideas about the role of Listeners and country of birth*

<b>Role</b>	<b>Born in Britain</b>	<b>Not born in Britain</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
Information	43.1% (121)	42.1% (16)	$\chi^2 = .012$ df = 1	.911
Help staff	15.3% (43)	10.5% (4)	$\chi^2 = .608$ df = 1	.436
Problem-solving	51.6% (145)	42.1% (16)	$\chi^2 = 1.208$ df = 1	.272
Advice	61.6% (173)	57.9% (22)	$\chi^2 = .190$ df = 1	.663

n=319

$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



### A7.3 Analysis of views towards Listeners in each prison

*Table A7.14 – Views towards Listeners in each prison*

View	Agreement	Prison 1	Prison 2	Prison 3	Prison 4	Statistics
Easy to talk to	Agree	19.7% (14)	16.2% (16)	7.1% (8)	15.6% (13)	$\chi^2 = 8.918$ df = 12 $p = .710$
	Don't know	25.4% (18)	52.5% (52)	31.9% (23)	32.5% (27)	
	Disagree	55.0% (39)	31.4% (31)	57.0% (41)	51.8% (43)	
Good reputation	Agree	59.2% (42)	51.5% (51)	63.9% (46)	56.6% (47)	$\chi^2 = 22.291$ df = 12 $p = .034$
	Don't know	22.5% (16)	37.4% (37)	29.2% (21)	38.6% (47)	
	Disagree	18.3% (13)	11.1% (11)	7.0% (5)	4.8% (4)	
Friendly	Agree	63.2% (52)	61.6% (61)	70.9% (51)	69.9% (58)	$\chi^2 = 15.851$ df = 12 $p = .198$
	Don't know	22.5% (16)	29.3% (29)	27.8% (20)	25.3% (21)	
	Disagree	4.2% (2)	9.1% (9)	1.4% (1)	4.8% (4)	
Pushy	Agree	2.8% (2)	4.0% (4)	5.6% (4)	1.2% (1)	$\chi^2 = 15.578$ df = 12 $p = .211$
	Don't know	26.8% (19)	29.3% (29)	30.6% (22)	32.5% (27)	
	Disagree	70.4% (50)	66.7% (66)	63.9% (46)	66.3% (55)	
Informers	Agree	22.6% (16)	9.1% (9)	5.6% (4)	7.2% (6)	$\chi^2 = 40.023$ df = 12 $p = .000$
	Don't know	26.8% (19)	63.6% (63)	48.6% (35)	47.0% (39)	
	Disagree	50.7% (36)	27.3% (27)	45.8% (33)	45.8% (38)	
Cannot be trusted	Agree	19.7% (14)	16.2% (16)	11.1% (8)	15.6% (13)	$\chi^2 = 24.778$ df = 12 $p = .016$
	Don't know	25.4% (18)	52.5% (52)	31.9% (23)	32.5% (27)	
	Disagree	55.0% (39)	31.4% (31)	57.0% (41)	51.8% (43)	

n=325

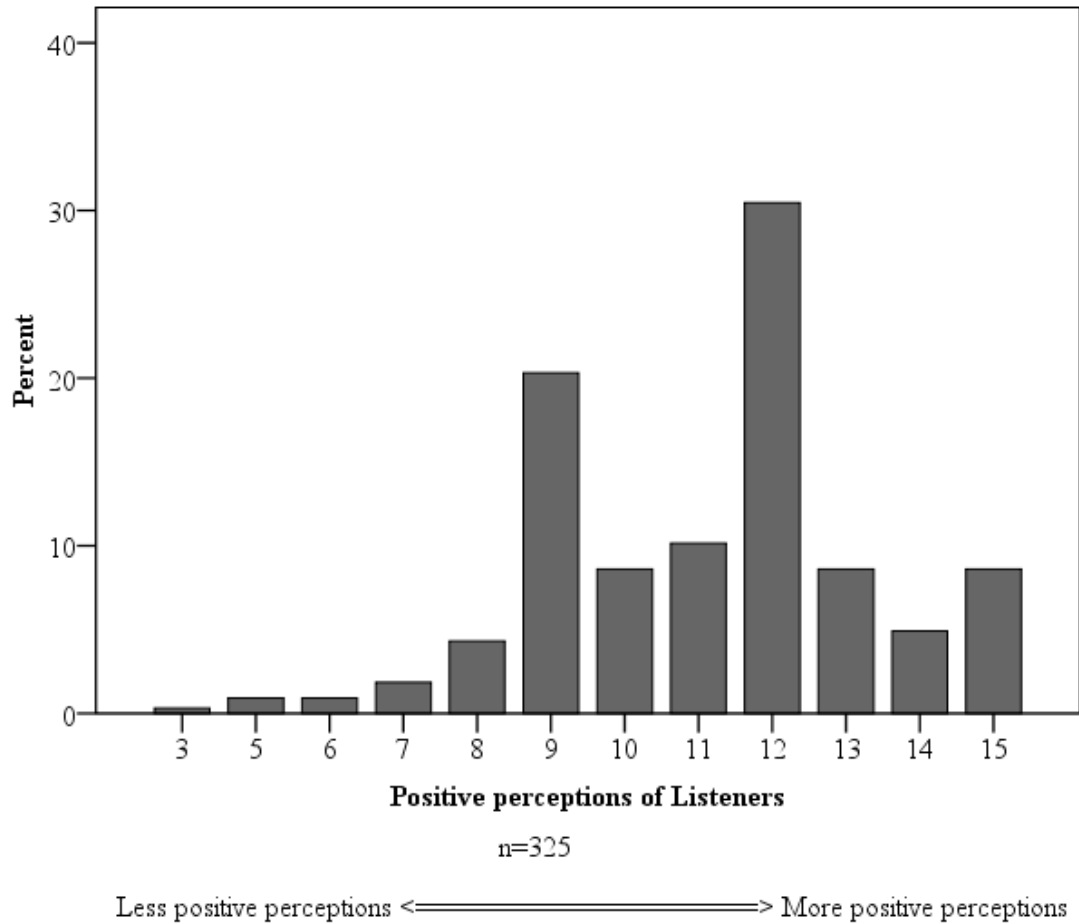
$p > .05$  is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

'Agree' represents respondents who selected 'Strongly agree' or 'agree'; and 'Disagree' represents prisoners who selected 'Strongly disagree' or 'disagree'.



## A7.4 Positive and negative perceptions of Listeners scales

*Figure A7.1 – Distribution of the positive perceptions of Listeners scale*

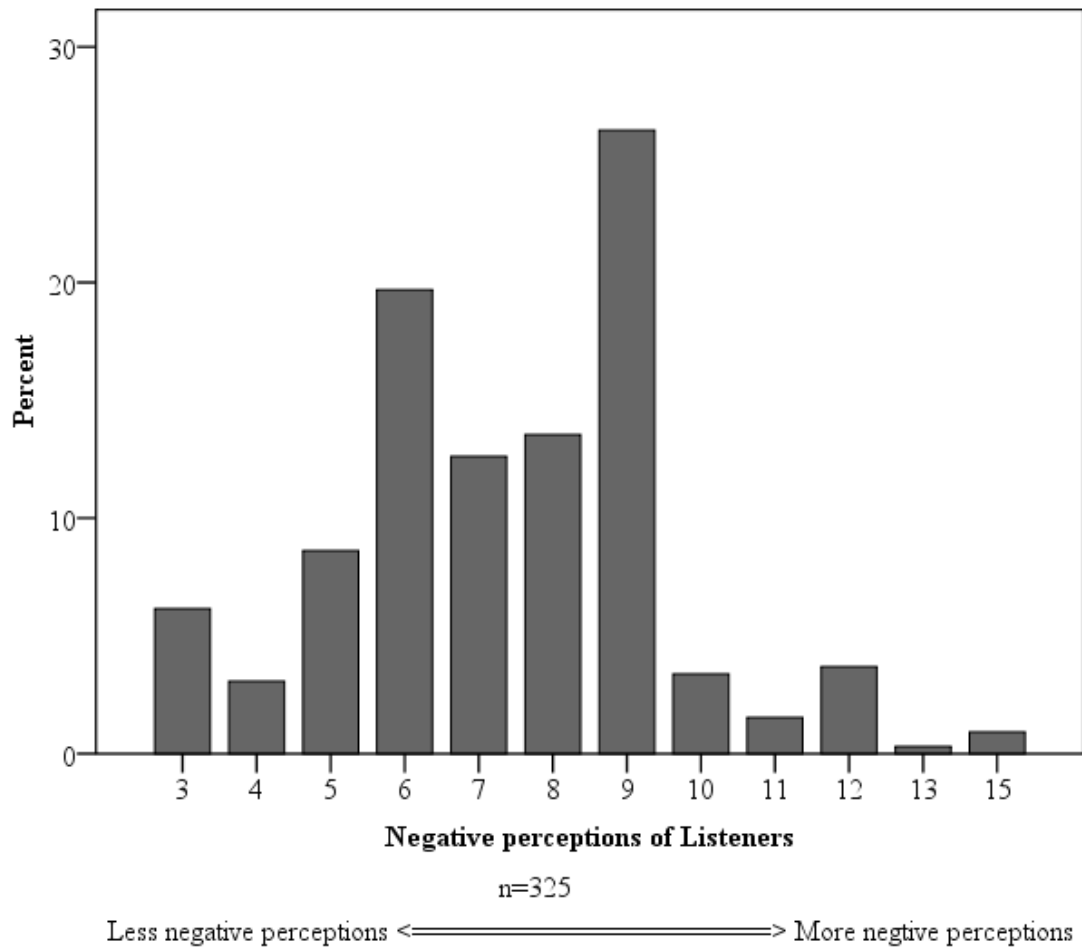


*Table A7.15 – Descriptive statistics for the positive perceptions of Listeners scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	11.15
Median	12
Mode	12
Cronbach's alpha	.804



*Figure A7.2 – Distribution of the negative perceptions of Listeners scale*



*Table A7.16 – Descriptive statistics for the negative perceptions of Listeners scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	7.40
Median	7
Mode	9
Cronbach's alpha	.689



### A7.5 Intentions to seek help from Listeners for different problems and individual/career variables

*Table A7.17 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and age*

<b>Problem</b>	<b>18-30 years</b>	<b>31+ years</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
Outside problems	12.7% (28)	13.5% (13)	$\chi^2 = .045$ df = 1	.832	317
Inside problems	10.9% (24)	12.8% (12)	$\chi^2 = .237$ df = 1	.627	315
Substance misuse problems	11.2% (24)	6.1% (5)	$\chi^2 = 1.757$ df = 1	.185	296
Offence problems	12.4% (27)	12.2% (11)	$\chi^2 = .003$ df = 1	.957	307
Changing life problems	12.3% (27)	8.7% (8)	$\chi^2 = .856$ df = 1	.355	315
Emotional or mental health problems	19.7% (43)	22.0% (20)	$\chi^2 = .201$ df = 1	.654	309

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

*Table A7.18 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and gender*

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
Outside problems	16.7% (12)	11.7% (29)	$\chi^2 = 1.235$ df = 1	.226	320
Inside problems	14.3% (10)	10.5% (26)	$\chi^2 = .786$ df = 1	.375	318
Substance misuse problems	10.9% (7)	9.4% (22)	$\chi^2 = .143$ df = 1	.706	299
Offence problems	16.2% (11)	11.2% (27)	$\chi^2 = 1.243$ df = 1	.265	310
Changing life problems	14.5% (10)	10.2% (25)	$\chi^2 = 1.000$ df = 1	.317	314
Emotional or mental health problems	21.4% (15)	19.8% (48)	$\chi^2 = .086$ df = 1	.770	312

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.19 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and first language*

<b>Problem</b>	<b>English first language</b>	<b>English not first language</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
Outside problems	13.0% (38)	11.5% (3)	$\chi^2 = .046$ df = 1	.830	318
Inside problems	12.1% (35)	3.8% (1)	$\chi^2 = 1.598$ df = 1	.206	316
Substance misuse problems	10.7% (29)	0.0% (0)	$\chi^2 = 2.954$ df = 1	.086	297
Offence problems	12.0% (34)	16.0% (4)	$\chi^2 = .337$ df = 1	.561	308
Changing life problems	11.5% (33)	7.7% (2)	$\chi^2 = .354$ df = 1	.552	312
Emotional or mental health problems	19.7% (56)	26.9% (7)	$\chi^2 = .764$ df = 1	.382	310

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.20 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and ethnicity*

	<b>White British</b>	<b>White European</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Mixed race</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Outside problems</b>	16.0% (32)	13.3% (2)	6.0% (3)	10.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	$\chi^2 = 6.282$ df = 5	.280	318
<b>Inside p[roblems</b>	12.6% (25)	0.0% (0)	10.0% (5)	20.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	$\chi^2 = 7.482$ df = 5	.187	316
<b>Substance misuse problems</b>	10.0% (19)	0.0% (0)	13.6% (6)	7.1% (2)	7.1% (1)	12.5% (2)	$\chi^2 = 2.563$ df = 5	.767	297
<b>Offence problems</b>	13.3% (26)	13.3% (2)	14.9% (7)	3.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (2)	$\chi^2 = 5.99$ df = 5	.347	308
<b>Changing life problems</b>	12.2% (24)	6.7% (1)	12.5% (6)	10.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	13.5% (1)	$\chi^2 = 2.506$ df = 5	.776	312
<b>Emotional or mental health problems</b>	20.9% (41)	26.7% (4)	19.1% (9)	17.2% (5)	13.3% (2)	25.0% (2)	$\chi^2 = 1.186$ df = 5	.946	310

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.21 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and country of birth*

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Born in Britain</b>	<b>Not Born in Britain</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
Outside problems	13.3% (37)	9.8% (4)	$\chi^2 = .463$ df = 1	.526	319
Inside problems	11.2% (31)	12.2% (5)	$\chi^2 = .033$ df = 1	.856	317
Substance misuse problems	9.6% (25)	10.5% (4)	$\chi^2 = .031$ df = 1	.860	298
Offence problems	11.8% (32)	15.8% (6)	$\chi^2 = .491$ df = 1	.484	309
Changing life problems	11.0% (30)	12.5% (5)	$\chi^2 = .080$ df = 1	.777	313
Emotional or mental health problems	19.2% (52)	27.5% (11)	$\chi^2 = 1.491$ df = 1	.222	311

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.

*Table A7.22 – Intentions to seek help from Listeners and prior imprisonment*

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Been in prison before</b>	<b>Not been in prison before</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
Outside problems	10.9% (20)	15.3% (21)	$\chi^2 = 1.358$ df = 1	.422	320
Inside problems	9.4% (17)	13.9% (19)	$\chi^2 = 1.556$ df = 1	.212	318
Substance misuse problems	7.5% (13)	12.7% (16)	$\chi^2 = 2.237$ df = 1	.135	299
Offence problems	8.4% (15)	17.4% (23)	$\chi^2 = 5.705$ df = 1	<b>.017</b>	310
Changing life problems	9.6% (17)	13.2% (18)	$\chi^2 = 1.057$ df = 1	.304	314
Emotional or mental health problems	16.9% (30)	24.4% (33)	$\chi^2 = 2.670$ df = 1	.102	312

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



*Table A7.23 – Intentions to seeking help from Listeners and sentencing status*

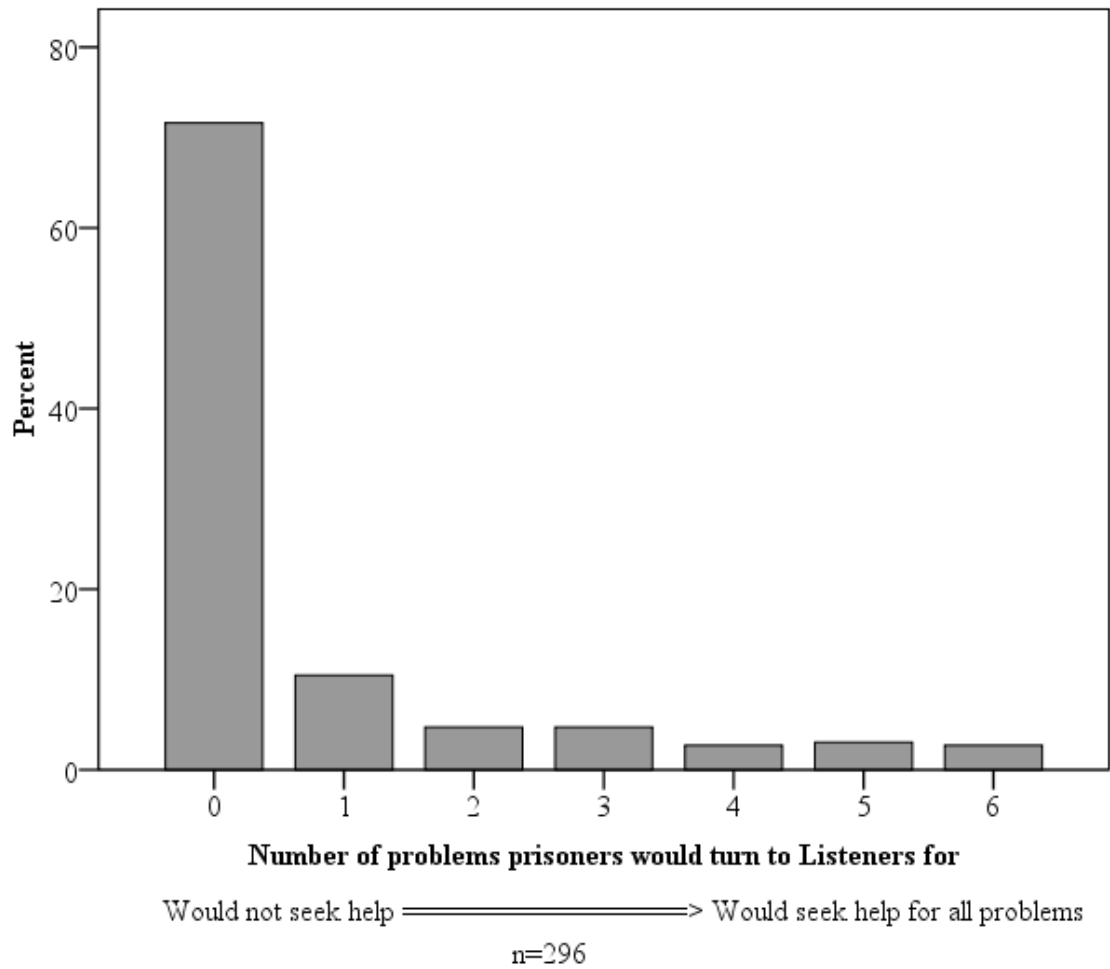
<b>Problem</b>	<b>Not sentenced</b>	<b>Sentenced</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>n</b>
Outside problems	15.4% (14)	11.5% (26)	$\chi^2 = .886$ df = 1	.347	317
Inside problems	15.4% (14)	9.8% (22)	$\chi^2 = 1.979$ df = 1	.160	315
Substance misuse problems	12.8% (11)	8.1% (17)	$\chi^2 = 1.571$ df = 1	.210	296
Offence problems	18.2% (16)	9.6% (21)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{4.373}$ df = 1	<b>.037</b>	307
Changing life problems	16.7% (15)	8.6% (19)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{4.277}$ df = 1	<b>.039</b>	311
Emotional or mental health problems	28.9% (26)	16.4% (36)	$\chi^2 = \mathbf{6.165}$ df = 1	<b>.013</b>	309

*p* > .05 is not significant and significant results are emboldened.



## A7.6 Intentions to seek help from Listeners scale

*Figure A7.3 – Distribution of the intentions to seek help from Listeners scale*



*Table A7.24 – Descriptive statistics for the intentions to seek help from Listeners scale*

Statistic	Value
Mean	.76
Median	.00
Mode	0



## A7.7 Relationships with wing officers

*Figure A7.4 – Distribution of relationships with wing officers item*

